

Pentecostal Crazy

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PENTECOSTALISM is a crazy modern phenomenon. Christians gather, sometimes in their thousands, and allow themselves to be sucked into a whirlpool of mass hysteria in which individual feelings of euphoric bliss are attributed to some power of their God “made manifest in their presence,” as often stated. Lead pastors and musicians carefully choreograph the emotional scenes, manipulating people minds so that they may be seduced—no, tricked—into believing that those Godly powers are real. I have seen all this.

I have seen crazy antics in some churches services, all in the “Name of Jesus.” I have seen people rocking backward and forward in their seats, sometimes jerking, as they succumbed to the so-called Toronto Blessing and whatever other blessings. We even gave them a name: the *Jerkers*.

I went to one or two Pentecostal church healing rallies. People would line up off- and on-stage to receive a laying-on-of-hands and a quick hallelujah-in-Jesus-name prayer. Then the main pastor would lay his hands on their forehead or shoulder, applying a slight push. So in that moment of subtle manipulation, thinking that they were feeling the tangible force of the Holy Spirit upon them, people would fall back, knowing that they would be caught by designated assistant pastors. Thus, they would be “slain in the Spirit.”

Sometimes a white, pink or pale blue tablecloth-looking piece of fabric would be draped over them as they lay there on-stage, some writhing, some quiescent, some babbling, some weeping. Then, after about 30 seconds or less, the assistant pastors would nudge them “awake” in order to make space for other folk in the queue to receive their moment of quick-fix glory, all in that Name of Jesus.

And all the while, the musos would be playing gentle soothing music as the Spirit of the Lord drifted like a fragrant perfume across the soft-carpeted expansive amphitheatre. As folk caught the drift, some would sing, some would prostrate on the floor, others would be “speaking in tongues”—a heavenly language which happens to be indistinguishable from gibberish.

And of course, soon thereafter would follow the short pre-offering sermon, reminding folk of their need to “plant seeds.” During the offering, offering baskets would be distributed far and wide with nimble feet and

facile fingers. And once again, the musos would be there to provide the obligatory seductive music stream so that the Holy Spirit could advise folk to dig deeper.

Isn't it curious how a Holy Spirit is able to descend upon a gathering when people so desperately want It to descend, and, of course, when the lead pastor and musos are well trained in confident charismania? What faculties do we lack that enable such sordid seduction?