Editors Note: We are happy to republish this previously 'lost' (unpublished since 1997) article in conjunction with a history of the CCR with Kennedy Hall on our YouTube Channel. The late John Vennari was a crusader for Catholic orthodoxy and our former Editor-in-Chief.

Part I Recap:
Part I of this article (October 1997) explained that Charismatics gained "legitimacy" within the Catholic Church primarily due to the efforts of the late Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens of Belgium. It was demonstrated that since Suenens was one of the most liberal Cardinals of this century, it follows that he would be enthusiastic about Protestant-styled Pentecostalism gaining a foothold within the Church. Suenens was a chief architect of the Vatican II revolution and a zealous promoter of the modernist notion of collegiality. He also challenged and undermined Catholic teaching against birth control, using collegiality as his principle weapon. Part II (the conclusion) will examine Cardinal Suenens' ecumenism, syncretism, intercommunion, his role in the destruction of women's religious orders, and his promotion of the Church's "new openness to the world."

Two Bishops Sound a Warning:
In 1974, in a scathing criticism of the charismatic movement, the staunchly Orthodox Archbishop Dwyer of the United States said, "We regard it bluntly as one of the most dangerous trends in the Church in our time, closely allied in spirit with other disruptive and divisive movements; threatening grave harm to unity and damage to countless souls."[1]

Joseph Fitcher, in his 1974 book *The Catholic Cult of the Paraclete*, mentioned that some Catholic prelates were "worried about the Protestant influence on their people" due to Pentecostalism. Fitcher quoted Bishop Joseph McKinney's concern about Catholics being "misled and not being firmly grounded in theology."[2]

Bishops McKinney and Dwyer's fears were well-founded, since one of the ecumenical consequences of "Catholic Pentecostalism" is the "breaking down of denominational walls" into a sort of pan-Christianity — with the Charismatic experience (rather than revealed truth) as the unifying factor.

This breaking down of denominational walls was most evident at the 1977 Charismatic Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, at which 50,000 people from at least 10 different denominations attended, including: Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Messianic Jews, nondenominational "Christians," Pentecostals, and United Methodists.[3] Characteristically, Cardinal Suenens demonstrated his jubilant support by attending and

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lecturing at this interfaith event.

"The Holy Ghost Breakdown":
Catholic Pentecostal leader Kevin Ranaghan fondly recalled this "ecumenical milestone." In the opening address of the "Catholic" Charismatics' 30th Anniversary conference in Pittsburgh (June 1997), Ranaghan recounted what he considered to be one of the most dramatic moments in charismatic history:

*"I can still see, in fact, I can still sometimes hear the 'Holy Ghost breakdown' at the great ecumenical Kansas City conference attended by about 50,000 people almost 20 years ago. Bob Mumford was preaching in the middle of the stadium, and suddenly it just broke out — it just broke out, exultant, cheering praise that lasted for about seventeen minutes."[4]

It seems that this ecumenical Kansas City conference took place because the Charismatics believed that they were told by Heaven that God wanted this interdenominational event to be staged. In the November 1977 issue of *New Covenant*, the magazine's editor, Bert Ghezzi, wrote approvingly:

*"This conference brought together for the first time Christians from the three traditions of the charismatic renewal — the classic Pentecostals, the neo-Pentecostals, and the Catholic Pentecostal. This historic gathering was a first response to a directive word that the Lord spoke at a conference on the Catholic charismatic renewal in 1974. At that time, the Lord expressed His desire to bring the three streams together … a sign of hope for all Christians … the Lord called us all to reach beyond our denominational walls to work and pray aggressively for a higher goal — the unification of all Christianity."[5] [emphasis added]

It is no wonder that Archbishop Dwyer regarded the charismatic movement as "one of the most dangerous trends in the Church in our time." Here we have the blasphemous inference that true Christian union exists outside of the Roman Catholic Church, with Catholicism represented as just one of the many religious bodies whose narrow denominational lines stand in opposition to Christian unity.

The so-called "directive word spoken by our Lord" is nothing more than an individual charismatic claiming to voice a "prophetic announcement" by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. This is called "prophesying" — a boring, tedious procedure that is part of the Pentecostal routine, whether "Catholic" or Protestant. The "recipient" of the "message" has no means of testing whether this "prophecy" is from God, from his own imagination, or from the devil. Nor does he (nor anyone else in the assembly) think that the "message" should be

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tested in any way. Usually, the "prophetic announcement" is a banal platitude that anyone with minimal knowledge of religion could make up as he went along. In other words, it is quite easy to fake.

Yet each utterance is believed to be a direct communication from Heaven. Notice in the above quote, *New Covenant's* Bert Ghezzi did not write that *it was his opinion* that the Lord was speaking. No, he emphatically stated that it was "a directive word of the Lord." Such presumption is foreign to the spirit of Catholicism, it defies 2000 years of Catholic teaching on the discernment of spirits, and opens wide the way for demonic deception.

Further, the organizing of the Kansas City conference was in obedience to a supposedly divine "directive" that commanded Catholics to do what a consistent line of Popes have always forbidden — an interfaith extravaganza of heretical sects with each denomination placed on equal footing with the other.[6] To treat all religions as equal is in direct opposition to the infallible dogma that there is only one true Church outside of which there is no salvation. Pope Leo XIII reiterated this imperative when he taught that "to treat all religions alike" is to "adopt a line of action that will lead to godlessness."[7]

A New "Unity":
The so-called "Holy Ghost Breakdown," mentioned by Kevin Ranaghan, occurred when *Protestant* Bob Mumford was "preaching" to the 50,000. At one point, the entire football stadium suddenly erupted into an extended cheering, "praise-frenzy" that lasted more than a quarter of an hour. This, the charismatics claim, was the Holy Spirit at work on the assembly.

Such confusion is astonishing and justifies Bishop McKinney's fears about Catholics being misled if they are not "firmly grounded in doctrine." In truth, a Catholic can only interpret this "breakdown" as springing from either natural (earthly) or preternatural (demonic) causes. The Holy Ghost had nothing to do with this Pentecostal eruption because, in the objective order, non-Catholics cannot be "filled to overflowing with the Holy Ghost." Non-Catholics live in denial of many of the Divine truths revealed by God and, in the objective order, cannot be considered to be in the state of grace. This is why Venerable Pope Pius IX taught in his *Syllabus* that it is an error to even entertain good hope for the salvation of those who live and die outside the Catholic Church.[8]

Yet, the charismatics interpret this natural pep-rally enthusiasm as "the Holy Ghost moving through the crowd" — a crowd where the vast majority were non-Catholics. Charismatics also choose to forget that Satan could easily instigate such a jubilant "breakdown" in order

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to deceive “even the elect.”

In this case, deception was the name of the game. The result of this interfaith conference was the growing conviction that the unifying factor of Christ’s true faithful is Pentecostalism, and that no single denomination can claim to be His One True Church.

The Protestant Pentecostal, Dr. Vinson Syman from Oklahoma City, rejoiced that “three streams of Pentecostalism have come together tonight because we are one in the spirit.” At a press conference later on, Syman said that regarding Church unity, “the place to start is with common spirituality,” and that “the number-one thread that holds us together is the baptism of the spirit.”[9]

In the book *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, Charles Nien Kirchen wrote:

*”As the flowering of first-generation charismatic conciliarism, Kansas City was a watershed in the evolution of the movement, which marked the triumph, at least temporarily, of an inclusive ‘renewal from within’ strategy over an exclusive, restorationist ecclesiology.”[10]

By “exclusivist, restorationist ecclesiology,” the author asserts that no single denomination can claim to be the one true religion established by Our Lord.

At the Kansas City conference, Cardinal Suenens behaved in a fashion that would bolster this new brand of unity. In *The Pied Piper of the Pentecostal Movement*, the anti-Catholic Wilson Ewin wrote in disgust that at this conference, Suenens, Thomas Zimmerman (Assemblies of God), J.O. Patterson (Church of God in Christ), and Archbishop Bill Burner (Anglican) “stood together before the vast multitude in an unprecedented demonstration of unity.”[11]

Yet this interfaith carnival was nothing new to Cardinal Suenens, who had already established himself as an ecumenical globe-trotter. If St. Paul’s motto was “woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel,” Cardinal Suenens’ motto could have been, “woe to me if I do not preach ecumenism.”

Ecumenism and Dialogue:
As has been noted, Suenens was one of the principal architects of the Vatican II revolution and was a militant propagator of collegiality, ecumenism, and “dialogue with the world.” In the 1963 book *Twelve Council Fathers*, which contains interviews with a dozen prominent Cardinals at Vatican II, Cardinal Suenens clearly outlines that ecumenism was the pivotal

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principle directing the Church's new course:

*"By our attention to the fact of the collegiality of the bishops, we will show the Orthodox that we are thinking along a line that means much to them. Moreover, by stressing the role of the laity in the Church, we will assure the Protestants that we hold something very dear to them — the sharing of the people in the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Second Vatican Council will be an act of charity to our separated brethren — Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant — just as it will be an act of charity to Catholics in its return to the purity of the Gospel message."[12]

Putting aside the fact that the modus operandi of many heretics in Church history has been the alleged desire to "return to the purity of the Gospel message," one can easily see that dialogue and ecumenism was the driving force for Suenens who, as one of the four Cardinal moderators, wielded a tremendous influence at the Council.

In the book *Vatican II Revisited*, Bishop Aloysius Wycislo writes approvingly that Cardinal Suenens' thinking was deeply influenced by the liberal Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx.[13] It was Suenens who also provided the name *Lumen Gentium* (The Light of the Nations) for the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.[14] It was also given to Suenens to deliver a special opening address at the 2nd Session of Vatican II[15] after his old friend and close ally, Cardinal Montini, had been elected as Pope Paul VI.

The Church's "commitment to dialogue" is largely the result of Cardinal Suenens' influence. Bishop Wycislo writes that this theme of a "new openness to the world" seems to have sprung from a pastoral letter written by Suenens in early 1962 that fell into the hands of John XXIII. Pope John was quite enamored with the pastoral letter and asked Suenens to develop it as a theme for the upcoming Council.[16] This suggests that the Rhine had already begun to flow into the Tiber even before the Council began.[17]

The theme of Cardinal Suenens' pastoral letter became fully developed in one of the most radical and controversial of all Council documents, *Gaudium et Spes*, "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." This lengthy document breathes the "spirit of Vatican II" like none other.

Michael Davies, the current president of Una Voce International, remarked that *Gaudium et Spes* is so un-Catholic in its ethos that it is difficult to understand how any self-respecting bishop could have signed it.[18]

Davies succinctly summarized that the novel spirit of this document not only conflicts with past Church teaching but that it is also utopian and unrealistic:

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"*Gaudium et Spes* is pervaded by the notion that all men are basically men of good will, seeking the truth and anxious to do good. Far from the notion of conflict between the City of God and the City of Man (as set forth, for example, in the writings of St. Augustine and reiterated in Pope Leo XIII's condemnation of Freemasonry, *Humani Generis* — Ed.), this constitution envisages a future where the two cities work together for the common good of mankind."[19]

Though *Gaudium et Spes* deserves an essay all by itself, it suffices to mention that the liberals themselves admit that this "Suenens-inspired" document is in direct contradiction to a consistent line of Papal teaching. The progressives celebrate *Gaudium et Spes* as a "counter syllabus"[20] — referring to the *Syllabus* of Pius IX.

Cardinal Suenens himself, in an indiscreet cockle-doodle of triumph, proclaimed:

*"Vatican II is the French Revolution in the Church … One cannot understand the French or Russian Revolutions unless one knows something of the old regimes which they brought to an end … It is the same in Church affairs: a reaction can only be judged in relation to the state of things that preceded it."[21]

What preceded it, of course, was that magnificent hierarchical constitution culminating in the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on earth. Suenens continued:

*"The Second Vatican Council marked the end of an epoch; and if we stand back from it a little more, we see it marked the end of a series of epochs, the end of an age."[21]

One of the many signs of this "end of the age" was the false idea that the Catholic Church was no longer to be the teacher of mankind but simply one of the many wise contributors to the building of a better earth — a new universal brotherhood. *Gaudium et Spes* and the Council's Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) were the primary documents that succeeded in eclipsing the Church's God-given commission to "Go forth and teach" with "go forth and dialogue."

Inter-Communion and Communion in the Hand:
Whether Suenens was in Belgium or on one of his many trips abroad, he was always the ambassador of dialogue, ecumenism, and Pentecostalism. His autobiography, *Memories and Hopes*, contains a colorful collection of various ecumenical meetings with false religions all around the world. Yet Suenens did more than simply meet and pray with adherents to various man-made creeds. It seems that the Cardinal was not beyond giving some sort of

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"Communion" to Protestants. This most shocking display of interdenominational, Pentecostal sacrilege was related by a well-known British Protestant minister who joyfully attended the event:

*"In June of this year (1976), eighty Charismatic Leaders met at Malines in Belgium. A report says, 'There was Holy Communion each day.' On Wednesday afternoon, I had the privilege of being present at the Sacrament in the Cardinal's private chapel in his residence. He preached from St. John Ch. 15, greeted and hugged us all, and each of us received from him bread and wine. On the Friday in the Cathedral, we gathered together for Holy Communion. A Protestant from Northern Ireland read the Epistle; a Jesuit priest read from St. John's Gospel; Tom Smail, a Presbyterian, preached a mighty word. The Cardinal broke bread and again served us all with bread and wine. In that service, there was prophecy, tongues and interpretation, open and free prayer, singing in and with the Spirit, and we concluded by singing and dancing up and down the aisle — Professors, priests, pastors, and the Cardinal, hands united and hearts united in the spirit of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, pouring into us such joy and love. I never thought I would see or participate in such a miracle. The Cardinal was Cardinal Suenens."[22]

It should come as no surprise, then, that it was Cardinal Suenens who was primarily responsible for establishing the sacrilege of communion in the hand within the Church. In the December 1995 issue of *Christian Order*, Dr. Alice von Hildebrand wrote:

*"Communion in the hand is another case in point. This practice was first introduced in Belgium by Cardinal Suenens in flagrant disobedience to the rubrics given by the Holy See. Not wishing to publicly reprove a brother bishop, Paul VI decided to lift the ban prohibiting Communion in the hand and left the decision to individual bishops. Overnight, the practice was universalized …"[23]

Yet Suenens was not only notorious for collegializing the hierarchy, desecrating the sacraments, and ecumenizing the Church; he also had a hand in tampering with religious life.

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Footnotes:

1. Dwyer's criticism appeared in an interview published in the *National Catholic Register*, July 21, 1974, and is cited from Joseph Fitcher's *The Catholic Cult of the Paraclete*, Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York, 1974, p. 40.
2. Op. cit., page 40. Original quote from Bishop Joseph McKinney appeared in an interview published in *New Covenant*, September 1971, pp. 10-16.
3. North American Renewal Service Committee web page, http://pcti.org/narrec/zhrtn.
4. Audio cassette, *Witness* by Kevin Ranaghan, recorded at the 1997 30th Anniversary Charismatic Conference in Pittsburgh and sold by Franciscan University at Steubenville.
5. Bert Ghezzi, *New Covenant*, November 1977, Editor's Page.
6. See the 1926 Encyclical *Mortalium Animos* by Pope Pius XI, which condemns all

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interfaith, ecumenical activity. Available from Catholic Family News.
7. Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas*, On Human Liberty, cited from *The Kingship of Christ and Organized Naturalism*, Father Denis Fahey, Regina Publications, Dublin, 1943, p. 8.
8. It is an error to believe that "Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ." Proposition #17, Pope Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, 1864, as cited in *Dogmatic Canons and Decrees*, p. 191.
9. North American Renewal Service Committee web page, http://pcti.org/narrec/zhrtn.
10. Taken from the essay "Conflicting Visions of the Past" by Charles Nien Kitchen, contained in the book *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, edited by Karla Poewe, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, SC, 1994, p. 129.
11. Op. cit., page 34.
12. Abbot, *Twelve Council Fathers*, p. 41.
13. Wycislo, Bishop Aloysius, *Vatican II Revisited: Reflections By One Who Was There*, Alba House, New York, 1978, p. 32.
14. Ibid., p. 42.
15. Cardinal Suenens delivered his speech "There was a Man Sent By God named John," *Memories and Hopes*, p. 387ff.
16. Ibid., pp. 142-143.
17. Peter Steinfels wrote in Suenens' *New York Times* obituary that "Vatican II's preparatory commission had produced dozens of proposed texts, many of them rigid and restrictive in tone … Cardinal Suenens sent Pope John XXIII a critique of these texts and earned his approval to prepare an alternative agenda for the Council … The Belgian Cardinal's presentation of this alternative approach during the Council's first session was a turning point in the bishops' deliberations … and essentially set the agenda for the entire Council." — "Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, A Vatican II Leader, Dies at 91," *The New York Times*, Tuesday, May 7, 1996, Sec. B, p. 7.
18. Audio cassette, *Comments on Vatican II*, Michael Davies interviewed by Joseph Ferrara, Keep the Faith, Inc., 10 Audrey Place, Fairfield, NJ 07004.
19. Davies, Michael, *Pope John's Council*, Angelus Press, Kansas City, 1977, pp. 184-185.
20. Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1987, p. 382.
21. Lefebvre, *Open Letter to Confused Catholics*, Fowler Wright Books, Hertfordshire, England, 1986, p. 105.
22. A letter from the Very Reverend Lord George Macleod of the Church of Scotland, published in *Faith*, November-December 1976, p. 28 — cited from Michael Davies, *Pope Paul's New Mass*, p. 216.
23. von Hildebrand, Dr. Alice, "The Sacredness of Tradition," *Christian Order*, London, December 1995.

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