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The Why of Discernment Rediscovering the Church's Neglected Gift

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Discernment has fallen on hard times. The word "Berean" from Acts 17:11, which once connoted nobility and praiseworthiness, is now used by many to describe someone who is small-minded, mean-spirited, divisive, narrow, and even pharisaical. Good is being called evil, just as Isaiah predicted (Isaiah 5:20).

NOT OLD AT ALL

The decline of discernment paralleled the rise of the modern Charismatic Movement-Charismatic Renewal (CM-CR) in the early 1960s. That movement emphasized emotion and experience at the expense of doctrine. Experience alone was supposed to bring unity among all religions. This is why, regardless of our denomination, we could all pretend to be one happy family.

The emphasis was on "happy." We were so happy we could forget our differences and that some were teaching differing ways of salvation. Majors were discounted while minor



issues were magnified well beyond their significance.

The writers of *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* admitted:

"As an experiential movement, CM-CR has always been strong on faith-affirmation and short on critical reflection. Charismatic faith strongly upholds divine intervention in miraculous occurrences, supernatural guidance, and prophetic messages. But while the need for discernment is widely recognized, charismatic discernment is mostly intuitive and generally lacks an adequate underlying theology, particularly of the relationship between the

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