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PREACHING AMONG FILIPINO PENTECOSTALS AND
EXPOSITION THROUGH TESTIMONIAL HERMENEUTICS: A
POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PGCAG TO
EVANGELICALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

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1. Preliminary Remarks

The Pentecostals in the Philippines see “the first job of the pastor” is essentially “the ministry of preaching.”¹ Preaching is also an avenue for a minister of the gospel to share his testimonies of his experiences with God. The most common illustrations in sermons are the testimonies of the preacher. The experience of Spirit baptism guides the Filipino Pentecostal preaching in their verbal homiletical skills.² A preacher’s “own personal experiences will come into the picture” as the proclamation is done.³ It is hard to disagree with the idea that “Filipino Pentecostals must begin to recognize that context is always local.”⁴ The uniqueness of Filipino Pentecostal preaching is the sensitivity to the needs of the congregation who are listening to the message spoken. Eleazer E. Javier, who for many years the General Superintendent of the

¹Eleazer E. Javier, *The Work of the Pastor* (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1989), 168.

²See Roli G. dela Cruz, “A Historical-Doctrinal Perspective of Filipino Pentecostal Preaching,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 2 (July 2007): 192-217.

³Javier, *Work*, 176.

⁴Joseph R. Suico, “Pentecostalism: Towards a Movement of Social Transformation in the Philippines,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 1, no. 1 (March 1999): 18.

Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (PGCAG), perceives that “the needs of people in general and your people [in the local church] in particular provide rich data for appreciation of spiritual truths.”⁵ Furthermore, Javier maintains an important principle in preaching: “Keep the individual and his needs in focus when you apply truth to the life situations of your people.”⁶ The total dependence on God’s power in preaching is crucial.⁷ Javier also believes that there should be sensitivity in the part of the preacher to meet the needs of the people.⁸ The Spirit-baptism and the experience of the anointing of the Holy Spirit is the key in effective preaching.

World-wide Pentecostals in general, including the constituency of the Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (PGCAG), take it for granted that when the disciples experienced the gift of the Spirit during Pentecost in Acts 2, they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them the utterance. Filipino Pentecostal preachers would certainly appreciate Craig S. Keener when he states that “if Jesus’ followers could be inspired to speak for God in a language that they did not know ([Acts] 2:4), how much more would they be prepared to speak for God in a language that they did know ([Acts] 1:8)?”⁹ Tongues and preaching are both Spirit uttered words. The Pentecostal understanding of the phenomenon of tongues sees a straightforward connection of contemporary experience of the outpouring of the Spirit with Luke’s description in Acts within the context of the fulfillment of Joel’s

⁵Javier, *Work*, 176.

⁶Javier, *Work*, 176.

⁷See Roli G. dela Cruz, “Missions Endeavor through the Gifts of the Spirit: The Reality of its Dynamic Power,” *Year bang eul hyang ha yeo* [Korean title] *Toward the Tribes in the World* [English meaning] (May-June 1999): 16-21. This article is a Korean-English Diglot.

⁸Javier, *Work*, 177, notes that: “Throughout the week, these people struggle through life, trying to make a living. Some of them are struggling desperately for recognition, acceptance, or success. Young and old alike are faced with temptations. If you stand behind the pulpit and show no enthusiasm or if you assume that the people are all extremely hostile, you can imagine what your approach will do to them.”

⁹Craig S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 194.

prophecy. Why? Because the Pentecostals still experience the Spirit of Pentecost. Hence, the PGCAG as a Pentecostal group puts stress on this experience. Preaching about the Spirit filled experience in the Pentecostal pulpits is nothing to be embarrassed about at all.¹⁰

It follows then that the depiction of Luke about Joel 2:28-32 prophecy is believed as still being fulfilled today. This is an unquestioned concept in the Pentecostal perception of Acts 2. Filipino Pentecostals expound and preach the interpretation of the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 using their testimonial experiences of being filled with the Spirit and uttering tongues. The Bible is alive! This kind of hermeneutical practice of the use of personal testimonies in biblical exposition during preaching is very common among PGCAG pastors. Contemporary experience of Spirit-baptism is used as a major tool for interpretation of the Bible during preaching. The experience of the apostolic church in Acts 2 is still for today. The apostolic interpretation the Spirit's coming in Acts 2 is parallel to current proclamation of the outpouring of the same Spirit in our day and age which gave birth to the Pentecostalism in the Philippines.¹¹ Hence, the central thesis of this paper is that preaching among the Filipino Pentecostals and exposition through testimonial hermeneutics cannot be separated. And that this inseparability is a positive contribution of the PGCAG to Evangelical preaching in the Philippines.¹²

¹⁰A good representative of this kind of perspective is the former General Superintendent of the PGCAG, Eli Javier, "The Pentecostal Legacy: A Personal Memoir," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005): 289-310.

¹¹The experience of the Spirit of God led the pioneer Filipino Pentecostals residing in the United States to go back to the Philippines and share their testimonies through their preaching before World War II. See Trinidad E. Seleky, "Six Filipinos and One American: Pioneers of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines," edited and introduced by Lemuel Engcoy, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 1 (2001): 119-29.

¹²This paper is not intending to challenge Espiritu's study of the biblical interpretation of the Filipino conservative Evangelicals in light of Gadamer's hermeneutical theory; neither Exiomo's research on the Filipino Christian and Missionary Alliance biblical interpretation using Ricoeur's textual theory. Rather, my investigation is meant to complement as well as compliment their studies. See Daniel L. Espiritu, "A Case for Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutical Description" (M.A. thesis, Saint Louis University, 1997); and Jonathan V. Exiomo, "The Significance of Paul Ricoeur's Theory of Text and

2. All Believers in Pentecostal Understanding are Prophetic Witnesses

One of the claims of the Pentecostals is that God intends for all of his people in the church to be filled with the Spirit. The purpose is to be witnesses for Christ in the last days. The early church perceived themselves as an eschatological Christian community. They experienced the prophetic Spirit for the purpose of being Christ's witnesses to the world.¹³ Acts is a major source of understanding the Spirit in the church. Hence, functionally speaking, for Luke, the experience of the Spirit according to Acts 2 designates every believer of Christ as a prophet—a prophetic witnesses of the gospel. R. B. Dillard, although a non-Pentecostal, supports the view of the Pentecostals when he points out that:

Protestant theology is accustomed to speaking of the "priesthood of all believers"; perhaps in light of Acts 2 and Joel 3:1-5 [2:28-32], we must also speak of the "prophethood of all believers." The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost inaugurated a new age, the age when Moses' prayer is realized and all God's people are endued with the Spirit of prophecy. The possession of the Spirit would never again be the restricted preserve of a few; all who call on the name of the Lord (3:5 [2:32]) now have the equipage and the obligation incumbent upon prophets to bear witness to their generation. This endowment with the Spirit of prophecy belongs to the general office of the church--rich and poor, young and old, male and female, the privilege of

Interpretation for Selected Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines Pastors' Orientations to the Bible Taken as Religious Text Necessitating the Task of Interpretation" (Th.D. diss., Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, 2002). Exiomo's revised work has been recently published with the title *Interpreting the Text: Towards a Filipino Biblical Hermeneutics from a Ricoeurian Perspective* (Quezon City, Philippines: Alliance Graduate School, 2008).

¹³See the discussion of the connection of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism according to Acts 2 with the witness of the Church to the world in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (1988), s.v. "Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic Hermeneutics," by F. L. Arrington, 388.

proclaiming God's truth to a waiting world is not the province of the special office alone.¹⁴

In other words, the Pentecostal hermeneutical view of the pertinent passages of Acts 2 and Joel 2:28-32 has made a positive contribution to the Protestant theology of the priesthood of all believers. The Pentecostals, based on their hermeneutical experience of Acts 2 gave birth to a complementary new model for the contemporary church that all believers are prophets. This is a significant input to the Evangelicalism in the Philippines which emphasizes the evangelism of the whole country. The Filipino Pentecostal exposition of Acts 2 and Joel 2:28-32 using testimonies is appropriately practiced in a hermeneutical endeavor during the preaching from the Bible. Roger Stronstad, coming from his Pentecostal perspective argues for the model of prophethood of all believers:

The Reformers would have served the church better if they would have chosen a different model than the priesthood of all believers to describe the people of God. This alternative model is the prophethood of all believers. The advantage of this model is that it is an authentic and explicit portrait of the apostolic church. The prophethood of all believers is Luke's description of the eschatological people of God, upon whom Jesus, the eschatological anointed prophet, has poured forth the Spirit. Luke's vision of the prophethood of all believers is given biblical definition and delineation in an ancient oracle of the prophet Joel which finds fulfillment beginning with the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.¹⁵

¹⁴Raymond Bryan Dillard, "Joel," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 295.

¹⁵Roger Stronstad, "The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology," in *Contemporary Issues in Pentecostal Theology*, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary First Annual Pentecostal Lectureship Series (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1993), 1.

Dillard and Stronstad are helpful for the Filipino Pentecostals. They provide the contemporary context of a Christian revival movement in the Philippines which is valid and faithful to the New Testament model of the Christian community. On the one hand, the context of the Reformers, i.e., their struggle against the Roman Catholic doctrine and hierarchy of priesthood, led them to develop a model of priesthood of all believers to characterize the people of God in their relationship to their sovereign Lord (see 1 Pet. 2:5,9; cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). On the other hand, the Pentecostal search for a model for the Spirit filled church, led them to propose a model of prophethood of all believers in relationship to the lost world. What would be the essential difference between the two models? The answer lies on the significance of the charismatic vocation of the Pentecostal understanding of the church. This perception of the charismatic vocation of the church should be understood in a broader way in the Philippines and in Asia, especially in the Pentecostal proclamation of the meaning of the gospel to contemporary Asian setting.¹⁶ Additionally, the equality of male and female, as well as young and old is included in the fulfillment of the charismatic service of the Christian community. The Protestant theology of priesthood of all believers emphasizes the access of believers to God. The Pentecostal theology of prophethood of all believers stresses the anointing of the believers for service according to Acts 2 with wider implications for Asia.¹⁷ This entails that both of the lady and male pastors as well as neophyte and veteran preachers can claim the same empowerment of the Spirit.

2.1. Availability of the Spirit Empowerment

The PGCAG appreciates and applies the experience of the Spirit-baptism in terms of the vocational task of the church. This experience

¹⁶As Simon Chan, "Asian Pentecostalism, Social Concern and the Ethics of Conformism," *Transformation* 11, no. 1 (1994): 32, puts it: "The Pentecostal phenomenon in Asia cannot be properly understood without considering the larger religious context and in more recent years, the socio-economic context of Asia."

¹⁷See the discussion of Amos Yong, "The Future of Asian Pentecostal Theology: An Asian American Assessment," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007): 22-43.

validates that the significance of Spirit-baptism is relevant for every believer's duty to witness for Christ and proclaim the gospel. The notion of the link between the Spirit-baptism and witnessing for Christ is the thrust of Fernando Basilio's view, when he points out that:

Thus, their experience served the purpose of [Acts] 1:8. Put differently, the very act of speaking with tongues was their baptism; and their baptism was itself their act of witnessing. The reason for this is obvious from the narrative: the crowd was drawn to the disciples on the day of Pentecost principally as a result of their hearing the disciples exalt God in 'the language in which we were born.' Hence, the Spirit's activity worked both ways. He inspired the disciples to speak in the 'tongues' of the crowd, thereby making them Christ's witnesses; and He used the same phenomenon (including Peter's sermon...) to bring the people to a saving knowledge of the Messiah.¹⁸

Accordingly, PGCAG congregations should be aware and, at the same time, motivated that the experience of the prophetic Spirit authenticates the call to all Spirit filled believers to witness for Christ boldly. This Christian witness is the real prophetic tradition which God ordained. The Pentecostal experience is for service.

The idea of the empowering of the Spirit for ministering based in Acts 2, which is provided for the eschatological Christian community to obtain, is the positive involvement of the Pentecostal theology to a larger aspect of Evangelical theology. For even if the Evangelical theology may assume that the empowering of the Spirit is available for the church, then it is the experience of the Spirit that should substantiate the theology of the biblical text. The Pentecostal experience makes all believers as prophets by function. This claim is confirmed by the reality of the prophetic Spirit in the lives of those Christians who experience this empowering. The Filipino Pentecostal encounter of the contemporary outpouring of the Spirit verifies Luke's theological motif of Spirit-baptism for empowerment of the believers for the intention of

¹⁸Fernando Basilio, "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit: With what "tongue" does one speak?," *Bethel Light* (February 1995), 11.

bringing the Christian witness to those who are lost. Consequently, the prophetic essence of the Spirit is for the advantage of all believers.

2.2. Preaching with the Testimonial Experience

It is notable that “testimony time” is a regular part of the Filipino Pentecostal church services. Why? It is due to the understanding of the Bible which is directly interpreted through the experience of God in life. Personal testimony of church members and testimonial preaching of pastors are central to the Filipino Pentecostal liturgy.¹⁹ Even for an academic article, Manuel Bagalawis started his first paragraph using a testimony of divine healing to expound on his subject matter of “power in Acts 1:8.”²⁰ There is no embarrassment for Filipino Pentecostals to give testimonies of God’s work in their lives when they interpret and expound the scriptures. Moreover, the use of testimonies in the exposition of a biblical passage makes the preaching alive, relevant and timely. Pentecostal congregations are attentive listeners! The Pentecostal preachers are sensitive. The perceived needs of a congregation guide the choice of Scriptures and the testimonial stories of the Pentecostal speaker wherein the common people can relate to and find edification and comfort that the Word of God can interpret their situations in life.

The study of Koichi Kitano in the 1980s on the ecumenical movement in the Philippines that involved some PGCAG pastors is instructive. One of his provisional and very cautious conclusions is that the Charismatic movement’s “experience [of] the charismatic gifts, instead of trying to reconcile the theological issues among Catholics [and] Protestants, has contributed to the development of ecumenicity in the movement.”²¹ In this particular setting of the Charismatic

¹⁹See Jae Yong Jeong, “Filipino Pentecostal Spirituality: An Investigation into Filipino Indigenous Spirituality and Pentecostalism in the Philippines” (Th.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2001), 155-62.

²⁰Manuel A. Bagalawis, “‘Power’ in Acts 1:8: Effective Witnessing Through Signs and Wonders,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 3, no. 1 (2001): 1-13.

²¹Koichi Kitano, “Socio-Religious Distance Between Charismatics and Other Religious Group Members: A Case Study of the Philippines in the 1980s,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 5, no. 2 (2003): 242.

movement the exposition of the Scripture through different testimonies of the speakers provides a common ground of the experience of the Spirit. Alex Fuentes also notes that the hotel churches or cinema fellowships of the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups among the Filipinos became effective.²² The PGCAG pastors participated in this ministry strategy. The regular part of the hotel ministry program of the Filipino Pentecostals is the testimony time. The pastor or speaker during the worship service also expounds the biblical passage for meditation using testimonies of God's goodness and faithfulness. These experiences, whether by church members, the preacher's family or stories read from books, are conflated and related to the congregation during preaching to interpret the Scriptures and at the same time meet the needs of people. Wonsuk Ma captures the typical Filipino Pentecostal preaching in a provincial PGCAG congregation in his visit to All the Gospel Church in San Fernando City, La Union, Philippines in June 4, 2006:

However, this portion of the service is dedicated to sharing the Word of God. And typically, although not on this particular day perhaps due to time constraints, this portion is further divided into two periods: testimonies by several members of the congregation, normally not prearranged, and the proclamation of the Word by the preacher. Pastor Conrado Lumahan reads almost the entire chapter of Acts 2. Noting that it is Pentecost Sunday, his message traces the appearance of God in the Old Testament through "fire," and then the presence of the "tongues of fire" on the day of Pentecost. Frequently repeated are words such as "fire," and "empowerment," and placing emphasis on the "empowering aspect" of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The preaching was quite long, almost an hour. And yet, the response of the congregation was active with an occasional "Amen," as well as various expressions, such as the nodding of their heads in agreement and clapping their hands. In fact, toward the end of the sermon, the audience enthusiastically responded in unison with "Amen." The sermon is concluded with the entire congregation standing and joining in the

²²See Alex B. Fuentes, "A Church in a Neutral Turf: A History of the Hotel Ministry in the Philippines," *Journal of Asian Mission* 6, no. 1 (2004): 81-96.

pastor's prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. The prayer eventually turns into a communal prayer as the audience is divided by threes and fours and prays for one another, particularly for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.²³

The PGCAG contributed well to the preaching of the gospel in the ecumenical settings, the hotel ministries and the provincial environment.

It is noteworthy that the use of experiential testimonies for exposition of the Bible is always an important element in their preaching, especially about the Spirit-baptism.

3. Christian Mandate for Filipino Pentecostals is a Matter of Spirit

It is noteworthy that the current experience of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit creates awareness among the Filipino Pentecostals to be devoted to the missiological directive that is handed over to the church even in terms of giving money to the work of the Lord.²⁴ Generosity is connected with the Pentecostal experience. To focus on the Great Commission is not adequate without being conscious that God intend to accomplish it through the church. An implication of Joel 2:28-32 as used in Acts 2 is the eschatological mission of the church to be Christ's faithful witness to the world.²⁵ This witness for the Filipino Pentecostalism is communicated through their life testimonies. Furthermore, the declaration of God's salvation and miracles is a feature of this kind of testimonial preaching.²⁶ The faithful

²³Wonsuk Ma, "Pentecostal Worship in Asia: Its Theological Implications and Contributions," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007): 139-40.

²⁴Carmelita P. Gallardo, "Pentecost Now and Our Mission," in Treasurer's Corner, *Intercom*, June 1995, 9, after quoting Acts 2:17 encourages the PGCAG believers who are Spirit-baptized to see the vision of supporting the PGCAG building project and missionaries.

²⁵According to the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (1988), s.v. "Evangelism," by L. Grant McClung, Jr., 285, the "biblical/theological foundations for evangelism" among Pentecostals is the understanding in particular of the outpouring of the Spirit in such passages as Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-17 in relation to Acts 1:8 and 2:1-4.

witness of the church is done through the anointed work of the Spirit.²⁷

This means that for the PGCAG the fulfillment of the great commission for the church in the Philippines is that the work could be done through the power of the Spirit alone.²⁸ The mandate of Christ can be done through the empowerment of the Spirit even if there are limitations of the material resources.

3.1. Honorable Paradigm for Filipino Pentecostal Preachers

The report given in Acts 2 that the Spirit of prophecy was poured out reveals that the group of believers received the anointing of God to be a prophetic community. Just like during the times of kings, priests and prophets the anointing of God brings the Spirit upon the lives of those people who responded to the call. The Assemblies of God, being a Pentecostal denomination, affirm that God gives the prophetic Spirit to all who respond to his call—which makes the concept of anointing for service inclusive.²⁹

The experience of the Spirit brings accountability. It places upon the PGCAG the duty to teach and model, not only to the Pentecostals

²⁶See Ma, *passim*.

²⁷Cf. Alton Garrison, "Evangelism in the Nineties," in *Pan Asia Pacific Conference Papers*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 16-19, 1990 (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1990), 99, who points out to the Assemblies of God leaders in Asia-Pacific that: "World evangelization is an impossible task without supernatural capabilities." Garrison, 99-100, made an exposition about "the mandate" of the church, "the means" of God's purpose, "the messengers" of the Lord's work and "the money" needed for evangelizing the world for the nineties. Then, Garrison, 100, concludes that: "Teamwork plus supernatural capabilities will result in a Decade of Harvest."

²⁸See the appeal of Ernest A. Reb, "Pentecostal Perpetuation: Evangelism--Sermon Delivered During the 25th Anniversary Convention Held at Cebu City," *The Pentecostal Voice*, June-July 1965, 10. Reb remarks: "I want to be very clear. The only hope of the Philippines is in the true positive powerful preaching of Jesus Christ, under the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost."

²⁹Richard Dresselhaus, *The Assemblies of God--Our Distinctive Doctrine: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 15, points out that Spirit-baptism is "an all-inclusive promise of universal dimension" which means that it is "promised to every Christian believer."

but to the rest of Christianity, the meaning of a life that is molded into the accomplishment of the church mandate in the end times.³⁰ In other words, the experience of Pentecost entails a big responsibility. As Richard D. Israel remarks:

Some questions which arise from the meaning of the Pentecost event described in Acts 2 include the following. What kind of lives should be lived in light of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit endowment? How does the eschatological existence in the Age of the Spirit impinge on our conduct? What does it mean to live a prophetic life as a result of Spirit-baptism? Certainly the Church is a Church in mission empowered by the Spirit, and it operates under the certainty of the coming of the Day of the Lord. But what does it mean "to call upon the name of the Lord"? What kind of community existence does that imply? What these questions attempt to do is to ask whether or not Pentecostal ethic ought not to be grounded in the Pentecostal experience. If so, then our task is to build from Pentecostal experience to Pentecostal ethic. Perhaps it is time to unite *mythos* and *ethos* for Pentecostalism and extend the significance of the Pentecostal experience from faith to practice.³¹

If Israel is correct, the Pentecostal ethic should be built on the Pentecostal experience. Put differently, Paul W. Lewis concludes: "Pentecostal ethics can not be divorced from the work of the Spirit through the baptism of the Spirit or *charismata* within a person's life."³²

The Pentecostal experience of Spirit-baptism incorporates the prophetic work of the believers. Thus, the preciseness of the significance of Spirit-baptism to Pentecostal ethic is to be an empowered witness for Christ, every time and every place, similar to the early disciples in Acts.

³⁰Cf. Thomas Zimmerman, "The Pentecostal Movement's Responsibility to the Present-Day Outpouring," *The Pentecostal Voice*, February 1965, 4-5, 9.

³¹Richard D. Israel, "Joel 2:28-32 (3:1-5 MT): Prism for Pentecost," in *Charismatic Experiences in History*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1985), 13-4.

³²Paul W. Lewis, "A Pneumatological Approach to Virtue Ethics," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1, no. 1 (1998): 60.

Stronstad is correct in his understanding of the nature of the early church in relationship with the present time church:

There are clear implications from Luke's charismatic theology for the contemporary church. If the gift of the Spirit was charismatic or vocational for Jesus and the early church, so it ought to have a vocational dimension in the experience of God's people today. In other words, if they needed the anointing-baptism of the Spirit, the leading of the Spirit and the empowering of the Spirit to render their ministries effective, we do as well. If their vocation was prophetic, so ours is to be prophetic. If Jesus was the charismatic Christ, and the disciples were a charismatic community, so the church in our generation is also charismatic, whether or not it functions at the level of our charismatic potential. Luke-Acts challenges the church in our generation, both individually and collectively, to function up to the level of its charismatic heritage which it derives from Jesus and the disciples. Only then will the contemporary church be a prophethood of believers in reality as well as in promise.³³

The Filipino Pentecostalism has something to share to the evangelical Christianity as an ethical paradigm. Put it this way, the Evangelical faith in the Philippines inherited the justification doctrine from the Reformed faith and the holiness emphasis from the Wesleyan belief. The Protestants reemphasized the salvific work of the Spirit due to their fight against the Roman Catholic Church for the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This is also the case in the Philippines. The Holiness movement rediscovered the sanctifying work of the Spirit because of their struggle against the secular world's tendency to sin. The issue of worldliness has become a problem in the Filipino church. And so, the Pentecostal movement is a reminder to the Evangelicals in the Philippines that the Holy Spirit is not only active "to save" and "to sanctify" people but also "to empower" them for to preach the gospel. Thus, the New Testament understanding of the Spirit's work is highlighted by the different Christian traditions that put stress on their

³³Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio, Philippines: APTS Press, 1995), 167.

understandings of the Spirit's role in "salvation," "sanctification" and "service."³⁴ As Stronstad once again succinctly puts it:

The key is to recognize that the Reformed, Wesleyan and Pentecostal traditions, with their soteriological, holiness and charismatic emphases, respectively, are each legitimate expressions of the diversity of the New Testament witness of the Holy Spirit. The challenge which then comes to each tradition is to recognize that the emphasis in the pneumatology of other traditions is not contradictory to its own emphasis, but is complementary. Consequently, each tradition then faces the Biblical mandate to embrace the full unity of New Testament pneumatology and to produce a doctrine of the Holy Spirit which is fully canonical, neither denying nor despising any dimension of the role of the Spirit in Salvation, Sanctification and Service.³⁵

It is important, therefore, for the PGCAG to draw attention to the understanding of Acts 2 in terms of awareness and inspiration that the Pentecostal experience should be incorporated in a life of righteousness and holiness as Stronstad insinuates.³⁶ The New Testament disciples obeyed Christ's missiological mandate and lived righteous and holy lives. For this reason, the Filipino Pentecostal preaching requires an emphasis on a life of righteousness, holiness and powerful testimony. The ethical standard, therefore, for those who experience the Spirit-baptism is a pure life—whether they are in their personal vicinities or across the miles.

3.2. Motivating Spirit for Filipino Pentecostal Witness

³⁴See Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, foreword by Clark H. Pinnock (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1984), 83.

³⁵Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology*, 192.

³⁶As Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* [PGCAG] (1980), 5-6, under doctrine number nine, "Sanctification," promulgates: "The Scriptures teach a life of 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord' (Heb. 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy' (1 Pet. 1:15,16)."

Due to the awareness of genuine Spirit anointing there is that God-given motivational force for every Spirit-baptized believer to proclaim the message of the gospel. This message is expounded by the Filipino Pentecostals in terms of their testimonies on how the power of God can still be experienced today by those who will believe. The notion that every believer should encounter the empowering Spirit to be effective witnesses for the gospel brings the experience of those who believe in the contemporary experience of Spirit-baptism according to Acts 2 as applicable in this day and age.³⁷ In what sense is the experience applicable? The doctrine of the empowering of the believers for service in Acts creates a hunger for the reality of the biblical record to be experienced in the present.³⁸ As it is experienced in the Pentecostal movement, the missiological effort is clearly motivated by the belief and the experience that the Spirit-baptism is God's anointing for his church to preach Christ. The contemporary Pentecostal experience reminds the universal church as a whole that Christ has anointed his church to serve. F. L. Arrington succinctly describes the Pentecostal motive for evangelism:

Pentecostals have seen themselves as an eschatological community; they insist that these are the last days as proclaimed by Peter in Acts 2:19; they see this Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit as a harbinger of the Parousia and their baptism

³⁷Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology*, 78, points out the synthesis of Pentecostal experience and the interpretation of Acts: "Thus, a Pentecostal hermeneutic is a holistic hermeneutic, which differs from Protestant Biblical hermeneutics at two significant points; namely, charismatic experiential presuppositions and experiential verification."

³⁸The hunger for Spirit-baptism is encouraged in PGCAG. See Willard T. Cantelon, "Believing and Receiving the Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, February 1969, 8-9, concluding with a question: "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" See also Harold Kohl, "Make Room for the Holy Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, July 1966, 4, who after giving a statistical study of PGCAG adherents baptized in the Spirit points out that: "The statistic indicates that we should preach more on the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and on the vital experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Cf. Dresselhaus, 10, who makes an appeal: "All who are hungry for the 'filling' should be encouraged to trust the Lord for the overflowing evidence of that 'filling'; namely, speaking in other tongues."

in the Holy Spirit as an empowering for missionary labors to reap the final harvest before the *Eschaton*.³⁹

The PGCAG, together with the world-wide Pentecostal movement, sees the evangelistic effort in connection with the experience of the outpouring of God's Spirit as central to the preaching of the gospel in the end times. This is clear in the history and doctrine of PGCAG: Premillennial Pentecostalism is "a revival of faith in fundamental Christianity, a re-emphasis upon the charismatic gifts and their operation, an intense evangelistic fervor, and a great missionary zeal."⁴⁰

Such a remark about the outpouring of the Spirit in the PGCAG constituency is noteworthy: "Significantly, this mighty move of God, which generated the outpouring of His Spirit, may remain in the annals of the history of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines as one of the most epochal and significant renaissances."⁴¹ The Filipino Pentecostalism is a devotion expressed through zealotry in evangelism and missions. This devotion is underscored in the Filipino Pentecostal pulpits. There is a sense of urgency that is apparent among the PGCAG circle due to the soon return of the Lord. The devotion and the urgency are so real since the Spirit-baptism makes Joel prophecy a tangible eschatological experience.

The affirmative role of the eschatological awareness of the PGCAG is that the outpouring of the Spirit is the assurance that God is faithful to his promise that his presence will be with his church until the end of the age. Through the Spirit, Christ is constantly there in the church. The Lord of the harvest equips his people by the Spirit to proclaim the gospel with empowerment. The death and resurrection of Jesus who is still doing the miraculous is the content of the empowered Pentecostal eschatological preaching. This gives the PGCAG that enthusiasm to be

³⁹Arrington, "Historical Perspectives," 385.

⁴⁰*Southern Tagalog District Council 15th Annual Convention Souvenir Program and Directory* (Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines, March 21-23, 1995), 5.

⁴¹"Meeting the Challenge of the Bicol Region," *The Pentecostal Voice*, August 1967, 7.

zealous because the miraculous is still done by the Spirit among those who believe.⁴²

The experiential Pentecostal interpretation of Luke's use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 brings a few pertinent insights for preaching. It provides a faithful scriptural paradigm for interpreting the significance of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. This paradigm is a good model for the Pentecostal form of Spirit-baptism which is a reliable method of biblical reading. It also leads into a biblical-theological understanding for the idea of the prophethood of all believers. Acts 2 describes that those who received the gift of the Spirit became prophetic witnesses. And finally it creates positive reception for the Evangelicals to appreciate the Pentecostal sensitivity to the Great Commission in terms of doing it with their empowered witness. It is obvious that the Spirit-baptism is the impetus behind the powerful witnesses and worthy inspiration of the Pentecostals to evangelize the lost.

4. Joel's Prophecy in Filipino Pentecostalism is Experientially Fulfilled

Luke portrays in Acts 2 that the Joel 2:28-32 prophecy was realized at Pentecost. The context of Joel's oracle which promises the outpouring of the eschatological Spirit is universal. This means it is applicable to all of God's people. The assurance of the Spirit's coming is pertinent only to his chosen ones. However, Luke, taking for granted Judaism's perception of the prophetic Spirit, cites Joel's text purposely among the various Old Testament Scriptures that mention the Spirit. Luke's selection of Joel's prophecy in the Acts 2 Pentecost event is explicitly describing the fulfillment of the promise that gives emphasis on the vocational dimension of the Spirit's role. As a result, the Spirit poured out at Pentecost is understood in Joel's language—as eschatological, universal and prophetic—which is reflected in the Acts narrative.⁴³

⁴²The Filipino view of the miraculous is always connected with the spirits. See Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc., 1986), *passim*.

⁴³See the discussions of Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series* no. 6 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); and cf. the views of Max

Luke appropriated Peter's sermon in Acts 2 as the relevant interpretation of the Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit. In the portrayal of Luke, the church's empowering experience at Pentecost brought the gospel from Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the world. Hence, the Filipino Pentecostals maintain that to fulfill Christ's command for the church to be a witness for him in the last days is to be empowered by the Spirit for service as he himself instructed:

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Lk. 24:46-49 New International Version)

Following the heart of Jesus' instruction for the church to be Spirit filled and a witness to the world the PGCAG should create new innovative models to better understand Luke's use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 for Filipino Pentecostal preaching. As Acts 2 reinterprets the prophecy of Joel for its relevance to the Pentecost event, Filipino Pentecostal preaching should highlight the Pentecost account of Acts narrative to the current circumstances of the PGCAG as well as the Christianity in the Philippines. The preaching mode on the Pentecostal claim in Acts should be clearly articulated appropriating it to the present context of revival in the Philippines. The role of biblical exegesis and theological approach to the prophetic experience should prioritize the fresh expressions of Pentecostal preaching in terms of Filipino symbols and values.⁴⁴

Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series no. 9 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁴⁴For Filipino value system see Florentino T. Timbreza, *Filipino Values Today* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: National Bookstore, 2003); F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino Value System: A Cultural Definition*, Anthropology of the Filipino People IV (Quezon City, Philippines: Punlad Research House, Inc., 1997); and Tomas D. Andres, *Positive Filipino Values* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989).

4.1. Eschatological Evangelistic Zeal among Filipino Pentecostals

It is taken for granted among the worldwide Pentecostals that the current experience of the outpouring of the Spirit is an eschatological event. Thus, Christ is coming soon. The Gospel should be proclaimed with urgency in these last days. Vincent Leoh is correct when he argues:

In Pentecostal eschatological preaching the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are interpreted by the preacher eschatologically, although the existential dimension is never totally absent. Several eschatological themes for preaching then begin to emerge in this kind of homiletical venture. Provisionality and hope for the new future in Christ begins to control how Pentecostals believe, think, and act in the historical present. This results in an emphasis on strict ethical behavior.⁴⁵

The history of PGCAG reflects the practice and belief that people's lives are changed by the gospel. The gospel is not only life changing but should be authenticated by the manifestations of the miraculous through the power of the Spirit. The Filipino Pentecostals believe that if "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever," (Heb. 13:8, Revised Standard Version) there is no difference between the signs and wonders in Acts and what we can see today. It is the same Christ who is presently doing the miracles as he did when he was on earth.

The zeal for evangelism among the Filipino Pentecostals is motivated by their distinctive doctrine of the Spirit-baptism for empowerment. Pentecostalism as "the fastest growing segment of Christianity," and definitely a "dynamic force" reckons that "they will be taking the lion's share of reaching the unreached."⁴⁶ Why? It is because the zeal in Pentecostalism is shaped by the appreciation of the empowering experience of Spirit-baptism. In addition, since the

⁴⁵Vincent Leoh, "Eschatology and Pneumatic Preaching with a Case of David Yonggi Cho," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007): 109.

⁴⁶Kevin Hovey, "Training 2/3 World Missionaries," *Agama Vision*, April-June 1995, 8.

Pentecostals expect Christ to quickly return, they take the task to accomplish propagation of the gospel even as the Lord tarries. Moreover, the Pentecostals see without any reservation that "God is going to use [them] in evangelizing the world."⁴⁷

For the reasons stated above, the PGCAG leadership in particular, and the PGCAG constituency in general, should be open for ingenious means of Filipino forms of proclamation. Filipino Pentecostal preaching should address Filipino mentality and values. God has already used Pentecostalism, and yet he can further use the PGCAG as a model to the evangelical Christian preaching by the Spirit in unprecedented mighty ways both in the miraculous manifestations⁴⁸ and the social transformation.⁴⁹ There should be ingenuosness for new possibilities of practicing the prophetic witness of the church apart from the usual ways that have been employed and previously served their purposes in the denominational history.⁵⁰ The past of PGCAG shows how the

⁴⁷Hiroshi Yoshiyama, "Missions are Vital to the Life of the Church," *The Pentecostal Voice*, August 1969, 11.

⁴⁸As a case in point refer to Harold R. Cole, "A Model of Contextualized Deliverance Ministry: A Case Study: The Cordillera Rehabilitation Center [of Rev. Tito Caput], *Journal of Asian Mission* 5, no. 2 (2003), 259-73; and Julie C. Ma, "Elva Vanderbout: A Woman Pioneer of Pentecostal Mission Among Igorots," *Journal of Asian Mission* 3, no. 1 (2001): 121-40.

⁴⁹For the involvement of the Pentecostals in social transformation see the fine articles written by Suico, "Pentecostalism," 7-19; and Conrado P. Lumahan, Sr., "Evangelical/Pentecostal Solution to Gambling in the Philippines," *Journal of Asian Mission* 4, no. 1 (2002): 121-40.

⁵⁰Cf. "New Approach to Missions and Evangelism," *The STDC Newsletter*, October 1993, 3, relates an openness of the PGCAG to new potential means of proclaiming the gospel:

As reported in the General Council Leadership Conference last January 1993 the following approaches in Mission & Evangelism are effective: evangelistic meetings, film showing, home Bible studies, evangelistic concerts, free medical clinic, house to house visitation, radio ministry, literature crusade (ICI), coupled with strong salvation-healing messages. However, recently the P.N.P. Seminar, a Values Formation Council Program headed by General Alfredo Basas (Ret. General) has given us a great open door of evangelism. This program under P. P. No. 62 enjoins all sectors of society to participate in the moral recovery of our Filipino people.

pioneers of Filipino Pentecostalism who were Filipino-Americans came back to the Philippines to preach Pentecost to their Filipino brothers. What went before was certainly unique in itself among the Filipino Pentecostals. Wherefore, trailblazing and pioneering work is not yet finished for the PGCAG. The strategy for unprecedented Filipino Pentecostal preaching is yet to come. These Spirit empowered possibilities for Filipino Pentecostal preaching is yet to be discovered and appropriated to win the Filipino nation.⁵¹

4.2. Pneumatological Empowered Witness in Filipino Pentecostalism

The awareness of the presence of the Spirit encourages the Filipino Pentecostal preacher to experience the reality of God's power and brings inspiration to witness for the Lord.⁵² If the Pentecostal experience is true, then it should lead a Spirit-baptized preacher to a lifestyle of anointed witnessing for Christ. As Kevin Hovey succinctly states that "the power of the Holy Spirit, the compelling inner dynamic that makes the Pentecostals what they are, is primarily the power to witness."⁵³ If Luke aspires to describe in Acts 2 that the Spirit-baptism is for the purpose of empowering for evangelism, then Acts is clear that the gospel was preached by the disciples to the whole world by the anointing of the Spirit.

Filipino Pentecostal preaching ought to carry new expressions for the prophetic role of the church. In allusion to Joel's oracle, Filipino Pentecostal preaching should underline that young men and women are supposed to see new visions of creative and effective ways of reaching out to different people groups that are not yet touched by the church's conventional approach to evangelism; and older men and women should continue to dream dreams of fresh approaches for the eschatological community to fulfill the Great Commission and should not be satisfied with what the church has already done in the past! The empowered

⁵¹The Assemblies of God as a Christian movement is always open for new and creative possibilities in doing the Great Commission. See *Pan Asia Pacific Conference Papers*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 16-19, 1990 (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1990). See also Dela Cruz, "Historical-Doctrinal," 192-217.

⁵²Cf. Vincent Leoh, "A Pentecostal Preacher as an Empowered Witness," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 9, no. 1 (2006): 35-58.

⁵³Hovey, 8.

opportunities are equal for all Spirit-filled believers. The Pentecostals as salt and light must become involved in social transformation of the Philippine society.⁵⁴

Accordingly, the interest of the Filipino Pentecostalism in the genuineness of Spirit-baptism positively contributes to the Evangelical understanding of the Scriptures—the prophethood of all Christians in the Pentecostal manner is for the job of evangelism. The contemporary outpouring of the Spirit takes Evangelicalism back to the mandate of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission through the empowered prophetic witness. This is also a reminder to the PGCAG leadership and constituency to constantly emphasize in the Pentecostal pulpit a lifestyle of bold witnessing integrating it with character, righteousness and holiness. The Filipino Pentecostal preaching would relate well with Roland Allen when he recognized in 1918—four years after the Assemblies of God in the United States of America was organized—what the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit can do to the missionary endeavor of the contemporary church:

We often complain that Christian people at home have little zeal for the spread of the gospel. How can it be otherwise when our people are taught that the Holy Spirit is given, when they are taught to recognize him in their own souls, almost entirely as the sanctifier, the truth revealer, the strengthener, and in the church as the organizer and the director of counsels, whilst they are not taught in anything like the same degree that [the Spirit] is the spirit of redeeming love, active in them towards others, moving every individual soul to whom [the Spirit] comes and the church in which [the Spirit] dwells to desire and to labour for the bringing of all men everywhere to God in Jesus Christ?⁵⁵

⁵⁴See Joseph Suico, "Pentecostalism in the Philippines," in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, foreword by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Regnum Studies in Mission and Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 3 (Oxford, England and Baguio, Philippines: Regnum Books International and APTS Press, 2005), 345-62.

⁵⁵Roland Allen, "The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles," *International Review of Mission* (April, 1918) as quoted by Robert P. Menzies,

5. Final Thoughts

The Pentecostal tradition claims that the experience of Spirit-baptism for empowering is still valid for today which is reflected in the Filipino Pentecostal preaching. The special reference of the use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 provides a basis for the Pentecostal hermeneutical model of looking at the biblical text with a consciousness of the experience of Spirit-baptism. The purpose of this experience is depicted in Acts narrative as the church empowerment for her vocation. Thus, for the PGCAG the Filipino Pentecostal boldness in preaching the gospel is the direct result of the experience of Spirit-baptism. The exposition of the Pentecostal text is done through the testimonial hermeneutical approach. This is a helpful contribution of the PGCAG to the Evangelicalism in the Philippines. Thus, the Pentecostal view of the Spirit's outpouring in Acts adds to the Evangelical theology primarily in terms of vocational service, which makes Pentecostal preaching anointed.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the PGCAG should be a model of openness to fresh articulation of Pentecostal theology for Filipinos using their pulpits as well as exhibiting new ways in fulfilling the prophetic ministry of the church that would bring growth.⁵⁷

The discussion of the Filipino Pentecostal preaching, with a special reference to PGCAG, brought noteworthy positive input to the Filipino Evangelical preaching that highlights the hermeneutics of historical-literary context and the homiletics of the textual sense of the content of the biblical passage on hand.⁵⁸ First, this kind of testimonial hermeneutics gives a scriptural interpretative model in making sense of the current Spirit outpouring. The Pentecostal view of Spirit-baptism is

"The Distinctive Character of Luke's Pneumatology," *Paraclete* 25 (Fall 1991): 27.

⁵⁶See Leoh, "Pentecostal Preacher," especially 48-52.

⁵⁷Conrado P. Lumahan, Sr., "Facts and Figures: A History of the Growth of the Philippine Assemblies of God," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005): 331-44.

⁵⁸I refer the issues in the Filipino Evangelical biblical interpretation and preaching content to Espiritu and Exiomo.

aply applied to arrive at a sound scriptural interpretation. Second, the use of experience of the Spirit to the biblical-theological paradigm of the prophethood of all believers is a functional exegesis. Every believer who has experienced the Spirit takes the role of a prophetic witness. Third, Pentecostal preaching creates sensitivity to the Evangelical agenda of evangelism. The experience of Spirit-baptism is the motivation for bold witnesses in the Pentecostal preaching. In addition, Pentecostalism is not a cult. Rather, the theological distinction of the Pentecostal experience, practices and preaching like the PGCAG against that of Filipino folk practices is scripturally based and clearly placed in proper biblical-theological boundaries.⁵⁹

The Pentecostals inherited the Reformation form of preaching that is used generally within Evangelical circles.⁶⁰ PGCAG ministers learn and apply this Protestant style of preaching from the pulpit. The Protestant exposition of the biblical passages is the main strength of the Reformation's heritage in the proclamation of the Word of God.⁶¹ This

⁵⁹Jeong Jae Yong, "Filipino Independent Pentecostalism and Biblical Transformation," in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, foreword by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Regnum Studies in Mission and Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 3 (Oxford, England and Baguio, Philippines: Regnum Books International and APTS Press, 2005), 401, through an interview that he made about Filipino Pentecostals in connection with folk Christianity succinctly summarizes my thoughts about the clarity of Filipino Pentecostal theology:

Roli [dela] Cruz mentions that it is very hard to distinguish between folk Christianity and Pentecostal practices. Indigenous spirituality has so much parallelism with the Pentecostal practices such as indigenous religious beliefs of healing, trance, speaking in tongues, all of which have often been understood as syncretistic elements. However, among Pentecostals these things are usual phenomena of Filipino Pentecostal spirituality. Their theological understanding is not 'syncretistic' and is a common Filipino Pentecostal spirituality.

⁶⁰For the role, emphasis and method of Reformation preaching see Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers A.D. 70-1572* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974), 358-524.

⁶¹One can just peruse the pages of Andrew Watterson Blackwood, compiler, *The Protestant Pulpit: An Anthology of Master Sermons from the Reformation to Our Own Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977) and he or she

is good. However, it is not the only form of preaching. Although Bible school and theological seminary graduates are trained to preach and expound the Bible in developing the outline form of having three or so main points with the support of sub points and illustrations or stories, the Filipino Pentecostal preacher would not be bound by this conventional form of sermon development. PGCAG pastors would argue that there are other ways and manners to preach after a person received the Spirit-baptism.⁶² With the sense of what Pentecostal ministers call the Spirit's anointing and proper biblical-theological boundaries Filipino Pentecostal preachers would not be tied down to their homiletically arranged sermon. There are other innovative ways to preach.⁶³ Testimonial homiletics and oral hermeneutics, while preaching within the parameters of the subject matter of the biblical text, bring out the sensitivity of Filipino Pentecostal preaching to the felt needs of the congregation who want to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying through the expounded Scripture.⁶⁴ What is important is what God has done

would affirm that because of the *sola scriptura* doctrine of the Reformers the accent on biblical exposition in preaching is significant.

⁶²A profound insight can be gleaned from the autobiography of one of the pioneers of the PGCAG, the Rev. E. C. Lagmay, *From Gambling to Pulpit* (Concord, CA: Published by the author, n.d.), especially 31-32. In his own Pentecostal encounter Lagmay's narrative presentation of his Spirit-baptism experience is strategically placed before he started preaching the gospel. Furthermore, he was instructed clearly by his Pentecostal friends about the meaning of his experience. Lagmay, in his own words, declared: "But I was told by the saints that my baptism was not given to me just to enjoy its sweetness but only given mainly for service. In other words it was given to me so that I might have power to witness for Him." (32)

⁶³See Yngve Brilioth, *A Brief History of Preaching*, trans. Karl E. Mattson, The Preacher's Paperback Library, ed. Edmund A. Steimle (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1965); and Richard Lischer, ed., *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002).

⁶⁴The current best example for this kind of Filipino Pentecostal preaching is the published sermon of Dr. Eleazer "Eli" Javier, *God, Giving and Gifts: Basic Biblical Teachings Revisited, Insights, Issues, Implications* (Valenzuela City, Philippines: ICI Ministries, Inc., 2009). This little book is the transcript of his sermon with the original title "Lessons in Giving and Receiving from Selected Passages of Scriptures: A Reflection. Basic Bible Teachings Revisited." The

and what he is doing among the people. Javier says it well: “When we examine the Scriptures carefully, we see that preaching does not center on human ideas about God. The focus is on what God has done for man, communicated to him by those who were called by God.”⁶⁵ This Spirit-led manner of preaching is the Filipino Pentecostals positive contribution to Evangelical preaching in the Philippines.

significance of this printed message is that it has been preached by the author at the “Triennial General Council of the Assemblies of God at the Convention Center in Mandaue, Cebu [Philippines] on 14th of May 2009.” Furthermore, Rev. Reynaldo A. Calusay, the current General Superintendent of the PGCAG endorsed this written preaching of his predecessor as “a new dimension of [Javier’s] message...taking the form of the prophetic.” See iii.

⁶⁵Javier, *Work*, 170.