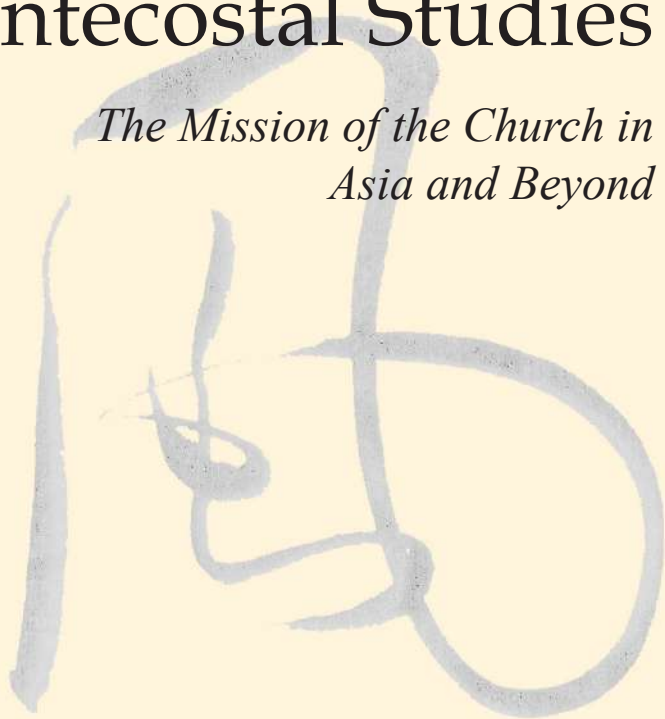


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## **Toward a Pentecostal Theology of the Altar**

By Monte Lee Rice

### **INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>**

In the 1970s, world Pentecostalism began producing an ecumenically recognized scholarship guild focusing on the movement's historiography and biblical studies to argue its beliefs about Spirit baptism and glossolalia. Yet at that time, Pentecostal scholarship 'father' Walter Hollenweger<sup>2</sup> posited a thesis which history has proved true—that the most important contribution of Pentecostalism to world Christianity lies not in any theological stress, such as pneumatology, but in its oral liturgy.<sup>3</sup> However, only within the past decade have Pentecostal studies embarked on a notable liturgical turn focusing on the tradition's liturgical life and generating a growing corpus of liturgical theologies. Unfortunately, there seems to be no published work assessing this production.

In my recently defended dissertation,<sup>4</sup> I provided an assessment by critically inquiring how those at the forefront of world Pentecostal liturgical theology are constructing liturgical theologies in ways which envision the flourishing that Pentecost signifies.<sup>5</sup> As one facet comprising my theological method, I followed an orientation known as the liturgy as

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<sup>1</sup>The original version of this paper was presented at the 31st Annual William Menzies Lectureship January 30-February 3, 2023. Asia Pacific Theological Seminary.

<sup>2</sup>D. William Faupel, "Walter J. Hollenweger: Charting the Pathway of Pentecostal Historiography," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 41, no. 1 (2021): 20-34 (20).

<sup>3</sup>Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 3rd ed. (London, UK: SCM Press Ltd., 1972; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers: 1976), 466; idem, "The Ecumenical Significance of Oral Christianity," *The Ecumenical Review* 41, no. 2 (April 1989): 259-265 (264-265).

<sup>4</sup>Monte Lee Rice, "On the Altar, Willed to Pentecost: A Critical Enquiry on Emerging Forays in World Pentecostal Liturgical Theology" (PhD diss., Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, 2023).

<sup>5</sup>Namely, Tanya Riches, *Worship and Social Engagement in Urban Aboriginal-led Australian Pentecostal Congregations*, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies* 32 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2019); Daniela Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common God: Shared Flourishing in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019); Chris E.W. Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2020).; and Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (London, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017).

primary theology movement, which defines liturgy as ‘the church at prayer’ (*ecclesia orans*).<sup>6</sup> Yet I discovered that Pentecostal experience accentuates this as more pointedly being, ‘the church at prayer on the altar’ (*ecclesia orans in altari*).

A pivotal movement towards this realization came through engaging the work of Pentecostal theologian Wolfgang Vondey, who provides the most comprehensive effort towards articulating a Pentecostal liturgical theology implicit within Pentecostal spirituality. He shows this through his 2017 ground-breaking work, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel*. In it, he chronicles how Pentecostal experiences, practices, and beliefs traditioned in the Full Gospel have emerged through liturgical practices consistently observed in phenomenological studies of Pentecostal spirituality worldwide.<sup>7</sup> From his data, he suggests that the Pentecostal fivefold Christological motifs of Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit-baptizer, Healer and soon-coming King translate globally expansive Pentecostal altar-centric-grounded worship practices and experiences into a world Pentecostal liturgical theology.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, the Full Gospel expresses a theological narrative structuring Pentecostal spirituality<sup>9</sup> centered on its liturgical practice of encountering God at the altar.<sup>10</sup> Vondey posits how as the tradition’s foundational worship practice—the altar call/response rite—functions as the source, center and summit of Pentecostal worship.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Joris Geldhof, “Liturgical Theology,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Oxford University Press, 2017, accessed July 28, 2017, 2, 11, <http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-14>.

<sup>7</sup>Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 15, 17-18, 26, 30-32, 291; idem, “Embodied Gospel: The Materiality of Pentecostal Theology,” in *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion: Vol. 8: Pentecostals and the Body*, ed., Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 103.

<sup>8</sup>Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 7-9, 15, 20, 31-32.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 21-24, 288-289.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 8-9, 25-26, 31-32, 282-283, 289.

<sup>11</sup>Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 5-6, 31, 40-43, 57-62, 84-85, 132, 267, 282, 289-292. The liturgical turn within Pentecostal studies has consistently noted the altar call/response rite as foundational within Pentecostal worship. Two other recently notable works exploring this are—Daniel Tomberlin, *Pentecostal Sacraments: Encountering God at the Altar*, rev. ed. (Charleston, SC: Daniel Tomberlin, 2015); Josh P. S. Samuel, *The Holy Spirit in Worship Music, Preaching, and the Altar: Renewing Pentecostal Corporate Worship* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2018). On how the term ‘rite’ aptly conceptualizes altar event from a ritual studies approach, see Daniel E. Albrecht, “Rites in the Spirit”: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series* 17 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 131-133, 165-166.

## A Theological Analysis of Pentecostal Experience of the Altar

Although we may describe the above as an altar theology, Vondey has not yet attempted a Pentecostal theology of the altar; nor have I observed a substantial attempt at such, notwithstanding a long-sustained recognition towards its centrality. I thus realized that this warranted a briefly constructed Pentecostal theology of the altar, which I believe we can best achieve by assessing the liturgical *ordo* operative within Pentecostal liturgy.

*Ordo* is a ecumenical term referring to not only the basic structure/shape of Christian worship,<sup>12</sup> but also the underlying premises and spiritual efficacy mediated through this structure.<sup>13</sup> Liturgical studies have identified three features the *ordo* commonly displays—first, a sequence of word/proclamation and sacrament (Eucharist);<sup>14</sup> second, commonly framing these are the observed rites of gathering for worship; and then third, a sending forth to the world.<sup>15</sup> The *ordo* thus consistently conveys a liturgical direction by formalizing these movements towards and from that middle point, which we may designate as the actual worship event.<sup>16</sup>

My construction of a Pentecostal theology of the altar thus considers the following themes—(1) methodological insights from Graham Hughes’ liturgical theology, (2) discerning the *ordo* plot within Azusa Street worship, (3) Azusa sanctification experience as Mimesis<sub>2</sub>,<sup>17</sup> (4)

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<sup>12</sup>Martha Moore-Keish, “The Importance of Worship that Centers on the *Ordo*,” *Liturgy* 21, no. 2 (2006): 15-23 (15); Arlo D. Duba, “The *Ordo*: The Center of Liturgical Reform: Towards the Establishment of the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship—a 2004 expansion of material presented to a meeting in Seattle, WA, July 5, 2003,” *Liturgy* 20, no. 2 (2005): 9-22 (10, 14-15). Highly influential towards this trend was Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Glasgow, UK: Dacre Press, 1945, 1949), xi-xiii. The term originated from medieval liturgical instructions on rightly ordering Christian liturgy. A notable example is the 7th century document prescribing the Latin mass, *Ordo Romanus Primus*; Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 131-132, 411-414, 522, 589-592, 620.

<sup>13</sup>Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 33; Moore-Keish, “The Importance of Worship,” *Liturgy*, 15; Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 39.

<sup>14</sup>Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshipping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 62-70; Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 51-52.

<sup>15</sup>Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 63, 128-146 (esp. 129-130); Geoffrey Wainwright, *Worship with One Accord: Where Liturgy & Ecumenism Embrace* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 31-32. On the symbolic significance of these framing rites, see Graham Hughes, *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical theology for Late Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 166-169. The result is this four-phased sequential *ordo* of gathering; word/proclamation. Eucharist/sacrament (i.e., reflecting common Protestant sequence; Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions practice Eucharist prior to Word); and sending; 166-167.

<sup>16</sup>Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 154-156.

<sup>17</sup>As I shall later explain, “Mimesis<sub>2</sub>” refers to the second stage of philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s theory of narrative emplotment, comprising three sequential stages: Mimesis<sub>1</sub>, Mimesis<sub>2</sub> and Mimesis<sub>3</sub>. As a unique convention, Ricoeur consistently used the subscript for distinguishing these three different phases. I will thus adhere to his convention.

how the Pentecostal altar effects God-pleasing sacrifice, and (5) how the Pentecostal altar rite functions within cosmic liturgy. Each of these themes will now be addressed.

### **Methodological Insights from Graham Hughes’ Liturgical Theology**

I find clarity through Anglican liturgical theologian Graham Hughes’ liturgical theology of meaningful worship.<sup>18</sup> He argues that worship is meaningful when it effects ‘limit experiences’ at the vocative edge of that alterative Other, which Christian faith calls God.<sup>19</sup> He defines limit experiences (or experiences of limit) as events that bring us to the brink of what we can manage.<sup>20</sup> Thus, a limit experience within worship is that event, along the *ordo*, wherein God’s Spirit brings one to that edge between human manageability and the unmanageable summoning presence of God<sup>21</sup>—when one experiences his manifest presence.<sup>22</sup>

Yet Hughes convincingly stresses that also requisite to worship is how well the *ordo* fosters and works in tandem with the human drive towards what philosopher Paul Ricoeur called *emplotment* (or narrative

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<sup>18</sup>Hughes relies on 20th century meaning/semiotic theories (particularly Charles Sanders Pierce) coupled with embodiment studies positing the role of nonverbal behaviors towards meaning-making (*Worship as Meaning*, 16-30, 118-127) for assessing how well a liturgy affects a meaningful worship experience; 11, 30-31, 115-116. He thus stresses three criteria towards a meaningful worship event—(1) ‘reasonableness, in that it should make cognitive sense; (2) ‘multisensory signification,’ for meanings/meaningfulness require not only verbal, but also appropriate nonverbal channels; and (3) ‘renewed theistic reference,’ in that the event fosters spiritual maturation within the human-God relation and thus a more theologically competent reading of the world; 31-42. This present study focuses on Hughes’ third criteria, which he stresses as being ‘the main aim of worship; 63, 225, 254, 255.

<sup>19</sup>Hughes derives his edge’ metaphor from Roman Catholic liturgical theologian Aidan Kavanagh’s thesis that “Liturgy leads [its practitioners] regularly to the *edge of chaos* [italics mine] and that from this regular flirt with doom comes a theology different from any other;” Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Eastern Theological Seminary, 1981 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 73, quoted in *Worship as Meaning*, 75 (also 227); see also 225-227, 255, 257-277. In Levinasian terms, Hughes describes this experience as vocative, for there God as the alterative Other summons a claim over us, summoning our “s” to his evoking Face, which the liturgy mediates before us; 280-285.

<sup>20</sup>Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 159-160, 260-275 296; see Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2nd ed., trans. by John W. Harvey (London, UK: Geoffrey Cumberledge, 1923, 1950), 12.

<sup>21</sup>Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 75-75, 148, 159, 180-181, 225-227, 257, 275-277, 283-285, 295; see Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 73.

<sup>22</sup>Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 150-151. On manifest presence, see Vondeck, “Pentecostal Sacramentality and the Theology of the Altar,” in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A. J. Swoboda (London, UK: Routledge, 2017), 100.

configuration), which we may otherwise call a narrative-formed identity.<sup>23</sup> Following Aristotle, Ricoeur identified three sequential mimetic actions or stages (*mimesis praxeōs*, meaning making a representation),<sup>24</sup> which together forms the following three-step process—Mimesis<sub>1</sub>/Prefiguration (pre-narrative structure/understanding); Mimesis<sub>2</sub>/Configuration, and Mimesis<sub>3</sub>/Refiguration.<sup>25</sup> Especially crucial to Hugh's Ricoeurian reading of the *ordo* is the liminal role Ricoeur attributes to mimesis<sub>2</sub>, stressing that, through the power of configuration, it transfigures the first to the third.<sup>26</sup>

After conceptualizing the emplotment theory through his *Time and Narrative* volumes, Ricoeur explained its applications to narrative identity by incorporating within this cycle a dialectical distinction between identity as sameness (Latin, *idem*) and identity as selfhood (*ipse*).<sup>27</sup> He showed how emplotment causes a transition from sameness to a fuller development of human identity—selfhood.<sup>28</sup> However, requisite is configuration. More precisely, for concordant identity formation, the experience of configuration entail admission of discordances that threaten this identity, often through taking away the support of sameness.<sup>29</sup>

Another crucial factor to meaningful worship is how well the *ordo* situates worshippers within liturgical emplotment—the configuring potency of limit experience through a God-encounter causing meaningful worship. The *ordo* thus aims at emplotment, perceiving it

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<sup>23</sup>Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 165-166; Paul Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 30-32. Building on Aristotle's emplotment (*muthos* as "plot") theory, Ricoeur defined it as an integrating process that transforms multiple discordant incidents in one singular and hence concordant story/narrative; Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricoeur*, 20-21; idem, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984, 1990), 65-67. Ricoeur substantially relied on the ancient Greek philosophical *concordia discors* notion that perceived (1) basic elements of earth, air, fire, and water in constant conflict; yet (2) how these often show harmonious coexistence evidenced through the natural aesthetics of living things. This concept accounts for Ricoeur's consistent depiction of emplotment as discordant concordance; William C. Dowling, Ricoeur on *Time and Narrative: An Introduction to Temps et récit* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2011), 6; Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricoeur*, 21; idem, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 4, 31, 38, 42-44, 66-73, 150.

<sup>24</sup>The resultant narrative represents the previously discordant events; Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 31-34, 53.

<sup>25</sup>Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 53-54, 178; idem, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 20.

<sup>26</sup>Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 53.

<sup>27</sup>Ricoeur, "Narrative Identity," in *On Paul Ricoeur*, 189; idem, *Oneself as Another*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 1994), 2, 114.

<sup>28</sup>Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 114.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 142, 147, 149. Thus, he notes, "Many conversion narratives bear witness to such dark nights of personal identity;" idem, "Narrative Identity," in *On Paul Ricoeur*, 199.

requisite to the limit experience that makes for such worship. To reiterate, most imperative towards the meaning-fullness of worship is its configuring potency<sup>30</sup>—hence, that liminal phase called configuration (Mimesis<sub>2</sub>).

Vondey convincingly shows how the Full Gospel functions as a liturgical *ordo* operating within Pentecostal corporate worship events.<sup>31</sup> He observes that, as a soteriological narrative hermeneutically situated within Pentecostal spirituality, the Full Gospel plots a person's/community's continuous lifelong movement to, at, and from the altar. Or more specifically: (1) coming to the altar, effecting salvation/saving-conversion experiences; (2) expectant time at the altar, effecting sanctification/sanctifying experiences resulting in a God-encounter, such as; (3) Spirit baptism/empowering and/or (4) healing experiences; followed by (5) release from the altar to the world or commissioning experiences.<sup>32</sup> Vondey states that this narrative comprises ongoing cyclical returns to the altar throughout a person's/community's life.<sup>33</sup> Although he stresses these five plotted points along his altar-centric liturgical narrative, he infers how this narrative boils down to three basic movements—to, at, and from the altar.<sup>34</sup>

By applying Hughes' analysis to his perceived Pentecostal *ordo*, I would wager that this liturgical narrative ultimately boils down to these three basic movements,<sup>35</sup> and then argue that this three-phased *ordo* is his liturgical theology's most significant contribution towards world Pentecostal liturgical theology.<sup>36</sup> Thus, as Vondey shows, this *ordo* is requisite towards soteriologically emplotting within a person/people, the transformationally efficacious God-encounter(s) that the altar signifies within Pentecostal spirituality/worship.<sup>37</sup> The broader Christian *ordo* shows that all Christian traditions generally practice an altar-centric

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<sup>30</sup>Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 148-155, 164-166, 169-170.

<sup>31</sup>Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 281-283, 291-294.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 6, 9-10, 21-22, 51, 84-85, 108, 132-133, 289-292.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 21-22, 51, 289.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, *Pentecostal Theology*, 8, 84-85; idem, "The Full Gospel: A Liturgical Hermeneutic of Pentecost," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2020), 175.

<sup>35</sup>Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 8, 84-85; idem, "The Full Gospel," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, 175.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 38-40, 55, 290.

<sup>37</sup>I have devised the term 'emplotting' from Paul Ricoeur's notion of narrative emplotment, which I will soon integrate within this discussion on the Pentecostal *ordo*. Emplotment refers to the human drive towards identifying a plot that integrates random life experiences into a narrative identity; Paul Ricoeur, 'Life in Quest of Narrative,' in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 21, 29, 33.

liturgy.<sup>38</sup> However, Pentecostal spirituality differs in that as it over accepts the day of Pentecost, it conversely fosters meaning-full worship by *over accepting* the altar.<sup>39</sup>

### Discerning the Emplotting *Ordo* within Azusa Street Worship

In light of the above, I suggest that the thickest potency of Pentecostal liturgy lies at the phenomena transpiring at the altar; which we may identify as the Mimesis/Configuration stage in the emplotment process within the tradition's *ordo*. Yet, if configuration transpires at the altar, we should consider the effectual role of the substance burning on—thus fuelling—the altar. After all, if we factor in its biblical imagery, an altar is a place for making offerings upon consuming fires. Thus, identifying this substance is crucial toward a Pentecostal theology of the altar.

I find help via Hollenweger's and Steven Land's shared thesis that the first ten years of 20th-century Pentecostalism represent its theological heart and thus most salient resources for its ongoing renewal.<sup>40</sup> I will thus map the preceding themes onto the basic *ordo* I perceive within the Azusa Street Revival's salvation theology discourse and worship experiences archived in its *Apostolic Faith* publication. I do so given the assumption that the Azusa Street Revival was a seminal harbinger of world Pentecostalism<sup>41</sup> and continues to function as an identity-marker within Classical Pentecostalism.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>It parallels the three-phased sequential *ordo* comprising the phases of Gathering and Sending that sandwich the two internal phases of Word/Proclamation and Eucharist/Sacrament; Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 63, 128-146 (esp. 129-130); Wainwright, *Worship with One Accord*, 31-32. On these two framing rites' symbolic significance, see Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 166-169.

<sup>39</sup>Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 12, 29.

<sup>40</sup>John Christopher Thomas, "'What the Spirit Is Saying to the Church'—The Testimony of a Pentecostal in New Testament Studies," *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, ed., Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London, UK: TT Clark International, 2021), 116; idem, "The Spirit, the Text, and Early Pentecostal Reception," in *Receiving Scripture in the Pentecostal Tradition: A Reception History*, eds., Daniel D. Isgrigg, Martin W. Mittelstadt, and Rick Wadholm, Jr. (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2021), 49-92.

<sup>41</sup>Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 23; Allen Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2007), 6, 52-54; Michael McClymond, "'I Will Pour Out My Spirit Upon All Flesh': A Historical and Theological Meditation on Pentecostal Origins," *Pneuma* 37, no. 3 (2015) 356-374 (360-363, 370-374).

<sup>42</sup>Reflecting my dissertation's critical discourse/discursive approach, I define 'discourse' as a body of knowledge produced and transmitted not primarily via a tradition's linguistic texts but via its practices, and 'discursive' as as the embodied behavioral practices that generate and manifest discourse insofar that a tradition institutionalizes them for its formative aims; Michel Foucault, "History of Systems of Thought," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY:

While charismatic phenomena became a discursively defining marker, Michael McClymond and Steven Studebaker both examine how what has not been equally significant towards its self-identity is the empowering racial/social inclusiveness that Azusa Street exemplified.<sup>43</sup> Yet both argue that one can retrieve from the Azusa Street discourse, this vital facet and labor towards it becoming a circulating identity- marker that should also discursively define Classical Pentecostalism.<sup>44</sup> Studebaker does so via his pneumatology-stressing theology of the atonement and McClymond via his strategic essentialism method towards a mediatory approach between monogenesis (singular origin) or polygenesis (multiple origins) reading of world Pentecostal history.<sup>45</sup>

My dissertation's broader analysis has shown that a recurrent theme throughout my interlocutors' trajectories is that Pentecostal experience thickly implies the following dynamic. That through its meaning-full worship, Pentecostal liturgy capacitates worshippers to rightly encounter human alterities for the cause of common good flourishing within shared cosmopolitan-marked geographies of God's new people willed to Pentecost. I thus believe that these intimations towards a Pentecostal theology of the altar can aid this effort.

Thickly mirroring the biblical Pentecost outpouring against the backdrop of early 20th century American violent-laden racial injustice, the Azusa Street Revival was marked by both an emerging highly diverse, racially inclusive worship community and highly ecstatic charismatic phenomena.<sup>46</sup> These two features together testified to how

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Cornell University Press, 1977), 200. Hence, I describe a practice or text as discursive when within a tradition it significantly generates and illustrates then circulates that tradition's core discourse themes; Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1972), 45-46. I use the term 'discursive' not to argue theological or doctrinal legitimacy towards common descriptions of Classical Pentecostalism, but rather to stress their observed identity-marking function, such as commonly stressed reference to Azusa Street as a seminal harbinger to world Pentecostalism.

<sup>43</sup> Steven M. Studebaker, *The Spirit of Atonement: Pentecostal Contributions and Challenges to the Christian Traditions* (London, UK: T&T Clark, Bloomsbury Publishing Co., 2021), 117-118; McClymond, "'I Will Pour Out My Spirit,'" *Pneuma*, 369.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 117-118; McClymond, 370-374.

<sup>45</sup> McClymond, 359; 359-360, 368-369. McClymond taps on Michael Bergunder's strategic essentialism concept referring to historical attempts at defining an historical tradition in terms of certain essential traits for serving contemporary agendas. See Michael Bergunder, "The Cultural Turn," *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan H. Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 58, 64.

<sup>46</sup>Studebaker, *The Spirit of Atonement*, 118-119; McClymond, 369-370, 373-374.

Note the following quote integrating these phenomena: "Those who know God feel His presence as soon as they cross the threshold... The work began among the colored people... Since then, multitudes have come. God makes no difference in nationality, Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities worship together"; "The

the Revival's meaning-full worship events were powerfully emplotting seekers of the Pentecostal Blessing into a new people identified by these experienced self-identity-markers.<sup>47</sup> They were thus crucial to the identify-forming meaning of apostolic faith, signifying the experience of Pentecost and thus confessional commitment towards contending its continuation.<sup>48</sup> Together, these markers exemplified William Seymour's and the Revival's consistent rendering of the Pentecostal Blessing and power as God's love binding human alterities into one common family.<sup>49</sup>

To tap on historian Gastón Espinosa's prose, it seems that the Azusa Street altar rite was functioning as a "transgressive social space wherein people from diverse backgrounds" were becoming corporately transformed into this new family.<sup>50</sup> Creating that space was the vocatively summoning limit experience transpiring through its *ordo's* threshold—i.e., the altar rite. Recall that configuration signifies the turning point (Mimesis<sub>2</sub>) within emplotment towards the re-figured life (Mimesis<sub>3</sub>). Thus, I argue that the thickest potency of Pentecostal liturgy towards liminalizing worshippers into this event, lies within the phenomena transpiring at the altar; thus making that the turning point within its emplotting movement.

The Revival's discourse propagated this soteriology through a typology of the Old Testament tabernacle, likening the three salvific experiences to its three sequential spaces—(1) the the brazen altar in the outer court signifying justification, (2) the golden altar in the holy place signifying sanctification, and (3) the most holy place (holy of holies) with its Ark of the Covenant signifying Spirit baptism.<sup>51</sup> This reading rendered justification and sanctification as definitive works of grace,<sup>52</sup> typified by the altars within the

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Same Old Way," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906), 3. Hereafter, I abbreviate *The Apostolic Faith* as *AF*.

<sup>47</sup>Recall how I defined these as on-the-vocative edge/limit experienced God-encounters sacramentalized through the Holy Spirit's manifest presence; effecting an altering or re-configuring of one's identity (greater self-hood) and hence transforming renewal. In Levinasian terms Hughes describes the edge/limit experience as vocative for there, God as alterative Other summons a claim over us, summoning our 'yes' to his evoking Face which the liturgy mediates before us; Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 280-285.

<sup>48</sup>"Contend for the Faith," *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906), 3.

<sup>49</sup>"The Pentecostal power, when you sum it all up, is more of God's love... Pentecost means to live right in the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, which is the standard... Pentecost makes us love Jesus more and love our brothers more. It brings us all into one common family"; *Apostolic Faith* 2 no. 13 (May 1908).

<sup>50</sup>Gastón Espinosa, William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography & Documentary History (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 32.

<sup>51</sup>"The Baptism with the Holy Ghost Foreshadowed," *Apostolic Faith* 1 no. 4 (December 1906), 2; "Salvation According to the True Tabernacle," *Apostolic Faith* no. 10 (September 1907), 3.

<sup>52</sup>"The Apostolic Faith Movement," *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906), 2.

outer court and the holy place.<sup>53</sup> As the second experienced work of grace, the Azusa Street discourse posited sanctification as a cleansing that made one holy and ready for Spirit baptism.<sup>54</sup> As the holy of holies has no altar, it taught Spirit baptism not as a work of grace but as the gift of power upon the sanctified life.<sup>55</sup>

Following through with the tabernacle typology, the Revival discourse further taught that the Ark of the Covenant located in the holy of holies signified two things I believe are significant to this discussion. First, there is no altar for, at this point, the believer is on the altar continually.<sup>56</sup> Second, being always on the altar, the Spirit-baptized believer stays filled with Shekinah glory, receiving gifts and graces,<sup>57</sup> which comprise the full blessing of Christ.<sup>58</sup> For reasons I will soon delineate, we may well assume that the liturgical actions presumed operative through this metaphoric description (“on the altar”) primed the Azusa Street altar rite as a highly meaningfully charged ritual field<sup>59</sup> that was formative within the Revival’s worshipping community and broader linked constituency.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>53</sup>“The Baptism with the Holy Ghost Foreshadowed,” *Apostolic Faith*, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 2; “Salvation According to the True Tabernacle,” *Apostolic Faith*, 3.

<sup>55</sup>“The Apostolic Faith Movement,” *Apostolic Faith*, 2; W. J. Seymour, “The Way into the Holiest,” *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906), 4.

<sup>56</sup>“The Apostolic Faith Movement,” *Apostolic Faith*, 2; “The Precious Atonement,” *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906), 2; Seymour, “The Way into the Holiest,” *Apostolic Faith*, 4 (“free gift of power upon the sanctified, cleansed heart”).

<sup>57</sup>Seymour, “The Way into the Holiest,” *Apostolic Faith*, 4. Note also, “My all is *on* [italics mine] the altar,” Emma Cummings, *Apostolic Faith* 1 no. 8 (May 1907), 4 (recalling her Azusa Street altar experience). “There is always a fire in your soul. Why? Because you are *on* [italics mine] the altar . . . The only way men and women can be preserved is by living *on* [italics mine] the altar”; “Salvation According to the True Tabernacle,” *Apostolic Faith*, 3.

<sup>58</sup>Constantly receiving gifts and graces; “The Baptism with the Holy Ghost Foreshadowed,” *Apostolic Faith*, 2. See Seymour, “The Way into the Holiest,” *Apostolic Faith*, 4; “Salvation According to the True Tabernacle,” *Apostolic Faith*, 3 (“The fire remains there continually burning in the holiness of God”).

<sup>59</sup>“Filling one with continual light; “Salvation According to the True Tabernacle,” *Apostolic Faith*, 3.

<sup>60</sup>Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 22, 121-123, 211-212.

<sup>60</sup>Hughes consistently stresses, as another qualitative feature effecting meaningful worship, the iconicity of worship and how that and limited experiences effect employment within worship events. ‘Iconicity of worship’ refers to how well the *ordo* iconically signifies movement to and from God’s presence within a time/space designated for encountering God through congregational worship. Iconicity also signifies how well the *ordo* fosters a likeness to how we imagine or should imagine God’s presence; Hughes, *Worship as Meaning*, 169. Through this iconicity, worshippers realize they are on sacred ground; 170. He derives the concept from Peirce’s notion of “iconic” sign; referring to a sign that not only signifies its object but more significantly, signifies a richly recognizable “commonality or similarity or likeness between the sign-vehicle and the sign’s object”; 139, also 35. To illustrate, he refers to the graphic representations we have on computer screens called *icons*, such as half-opened manila folders representing opening a document; 139. I believe that the Pentecostal distinctiveness observed through

Azusa's Sanctification Experience as Mimesis<sub>2</sub>

I argue that, within the Azusa Street Revival's altar-centric liturgy, the configuring turning point (Mimesis<sub>2</sub>) generally occurred within the altar event; which its discourse discursively identified as the consecrating experience of sanctification. Such was the experience effecting the subsequent movement called Spirit baptism. The phrase "Spirit baptized" thus designates the re-figured life (Mimesis<sub>3</sub>).<sup>61</sup>

However, I am not validating the Azusa Street three-staged soteriology scheme,<sup>62</sup> but simply observing (from Hughes' insights) how, within the Azusa Street discourse, the sanctifying experience at the altar seems to mark the configuring turning point within its communities' liturgical/worship experience.<sup>63</sup>

It is here where we tap into the transforming logic of the revival fires through God's Spirit operative within Pentecostalism (or spiritual maturation). For Pentecostal spirituality suggests I would argue, that spiritual growth comprises growth in charismatic power received through Spirit baptism. And this growth into the pneumatically fuelled charismatic fullness of Christ requires periodic on-the-edge 'dramatic moments of spiritual renewal'<sup>64</sup>—or perhaps, in more vivid terms, 'dramatic moments of God-encounter.' This study, however, has led me to accentuate the configuring experience (Mimesis<sub>2</sub>) of phenomena transpiring at the altar, towards constructively funding a Pentecostal theology of the altar.

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Vondeg's Full Gospel theology lies not so much in its observed narrative sequence, but rather in the thick iconicity its *ordo* achieves within Pentecostal liturgy. I especially pinpoint this iconicity to the formational/teleological role that the term Pentecost symbolically plays within Pentecostal spirituality and, consequently, the tradition's altar call/ministry as its foundational rite and summit of Pentecostal liturgy, coupled with its transformational efficacy towards the God-encounter it signifies and sacramentally mediates within Pentecostal worship.

<sup>61</sup>I am not suggesting an absolute categorizing, for surely all three salvific experiences comprise their own uniquely facets—thus recalling Vondeg's caveat that we recognize the Full Gospel altar-centric narrative not as a strict programmatic . . . cycle, but rather as a heuristic framework that may comprise entry to the altar from any the five narrative events; Vondeg, *Pentecostal Theology*, 13-14, 293.

<sup>62</sup>Concurring with Frank Macchia that justification and sanctification are not soteriological stages but actually overlapping metaphors characterizing all Christian life; Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 214-220; 140; idem, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 8-9, 86-92.

<sup>63</sup>For an article exemplifying the role that consecration at the altar plays in meaningful worship within the revival, see, "Victory Follows Crucifixion," *AF* 1, no. 1 (October 1906), 4. ("Think of what hung on that momentous hour that Jesus suffered... God will give you grace for the hour of your opportunity" for "When we get on the resurrection side of the cross, the glory and victory will be unspeakable").

<sup>64</sup>Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 32.

## How the Pentecostal Altar Effects God-Pleasing Sacrifice

The Azusa Street discourse community intuitively grasped that the altar (being the *axis mundi*; the converging point between heaven and earth) functioned for offering God their bodies as living sacrifices according to the pattern of Romans 12:1-2.<sup>65</sup> At this point I draw help from Anglican liturgical theologian Nathan Jennings' liturgical theology as 'economic anagogy'<sup>66</sup>—namely, positing liturgy as a gift-economy perpetually moving non-bartered/commodified goods within the household of God.<sup>67</sup> Even as economics is about managing resources in ways that best foster flourishing within a household, Jennings demonstrates how God's envisioned flourishing comes through an ascetically practiced, cycling gift-economy.<sup>68</sup> For as we practice gift-giving through sacrifices of praise and our bodies to God, we labor with him in fuelling this economy,<sup>69</sup> thus becoming adept sharers within his household through the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8-9).<sup>70</sup> Such happens as we thankfully render the property we hold, which we may earlier deem as commodities/capital having market value for something we perceive of equal or higher value, as now gifts for circulation throughout the household for its common-good flourishing.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>In his research, Albrecht observed how Pentecostal worshippers intuitively recognize the altar space/time rite as the *axis mundi* for sacrificing their lives to God for service; *Rites in the Spirit*, 132-133, 166, 206, 236, 247-249.

<sup>66</sup>Situating himself within the liturgy-as-primary-theology movement and the Anglican Platonic tradition, Jennings approaches liturgical theology from an understanding of theology as anagogy. Thus, understanding theology as a search for the highest possible level of human pattern recognition, the "highest being that of the Triune life of God;" ix-x, 1-2 (see also 8-9, 14, 20-23, 123-124). Hence, "Liturgy is a manifestation on earth of the divine economy of the heavens"; thus an "initiation into the divine mystery"; 124. Within liturgy, we discern the gift-exchange pattern of God's divine economy; hence, the economy of salvation; 2, 10, 30, 46, 72-73; esp. 128-129.-

<sup>67</sup>Contrasting with a market economy's requisite goods, exchange of theoretically equal value goods; Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 1, 10-11. He explains how a barter economy exchanges goods for goods deemed of equal value; while market economy abstracted through using money as an arbiter of exchange; 10. His concern is not the rightness of market economy but rather establishing how market and gift economies differ (appropriate for different aims); *Liturgy and Theology*, 10.

<sup>68</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 2, 10, 30, 46, 72-73; esp. 128-129.

<sup>69</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 14-16, 35-36, 54-73.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 16, 21, 29.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 10-13, 30-32 (defining property as the right of action in things beyond recognized boundaries of the human body; 11). This reflects the base ancient meaning of liturgy (*leitourgia*) as civil/political work (*érgon*) performed for a people's (*laós*) common good; Aristotle; *Politics*, trans by Ernest Barker (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), 244 (131a31); Frederick William Danker, "Leitourgéō," in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 523.

This begins with experiencing the circular gift-exchange that marks God's triune life.<sup>72</sup> Within a household, a gift-exchange economy manages goods we consider to have transcendental origins through founding gifts.<sup>73</sup> As founding-benefactor doner, God has primordially initiated this economy.<sup>74</sup> Via his cosmic liturgy, he now summons household recipients into this exchange through their own sacrificial gift-giving.<sup>75</sup> Thus, as encounters with God's manifest presence elicits our worship, so do they integrate us within the gift-exchange economy that marks his triune life, household, and kingdom.<sup>76</sup>

I would wager that the Azusa Street worshippers intuitively grasped this truth, and that, as participants through experiencing God's grace at justification<sup>77</sup> (thus reaching towards Jennings' reference to God as founding benefactor of his gift economy), this sacrificial facet was imperatively integral to their worship. The Azusa Street Revival discourse normalized this insight through the secondly identified altar experience that it designated as sanctification. Recall that Jennings argues how God, as its founding benefactor, enjoins this sacrificial facet to worship, given its requisite role towards fuelling the gift-economy that flourishes his household.<sup>78</sup> It follows then that the Azusa Street discourse appropriately construed that requisite to a sanctifying experience and the Spirit baptism as an empowering experience, are consecrating acts/resolves at sacrificing one's self to God *on* the altar.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 29-31.

<sup>73</sup>This premise lies within the Greco-Roman term *leitourgia*; Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 15. Premised on the ancient Mediterranean/Near Eastern premise that all life is a gift/gifting from God, Christian liturgy begins with this transcendent act that evokes from unequal beneficiaries their thankful response through sacrifices of gift-exchange, granting a taste of peerage through cycling gifts fueling the household economy; 30-33.

<sup>74</sup>Jennings argues this economy was cosmically "restarted" (his word for Christ's atonement) through the liturgical sacrifice of Jesus; *Liturgy and Theology*, 65-70; esp. 68: "God reverses the effects of the fall through the incarnation and paschal mystery of the Word of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the re-start of the gift economy, the flow. For it is . . . the gift of God himself to humanity that is also, simultaneously, a human gift to God." Jennings is not, however, arguing a penal substitutionary atonement approach but rather an economic substitutionary atonement theory for stressing the atonement as a restart of God's primordial gift economy that redeemed humanity anagogically replicate it in all its life and missional witness/service to God's kingdom; 68 70-73, 129.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 32, 35-36. "Liturgy is a gift from a superior that establishes a household, an economy. God's liturgy is the benefaction that enables and empowers our sacrifices of thanks and praise, so that it can be successful—worthy of reception, generative of relationship"; 36.

<sup>76</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 21, 29, 46.

<sup>77</sup>"The Apostolic Faith Movement," *Apostolic Faith* 2.

<sup>78</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 16.

<sup>79</sup>After justification, "Then we go on to the Holy Place to consecrate ourselves. There we find the believer's altar which is the golden altar. We sanctify ourselves and consecrate ourselves to God as a living sacrifice"; "The Baptism with the Holy Ghost Foreshadowed," *Apostolic Faith*, 2.

At and, more pivotally, on the altar, the consecrating resolve to offer one's life as a sacrifice for the flourishing of God's household thus intrinsically presupposes the sanctifying experiences of purgation as the Spirit heals one's malformed will and orders its *telos* towards the flourishing that Pentecost signifies.<sup>80</sup> Pentecostal Old Testament scholar Ricky Moore, via his notion of altar hermeneutics, explicates this sequence by describing the altar as a sacred zone that 'altars' our life through its inevitably purgative effects as on the altar we lay bare that life in order for God's Spirit to transform it as a pleasing sacrifice.<sup>81</sup>

It should be evident that the purgation effected through the Azusa Street sanctification experiences was delivering, cleansing, and eradicating from its worshipping community the sin(s) of systemic racism. In this sense, the consecrating act of bodily presenting ourselves to God on the altar functions as a healing rite effecting not only the vertical but also horizontal sphere within human relations extending beyond the Church to the entire human race.<sup>82</sup>

Being fairly conversant with Roman Catholic philosopher Richard Kearney, let me further substantiate this trajectory through his Ricoeurian-rooted philosophy. Sometimes in life we traumatically experience disorienting events that he calls the *ana*-theistic moment.<sup>83</sup> Yet with it comes the *ana*-potential for epiphanic-renewal.<sup>84</sup> For these threshold moments<sup>85</sup> are always correspondingly, messianically vocative

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<sup>80</sup>I situate this study's aims and reference to human will within an Augustinian/Thomistic-rooted theology of salvation that heals, perfects, and recalibrates the will and its correlating disordered desires; Dale M. Coulter, "Introduction: The Language of Affectivity and the Christian Life," in *The Spirit, the Affections, and the Christian Tradition*, ed. Dale M. Coulter and Amos Yong (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 7-15. In this study I also argue that, as the tradition's core theological symbol (Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 3-4, 12-15, 28-34, 285, 291, 293), Pentecost should shape Pentecostalism as a potent symbol for the hospitable common-good flourishing it signifies; Daniela Augustine, *Pentecost, Hospitality, and Transfiguration: Towards a Spirit-inspired Vision of Social Transformation* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012), 13-14, 18, 44-45, 65-72; 123-124; 145-148.

<sup>81</sup>Ricky D. Moore, "Altar Hermeneutics: Reflections on Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation," *Pneuma* 38 (2016): 148-159 (149, 152, 155-156).

<sup>82</sup>Jacqueline Ryle, "Laying Our Sins and Sorrows on the Altar: Ritualizing Catholic Charismatic Reconciliation and Healing in Fiji," in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2011), 68-69, 93-94.

<sup>83</sup>Richard Kearney, "God Making: Theopoetics and *Ana*-theism," in *The Art of Ana-theism*, ed. Richard Kearney and Matthew Clemente (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), 9-10.

<sup>84</sup>Kearney, "God Making," in *The Art of Ana-theism*, 8-9. The prefix *ana* (back again, anew) signifies after experiences of loss, return to one's primal experience in newer, fuller, and forward-moving epiphanic receptions; idem, *Ana-theism: Returning to God After God* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>85</sup>Kearney, *Ana-theism*, 4, 29, 31, 38.

(Latin: *vocare*; “to call”).<sup>86</sup> To frame this within Kearney’s broader works, we could say that in them God as Sacred Stranger summons us from hostility to just, hospitable action (particularly towards others different from us) for the cause of equitably shared, common-good flourishing, both human and creational.<sup>87</sup> On this note, his *ana*-theistic moment recalls Pentecostal liturgical theologian Daniela Augustine’s thesis—it being that, in worship, God summons our hospitable response to his alterative face that, beholding him so different than us, his Spirit primes our hospitable turn towards human alterities.<sup>88</sup>

Although not wholly parallel, Pentecostalism testifies to these *ana*-events through the purgative facets of its altar rite. Contingent to this refiguring of life willed towards the world’s common-good flourishing, is wise response to this call of God whenever it surfaces through the *ana*-events that foster *ana*-theism.<sup>89</sup> Kearney often illustrates this response via Mary’s womb becoming filled with the power of the Spirit. Yet contingent to her womb becoming filled with the impossible-made-actual is that, in the *ana*-theistic moment as she hovered on the threshold between “Will I” or “Won’t I,” she said “Yes” to the angelic summons.<sup>90</sup> Kearney defines this filling as the the “possibilizing power of the Spirit”

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<sup>86</sup>Kearney, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001); 45. Behind Kearney’s understanding of *ana*-moments is Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin’s ‘weak messianism;’ illustrated in the latter’s reflection that “at the heart of every moment of the future is contained the little door through which the Messiah may enter.” Walter Benjamin, “Theologico-Political Fragment” (1921), in *One Way Street* (London, UK: NLB, 1979), 155; quoted in Kearney, “Enabling God,” in *After God: Richard Kearney and the Religious Turn in Continental Philosophy*, ed. John Panteleimon Manoussakis (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2006), 43. In continental philosophy, messianism speaks of the promise of transcendence breaking into immanence, though as a potentially unsettling ethical summons (particularly via Derrida’s and John Caputo’s deconstructive themes) towards human alterity; Clayton Crockett, B. Keith Putt, and Jeffrey W. Robbins, “Introduction: Back to the Future,” in *The Future of Continental Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Clayton Crockett, B. Keith Putt and Jeffrey W. Robbins (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 3-4.

<sup>87</sup>Kearney, “God Making,” in *The Art of Ana-theism*, 9-10. *Ana*-events thus traumatically liminalize us from past and ongoing pre-critical first faith-naïveté assumptions to a further critically-purged, idol-breaking, more matured faith in God; Kearney; 7. He builds on Ricoeur’s hermeneutical movement “to a second naïveté after the dogmatic prejudices of one first naïveté have been purged”; thereby becoming freed from “false religious fetishism so that the symbols of the eschatological sacred may speak again”; *Ana-theism*, 202-203, footnote 47; see Ricoeur, “The Critique of Religion” in Charles Regan and David Stuart, ed., *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 213f. Kearney consistently calls this traumatically epiphanic outcome, “*God after God*”; “God Making,” in *The Art of Ana-theism*, 7-8. Also drawing from Ricoeur’s concept, Hughes conversely stresses how meaningful worship effects second naïveté experiences; *Worship as Meaning*, 150-151 233, 287-288.

<sup>88</sup>Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good*, 27, 45-49, 137.

<sup>89</sup>Kearney, “God Making,” in *The Art of Ana-theism*, 6, 8.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 13-16.

that raised Christ from the dead and subsequently empowering the disciples for their prophetic mission.<sup>91</sup> Yet actualizing the possibilities of God entails, within those *ana*-theistic moments, our “Yes” to the Spirit of God.<sup>92</sup>

Kearney’s reflections well clarify Seymour’s teaching that, through this consecrating posture with its cleansing and purging experiences, the worshipper is now “on the altar ready for the fire of God to fall, which is the baptism with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>93</sup> What I am stressing here is that, within the Pentecostal altar rite, the purgation experience of this liturgical act of sacrifice intrinsically effects its re-figured aftermath—that being the empowering experience of Spirit baptism.

Seymour taught that, through their consecrating posture before God, worshippers are now on the altar ready for the fire of God to fall.<sup>94</sup> There the Holy Spirit altars us into fuel for the fire. Metaphorically speaking, once the heavenly fire falls upon this sacrificial offering, God-pleasing smoke arises from altar-placed bodies, causing a constant incense (Philippians 4:18) as we willingly let our rightly-ordered life (through the healing of our will) gift his household for its flourishing.<sup>95</sup> The empowering experience that Classical Pentecostalism calls Spirit baptism is the fire of God falling from heaven and consuming this offering on the altar. This divine consumption thus enables our offering as a circulating gift within the cosmic economy for the flourishing of God’s household.

### **How the Pentecostal Altar Rite Functions Within Cosmic Liturgy**

A final observation to be retrieved from Jennings’ theology concerns his argument that the cosmic temple liturgy that fuels God’s gift-economy is not human projection but very real. Like Jacob’s ladder (Genesis 28:12; John 1:51), it operates from heaven to earth and back to

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<sup>91</sup>Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 81.

<sup>92</sup>Also, inspiring Kearney’s perception of God as a loving, possibilizing force towards and within creation is Aristotle’s notion of possibility (e.g., potentiality to actuality); *The God Who May Be*, 83, 101-102, 111.

<sup>93</sup>Seymour, “The Way into the Holiest,” *Apostolic Faith*, 4.

<sup>94</sup>For similar observations, see Tomberlin, *Pentecostal Sacraments*, 12-17.

<sup>95</sup>R. Hollis Gause, “The Nature and Pattern of Biblical Worship,” in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, 2nd ed., ed. Lee Roy Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2020), 148-151. See Christian A. Eberhart, “A Neglected Feature of Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible: Remarks on the Burning Rite on the Altar,” *Harvard Theological Review* 97, no. 4 (October 2004): 485-493 (490, 492): (The smoke from the sacrifice thus reaches God as a pleasing order). 2 Corinthians 8-9 illustrate this flourishing aim through the grace of giving capacitating the churches to offer themselves within the divine economy for servicing Paul’s collection for the struggling Jerusalem community; Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 120-121.

heaven.<sup>96</sup> In her monograph, *"I Was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day": A Pentecostal Engagement with Worship in the Apocalypse*, Pentecostal Bible scholar Melissa Archer similarly argues how the early 20th-century Pentecostal worship ethos is saturated with imageries of the Apocalypse. For through Holy Spirit outpourings, worshippers found themselves in the Spirit, intensely caught up in the heavenly worship.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, *The Apostolic Faith* evidences how Azusa Street altar-centric worship made them adept at the tasks of pattern recognition, perceiving the divine patterns of transcendent causality from heaven to earth<sup>98</sup> and accounting for the Revival's phenomena of dreams, visions, and prophecies.<sup>99</sup> This accounts for the outcomes of human diversities becoming one in a singular house of worship<sup>100</sup> patterned after the heavenly economy.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the gift of the Spirit granted worshippers apocalyptic revelation to the cosmic temple.<sup>102</sup>

In his Christology stressing the gift of the Spirit as the prime aim of Christ's atonement and resurrection, Assemblies of God theologian Frank Macchia similarly expresses how his ongoing priestly work summons our own priestly labor and our worship to him as high priest. One aim of this labor is our taking on Christ's image, which we conversely "offer ourselves in the Spirit as living sacrifices to God for his missional purposes (Romans 12:1)."<sup>103</sup> By its analogies to the heavenly liturgy of Jesus, earthly liturgy should function as apocalypse, revealing these transcendent realities, transporting us within their operations, and enabling prophetic vision into how they should be manifesting within our earthly sphere.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 107, 121.

<sup>97</sup>Melissa L. Archer, *"I Was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day": A Pentecostal Engagement with Worship in the Apocalypse* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), 68-79. (She examines how *The Apostolic Faith* reports show how the Apocalypse shaped the worship of the Azusa Street Revival, 299-300).

<sup>98</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 3, 91-94, 98, 108-111, 114, 116, 127. Discussing the millennium, an Azusa Street Revival participant states, "We shall be in the heavenly image:" "The Millennium," *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906), 3. Thus, the typological phrase, "Jesus is the true tabernacle...the tabernacle in the wilderness was made after the pattern of the heavenly tabernacle. . . . We now have the true pattern which is the Lord Jesus Christ"; "The Baptism with the Holy Ghost Foreshadowed," *Apostolic Faith*, 2; "Our tabernacle must be built according to the pattern in the Word"; "Salvation According to the True Tabernacle," *Apostolic Faith*, 3.

<sup>99</sup>*Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906), 1, 2.

<sup>100</sup>"The Same Old Way," *Apostolic Faith*, 3 ("Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities worship together"); "Spreads the Fire," *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906), 4 ("God is drawing His people together and making them one").

<sup>101</sup>"Our tabernacle must be built according to the pattern in the Word;" "Salvation According to the True Tabernacle," *Apostolic Faith*, 3.

<sup>102</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 111-113.

<sup>103</sup>Macchia, *Jesus the Spirit Baptizer: Christology in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 329.

<sup>104</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 98-101, 111-114, 123-127.

While recognizing its intended teaching towards a far too strictly demarcated salvation sequence, I would suggest that, within *The Apostolic Faith's* tabernacle typologies<sup>105</sup> and its tabernacle/temple language,<sup>106</sup> we can discern an intuitive grasp of the anagogical structure of the cosmic liturgy<sup>107</sup> that integrates its earthly and heavenly levels in God's household.<sup>108</sup> That house is a temple;<sup>109</sup> and through the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 9:8-15), it is active with sacrificial worship for fuelling its gift-economy towards the flourishing of creation.<sup>110</sup>

I thus wager that the Azusa Street community perceived the cosmic temple liturgy manifested within its own worship events. In the Spirit, they obeyed Jesus' call to the sanctifying, empowering altar of sacrifice. For at the configuring moment transpiring *on* the altar of sacrifice, Christ (our Sanctifier, Spirit baptizer, Healer, and commissioning King) summons us to sacrificial worship so that our will can be healed through our obedience of faith in him (Romans 1:5; 16:26).<sup>111</sup> Thus, as we become re-figured in the vocational empowerment of Spirit-baptism, our capacity to promptly obey his summons from within, suffering alterities being made known to us, might be more rightly willed to loving embodied action now serviceable to his saving aims for creation.<sup>112</sup>

These intimations towards a Pentecostal theology of the altar rendezvous with Macchia's theology of the Spirit-baptized church

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<sup>105</sup>“The Baptism with the Holy Ghost Foreshadowed,” *Apostolic Faith*, 2; Salvation According to the True Tabernacle,” *Apostolic Faith*, 3.

<sup>106</sup>*The Apostolic Faith* typically uses the term ‘tabernacle’ to describe gathered church meetings and/or their localities in actual tent structures; *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906), 3; *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 4 (December 1906), 3; *Apostolic Faith* 1 no. 10 (September 1907), 1 (whereas here, the tabernacle refers also to an upper room tent). Yet the tabernacle language also typically recalls within those meetings the designated ritual altar space; “Pentecostal Scenes,” *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906), 3.

<sup>107</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 20-21, 33, 93-94, 101.

<sup>108</sup>Sometimes reference is made to the heavenly temple of God interfacing with earthly worship; “The Lord is in his holy temple and let all flesh be silent before him.” *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 6 (February-March 1907), 5.

<sup>109</sup>Recognizing the cosmos as a temple nested within the basic Ancient Near East (ANE) cosmology and its temple-mythos funding the Old and New Testament Scripture Bible a Jewish/Christian cosmology; Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 80-81, 91-93. Daniela Augustine articulates a similar understanding of the cosmos as temple, which the tabernacle foreshadows as a mini-cosmos and the garden of Eden as a proto-holy-of-holies within the created order; Augustine, “Liturgy, Theosis, and the Renewal of the World,” in *Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, 222-227. Hence, the Spirit-filled church is to function on earth as temple patterned after the heavenly temple; 232-235.

<sup>110</sup>Jennings, *Liturgy and Theology*, 35-36.

<sup>111</sup>Paul D. Janz, *The Command of Grace: A New Theological Apologetics* (London, UK: T & T Clark, 2009), 86-87, 94.

<sup>112</sup>Oliver Davies, “The Interrupted Body,” in Oliver Davies, Paul D. Janz, and Clemens Sedmak, *Transformation Theology: Church in the World* (London, UK: T & T Clark, 2007), 39, 43-57. See also Macchia, *Jesus the Spirit Baptizer*, ix, 2, 25-29, 64, 301-302, 315.

explicated as the temple of God's Spirit, given its aim towards liturgically forming worshippers into the "image of Christ as priests offering themselves as living sacrifices for the mission of God."<sup>113</sup> For through our embodied sacrifices of thanksgiving, praise, and gifted lives, his Spirit transforms us more and more as a mighty Spirit-powered army of God<sup>114</sup>—an army that touches heaven and wars in the spirit realm against the kingdom of darkness as it goes forth to the ends of earth prophesying the kingdom, freeing the captive, and healing the world until all creation is willed to Pentecost as the waters cover the sea.

### Conclusion

I have constructed here a Pentecostal theology of the altar by mapping relevant liturgical theology themes developed within my dissertation onto the basic liturgical *ordo* I perceive within both the Azusa Street Revival's salvation theology discourse and the altar-centric worship experiences archived within the Revival's *Apostolic Faith* publication. My aim was to augment the identity-marking role that Azusa Street plays within Classical Pentecostalism. I thus strove to intimate a theology of the altar constructed from how the Azusa Street altar rite had effected—for a brief though exemplary witness to the promise of Pentecostalism for the world's healing—a discourse tradition defined and fueled by its empowering social inclusiveness and the apocalyptically functioning charismatic phenomena that together signified the experience of Holy Spirit outpouring (otherwise called 'the Pentecostal fullness'). The witness of Azusa Street's altar-centric liturgical outcomes thus clarifies how Pentecostal liturgy, through the efficacy of its meaning-full worship, capacitates worshippers to encounter human alterities for the cause of common-good flourishing within shared cosmopolitan-marked geographies of God's new people willed to Pentecost.

By wedding Hughes' and Jennings' liturgical theologies coupled with Ricoeurian emplotment theory, I have discovered and shown how a crucial event marking configuring experiences within the ongoing maturation of Pentecostals are those moments at the altar which in obedience to the vocative summons through the Spirit's manifest presence, worshippers place themselves on it as living sacrifices to God. Although they may not fully recognize it, in those healing vocationally empowering moments, they become gifts for fueling the gift-economy that flourishes God's household and his mission for the world's healing.

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<sup>113</sup>Macchia, *The Spirit-Baptized Church: A Dogmatic Inquiry* (London, UK: T&T Clark, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 117, 120.

<sup>114</sup>Macchia, *The Spirit-Baptized Church*, 121-125.

As his Spirit-baptized temple, we thus discharge the priestly work (*leitourgia*) of invoking the Spirit's outpouring on these offerings of thanksgiving to Christ, who commissions us for the mission of God.

To conclude, within the Pentecostal liturgical *ordo*, the Holy Spirit sacramentalizes the altar event into an epiclestically-charged holy ground that liminalizes worshippers into that edge experience which Pentecostals often describe as encountering God through his manifest presence. There on the altar, they encounter him as the wholly Other. In offering themselves as living sacrifices of praise (i.e., living gifts for circulation as He chooses within the economy of his household), the Holy Spirit heals their malformed will to rightly order their *telos*, and vocationally empower them as God's ministering people to all alterities they encounter within his mission. Thus, having freely received this liberating power, they now in renewed measure, will themselves to Pentecost.

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