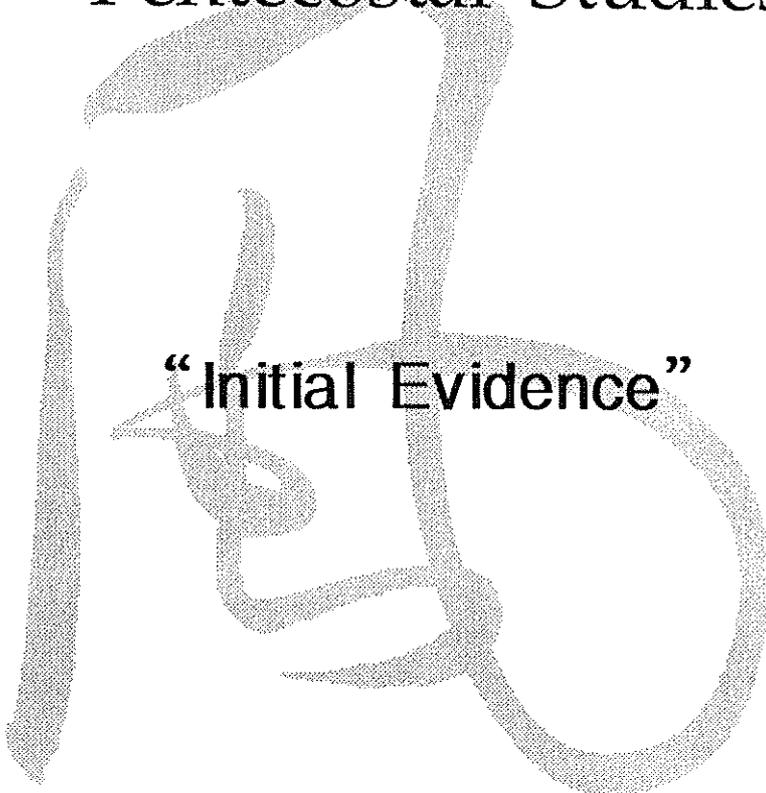


Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies



“Initial Evidence”

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INTRODUCTION

Classical Pentecostals are often defined by their deeply felt conviction that baptism in the Spirit is accompanied by speaking in tongues. In the Assemblies of God, U.S.A., for instance, this conviction finds expression in The Statement of Fundamental Truths, point 8, entitled, "The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost":

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

It is evident, however, that this doctrine has not found universal acceptance within the Pentecostal movement and has been largely dismissed by non-Pentecostal brothers and sisters in the wider Evangelical world. This fact highlights the need for further discussion of this important issue. Indeed, there is a need, experienced within each ecclesiastical tradition and by every generation of adherents, to reflect upon and rearticulate our theology in a manner, which is relevant to the contemporary context and faithful to the Scriptures. The rich heritage embodied in Pentecostal theology, and more specifically in the doctrine of evidential tongues, is no exception at this point.

This issue of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, then, seeks to explore this keenly felt and, at times, controversial doctrine. It is hoped that this collection of articles will help Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals better understand one another, and stimulate further reflection on this issue. With this goal in mind, we have intentionally included a wide range of articles, including those that clearly critique the traditional view of classical Pentecostalism. David Lim and Max Turner, both open and sympathetic to much within Pentecostalism, offer Evangelical critiques of the "initial evidence" doctrine. These articles helpfully point out key areas of disagreement and seek to stimulate responses from the Pentecostal community.

This volume begins, however, with essays from classical Pentecostal perspectives. My own article focuses on largely hermeneutical issues related to the tongues question and seeks to point future discussion in what is hoped will be a fruitful direction. Roli dela Cruz, a minister of the

Philippine Assemblies of God, offers a response article, which seeks to interact, not only with my article of this issue, but also with previous works which I have written. Frank Macchia, an American Assemblies of God minister, offers a stimulating article discussing the theological significance of the doctrine. Tan May Ling, an Assemblies of God minister and academician from Singapore, offers her insights on the matter by way of response to Macchia. Harold Hunter, the Director of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church Research Center, offers an historical sketch of Holiness Pentecostal perspectives on the "initial evidence" doctrine. And Mathew Clark, a minister of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and an instructor in their Theological College, helps us understand aspects of the experience and theology of Pentecostals in the region of Southern Africa. Finally, as noted above, **this** issue ends with two contributions from sympathetic, but critical friends: David Lim, a prominent Filipino theologian, and Max Turner, a Baptist scholar in Britain, both provide articles which will undoubtedly stimulate much discussion and hopefully a number of response articles from our *AJPS* readers.

Of course the perspectives presented in these articles reflect the viewpoints of the various authors; they do not necessarily reflect the official stance of any **particular** church or institution. It is hoped that through this free **exchange** of ideas, we can move a bit closer to mutual understanding and a fuller apprehension of the divine truth. We do look forward to and encourage our readers to respond to the **articles** contained in this issue.

Robert P. Menzies
Guest Editor

Vol. 2, no. 2 (July 1999) issue is tentatively set to publish responses and additional relevant articles – editors.

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AN EVANGELICAL CRITIQUE OF “INITIAL EVIDENCE” DOCTRINE

David S. Lim

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege to be asked to write this article as a representative of the Asian Evangelical theological community. The writer appreciates this openness to honest academic dialogue on one of the key distinctives of Pentecostal theology. It is hoped that this essay will open the way forward for a common understanding and a more biblical theology of those who believe in the doctrine of “initial evidence” and those who do not.

At the outset, may the writer identify himself and his context, for he is a mission theologian who believes that all good theologies are contextual or experiential.¹ In relation to Pentecostalism, he is an “open Evangelical,” that is someone who accepts Pentecostal theology and experience,² whereas a significant number (perhaps as many as half of

¹ Even the best exegetes and theologians come with pre-understanding to the biblical text. Those who do not acknowledge this fact are most prone to the weakness of jumping into dogmatism and/or premature (narrow and sub-biblical) theological conclusions.

² He has many Pentecostal friends and attends a Charismatic church; some (including himself) would consider him a “Charismatic,” as defined in this essay. “Open Evangelicals” believe that tongues and other supernatural gifts are still being endowed by the Holy Spirit, but still find certain Pentecostal doctrines to be problematic; cf. his forthcoming book, *Speaking in Tongues* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1998); S. Grossmann, *Stewards of God’s Grace* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1981); R. Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics, II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983); J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1986); H. Snyder, *The Divided Flame* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986); and T. Campolo, *How to Be Pentecostal without Speaking in Tongues* (Waco, TX: Word, 1991).

Evangelicals) are “closed Evangelicals” who hold to the cessationist,³ anti-Pentecostal view.

Although he came from a closed Evangelical tradition, he became more and more open to Pentecostalism since his college days while serving as a youth leader working for church unity and for campus evangelism.⁴ He is familiar with the theological issues raised from both the Evangelical and Pentecostal camps, and has heard and read of testimonies of Evangelicals who have moved to Pentecostalism,⁵ as well as of Pentecostals who have transferred to Evangelicalism, even of the closed variety. He has made an in-depth academic study of the tongues phenomenon, published a lengthy journal article about it in 1984,⁶ and revised it into a book to be published soon.⁷ In his ministry in Asia, especially in China, he has come across tongue-speaking traditions which do not share the Pentecostal paradigm.⁸

The writer recognizes that the twentieth century has seen at least three major waves of the Holy Spirit which carry Pentecostal theology.⁹ Classical Pentecostalism (simply called “Pentecostalism” in this essay) traces its roots to a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas (January 1, 1901) and the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1906-09). The late 1950s brought the second renewal (called “neo-Pentecostalism” here) into many established churches (Protestant, then Roman Catholic and Eastern

³ “Cessationists” believe that, since the completion of the canon, supernatural gifts like tongues have passed away. This viewpoint was popularized by Dispensationism, which based such views on the Dutch Reformed theology of B. B. Warfield. Cf. P. Wiebe, “The Pentecostal Initial Evidence Doctrine,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984), pp. 465-72; J. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992); and M. Moriarty, *The New Charismatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992).

⁴ He served as the president of a coalition of church youth fellowships and led the local student leaders council of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship-Philippines in Bacolod City from 1971-74.

⁵ Most impressive is that of ex-professor of Dallas Theological Seminary, John Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993).

⁶ “Speaking in Tongues,” *Christian Forum* 7 (1984), pp. 34-73.

⁷ Referred to in n. 2.

⁸ In the Wenzhou area of China, Christian leaders who spoke in tongues started a Charismatic revival in the late 1950s; yet their theological paradigm does not include “initial evidence.” Cf. “Charismatic Churches in Mainland China,” *Chinese Around the World* (February, 1990), pp. 13-14.

⁹ Cf. C. P. Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1988).

Orthodox). Since the 80s, several independent Charismatic mega-churches and networks (called “Charismaticism” here) were formed, often with some unusual teachings. These spiritual “waves of the Spirit” have made tremendous (and perhaps the greatest) impact in the growth of the church worldwide in this century.

2. QUESTIONS

But like almost all others of the Evangelical community, and despite his openness to the Pentecostal doctrines of “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and “initial evidence,” this writer finds problems in fitting them into Evangelical theology: Does the Bible (and Christian experience) really teach: 1) “baptism of the Holy Spirit” as a normative experience?; 2) “evidence” as a necessary element in spiritual experiences?; 3) “initial evidence” as an important element in Christian spirituality?; and 4) “speaking in tongues” as the only “initial evidence”? To each of these four issues, he offers suggestions for a possible way forward towards a common or shared Pentecostal-Evangelical theology.¹⁰

2.1 Spirit-baptism: Normative?

Sharing the Wesleyan-Holiness theological framework for interpreting the work of the Spirit, Pentecostalism clearly teaches that all believers should seek to be “baptized by the Holy Spirit,” which is understood as an experience subsequent to their conversion.¹¹ Among many other listed purposes, the most common reason why this experience is considered normative is that it anoints and empowers the Christian for (more powerful) spiritual service.¹²

¹⁰ This should be a high priority, in light of the observation of Jeremy Rifkin, *The Emerging Order* (New York: Random House, 1979): “If the Charismatic and evangelical streams of the new Christian renewal movement [today] come together and unite a liberating energy with a new covenant vision for society, it is possible that a great religious awakening will take place, one potentially powerful enough to incite a second Protestant reformation” (p. xi).

¹¹ Biblical support for Spirit-baptism is found in the perceived two-fold pattern in the life of Jesus (His miraculous birth through the overshadowing of the Spirit and the Spirit’s anointing at His baptism) and the apostles (born again or reformed in John 20:22 and then Spirit-baptized on the Day of Pentecost).

¹² Cf. G. P. Duffield and N. M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (San Dimas, CA: LIFE Bible College, 1983; reprint, Manila: OMF Literature,

Many Evangelicals have found this view to be biblical wanting. It is good that there are Pentecostals who suggest that Spirit-baptism need not be a distinguishable, second event; but rather, may be a “concurrent yet subsequent” experience.¹³ Yet do all Spirit-baptisms have to be an eventful experience? This is not consistently shown in Acts. Barnabas, Timothy, Titus and other close companions of Paul, the twelve apostles, as well as other converts mentioned in the New Testament seem to have had no uniform crisis experiences. The “silence of Scripture” or the scarcity of biblical data leaves this tenet uncertain at best. Insisting on present definitions, Pentecostals are forced to deduce that those who have not been baptized by the Spirit have “imperfect dispositions” or “lack of faith-awareness, faith-expectancy or faith-openness.”¹⁴

So it appears that “Spirit-baptism” as a normative experience has to be redefined: not necessarily as a single event, but as a possible series of crisis experiences one encounters in the normal Christian life. This fosters an ongoing openness and expectancy for “life in the Spirit” which incorporates the full range of Charismatic gifts (including tongues, healing and prophecy) as a present day reality.

Evangelical theology may also be faulty if “conversion” is also perceived as a single event rather than as a process (series of events) that may or may not be highlighted by a memorable crisis experience.¹⁵ This traditional Evangelical and Pentecostal *event-centeredness* should be superseded by the recognition of the clearer biblical teaching of the unlimited creativity of God working *sovereignly* and *differently* in each Christian’s life. Throughout history the Spirit has brought believers *in various ways* into higher levels of awareness of God’s presence, power and glory. This Charismatic dimension of the normative Christian life may include any number of spiritual milestones, breakthrough

1990), pp. 307-13; and G. McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991).

¹³ Cf. Y. C. Lim, “Acts 10: A Gentile Model for Pentecostal Experience,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1 (1998), pp. 70-71.

¹⁴ P. A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), p. 89.

¹⁵ It seems that most second and subsequent generations of believers, especially those who received good Christian nurture and did not undergo rebellion against their parents’ faith, would testify that such dramatic conversion and other spiritual experiences are rarely distinguishable in their lives.

experiences, and gradual uneventful “Spirit-infillings.”¹⁶ In this way, “Spirit-baptisms” (note plural) can be fully integrated into mainstream Evangelical theology.

2.2 Evidence: Necessary?

Pentecostal theology goes beyond the Wesleyan-Holiness paradigm by connecting “Spirit-baptism” to the concept of “initial evidence,” i.e., the need for a visible sign (in the sense of physical proof)¹⁷ to accompany the experience. This doctrine is supported from the five cases of (recorded and presumed) tongue-speaking in Acts: Pentecost (ch. 2), Samaritans (ch. 8), Paul (ch. 9), Cornelius (ch. 10), and the twelve in Ephesus (ch. 19).¹⁸ Evidence *per se* is considered to be a demonstration of God’s power that His kingdom has broken into this present age; the Spirit witnesses to Christ both inwardly and *outwardly* today.¹⁹

Yet this seems to be opposite to the New Testament or Pauline teaching that Christians are to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7; cf. 2:14-5:10).²⁰ In the synoptic gospels Jesus consistently refused to grant requests for signs (Matt 12:38f.; 16:4; cf. Luke 11:16f.). In John’s Gospel, although John showed that signs (in the sense of supernatural miracles) were useful to lead to faith (2:11, 23; 3:2; 6:2; 7:31; 9:16; 12:18f.; 20:31); nevertheless, Jesus knew that such human expectations are not necessarily linked to true faith (2:18f., 24f.; 4:48; 6:30; 12:10f.; cf. 11:47-53). If indeed there are evidences to be sought, Paul (Acts 14:22; 2 Cor 10-13; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 3:12) and Hebrews 11 emphasize that suffering and pain are the “signs” of true spirituality.

Some Pentecostal theologians have begun to locate this search for proof or evidence in the rise of “the scientific mindset” which has been popularized by Western secularism and empiricism.²¹ Yet this tendency

¹⁶ Cf. H. Lederle, “A Reformed Perspective on Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” *PRRMI Renewal News* 128 (Fall, 1992), p. 7. May we not include struggles, breakdowns and depressions, too?

¹⁷ On the biblical concept of “proof,” cf. G. T. D. Angel, “*apodeixis*,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Exeter: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), III, pp. 570f.

¹⁸ Cf. McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*.

¹⁹ Cf. Pomerville, pp. 93-95.

²⁰ Cf. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 82, 115.

²¹ R. Spittler, “Suggested Areas for Further Research in Pentecostal Studies,”

seems to be not just a modern Western phenomenon; it seems to be a universal human weakness, dating from Cain (Gen 4:13-15) and manifested in New Testament times (1 Cor 1:18-2:16).²² Thus Asian Pentecostal theologians cannot opt out of this issue by just referring to the need to contextualize in non-Western settings; they need to develop a theology that critiques the general human longing for “visible evidence.”

Is this demand for evidence a sign of spiritual maturity or immaturity? The biblical data seem to point towards the latter.

2.3 Initial Evidence: Important?

Pentecostals emphasize the importance of “*initial* evidence” as a distinctive.²³ It is needed to assure the seeker that he has received the Holy Spirit, as in Acts.²⁴

This seems to detract from the biblical emphasis on the “*ultimate* evidence” or “*primary* evidence” of Spirit-baptism or Spirit-fulfillment, which is *love* (Gal 5:6, 22f.; 1 Cor 12-14, esp. 13:1-3).²⁵ There seems to be hardly any emphasis nor any significant reference in the Scriptures to the physical pattern of beginning the believers’ spiritual journey and growth. Spiritual breakthroughs can start from any point, no matter how sinful (like Jacob in the OT and Zaccheus and the Samaritan woman in the NT), for people can come to Jesus as they are, as they are drawn by the Spirit of God (Rom 8).

Just like the Corinthian church, focusing on spiritual gifts (and the experience of initiation behind them) diverts attention from the Giver and His ultimate purpose. Paul had to rebuke the Corinthians for ignoring the fruit of the Spirit which ultimately validates or invalidates the theologies and spiritualities brought by whoever from whatever tradition (1 Cor

Society for Pentecostal Studies (paper presented at its 12th Annual Meeting, 1982), traces it to Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* in 1859 (p. 9).

²² The “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (2:4) seems to denote non-dramatic conversions that transformed lives, though “signs and wonders” may also be meant.

²³ Cf. McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*.

²⁴ Duffield & Van Cleave, pp. 320f.

²⁵ Biblical “love” (*agape*) may simply be defined as the sacrificial denial of oneself to serve the good of God’s kingdom and other people, particularly those in need, as modeled by our Lord Jesus himself (Eph 5:2; 1 Cor 13:4-7; 2 Cor 8:9; 1 John 3:16-18).

12:31-14:1; 16:14). The biblical emphasis is on the ethical rather than on the charismatic.²⁶

Thus, to emphasize “initial evidence” is theologically defective for it majors on a biblical minor rather than on a biblical major, that of “ultimate (or primary) evidence.” A couple of Pentecostal theologians have suggested six “permanent evidences,”²⁷ but fail to highlight “love” as the “ultimate evidence.” Can Asian Pentecostals take the lead in working on this corrective?

2.4 Tongues: Sole Initial Evidence?

As seen above, Pentecostals find biblical support for glossolalia as the initial evidence of Spirit-baptism in the five cases of tongue-speaking in Acts (chs. 2, 8, 9, 10 and 19). These biblical references are considered to be model events and hence normative.²⁸ Thus many Pentecostals have considered tongues as the *sine qua non* or the essence of Pentecostalism.²⁹ Some Pentecostals, several neo-Pentecostals and most Charismatics are more flexible in affirming Spirit-baptism as “usually, but not always” accompanied by glossolalia.³⁰

Given the paucity of references to tongues in the Scriptures (mainly in a few portions of Acts and 1 Cor 12-14), it seems improper to insist that God’s manifestation be identified with this specific gift as a “proof,”

²⁶ Quebedeaux, p. 238, who adds Jesus’ words, “By their fruits you shall know them.” See Matt 7:20; cf. 7:15-27; 25:31-46; James 2:14-26; 3:13-18; 2 Pet 1:3-7; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-21.

²⁷ Duffield & Van Cleave, p. 323, list: 1) Christ glorified as never before (John 14:21-23); 2) deeper passion for souls (Acts 2:14-41; 4:19f.; 11:22-24, etc.); 3) greater power to witness (Acts 1:8; 2:41; 4:31-33; John 15:26f.; 1 Cor 2:4f); 4) new power in prayer (Acts 3:1; 4:23-31; 6:4; 10:9; Rom 8:21; Jude 20; Eph 6:18; 1 Cor 14:14-22); 5) deeper love for the Bible (John 16:13); and 6) use of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4-11).

²⁸ Cf. Y. C. Lim, pp. 71-72. Evangelicals tend to view these cases as “initiatory events” of the universal church, hence non-normative, yet significantly confirming the presence of the Spirit among the early believers.

²⁹ Cf. McGee.

³⁰ W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), p. xix; cf. Quebedeaux, *New Charismatics*; C. Roxas, *Catholic Life in the Spirit Seminar Speakers Manual* (Quezon City, Philippines: Catholic Christian Community, 1992), pp. 23-24; and others. Duffield & Van Cleave, p. 323, also list other accompanying “signs,” like praise to God (Acts 2:11,47; 10:46), overflowing joy (2:46) and a deep burden and desire to preach Christ (1:8; 2:14-18; 3:31; 19:6).

however valuable the gift might be. At best, Pentecostals can point out that this is the distinctive of Lukan theology in Acts.³¹ But without downplaying its divine origin³² and its spiritual and psychological value (particularly in Spirit-baptism), and in accord with Pauline teaching, tongues need not be exalted above other gifts nor despised nor forbidden, but must be spoken in love and decorum (and preferably with interpretation if used in public) (1 Cor 14:26-33, 39-40).

Moreover, a Gallup poll in 1979 already revealed that only one-sixth of those who claim to be Pentecostals (and neo-Pentecostals and perhaps many more Charismatics) have ever spoken in tongues.³³ How are Pentecostals going to integrate this reality into their theology? An over-emphasis on tongues may be detrimental to the long-term development of Pentecostal theology³⁴ and the growth of Pentecostalism.³⁵ It seems that the less glossolalia is linked to "initial evidence" and "Spirit-baptism," the more universal (and biblical) will Pentecostal theology be. Perhaps the term "common (or usual) evidence" is a step forward?

3. CONCLUSION

Thus, for lack of direct or explicit biblical references (perhaps except for some "clues" in Acts) to glossolalia as the only initial evidence of Spirit-baptism, it may be best for Pentecostal theology to reformulate this doctrine.³⁶ This should be interpreted not as a retreat to tentativeness but

³¹ Cf. Y. C. Lim, pp. 62-72; and Pomerville, pp. 89-92. Yet if tongues were a common experience in "Spirit-baptism" in the early church, why did Luke have to deliberately (did he?) record and teach it in Acts?

³² Yet tongues are also known to occur in non-Christian contexts, even under occult or demonic influence. Besides, some instances may be merely psychological and not necessarily edifying or beneficial to those present.

³³ K. S. Kantzer, "The Charismatics Among Us," *Christianity Today* (February 22, 1980), pp. 13-17.

³⁴ Why insist on a distinctive which is biblically limited (almost exclusively Lukan) rather than on others which are more widely taught alongside other biblical traditions (Pauline, Matthean, Johannine)?

³⁵ Why insist on a doctrine that would alienate potential church members, and may lead to exclude members and disenfranchise ordained ministers who can no longer hold on to such with intellectual and/or moral integrity?

³⁶ One that interests the author is what will happen to the "latter rain" teaching of Pentecostalism, particularly if our Lord Jesus does not return in another 50 years.

an advance to maturation in theological development,³⁷ in at least three directions:

3.1 Redefinition of Initial Evidence

In light of the above discussion, tongues may best be called “a common (or usual) evidence” of Christians who (and not all will) experience Spirit-baptism. The phrase “initial evidence” may mean the “primary (or main) experience.”

Perhaps glossolalia was indeed the initial evidence then, but now it is just one of many, just like Aaron’s rod, the ark of the covenant and the serpent on Moses’ pole; these brought forth a spiritual revival, but were later no longer God’s means. Today Spirit-baptism may be accompanied by “resting (or slain) in the Spirit,” prophetic words, inner healing, holy laughter, or no physical manifestation!³⁸ Thereby the distinctive’s emphasis shifts to the sovereign grace of God,³⁹ who deals with each person in his/her context according to His riches in Christ Jesus. Here is an example of a modified “common evidence” view:

... tongues is not a mark of maturity, because we see unbelievers who come from completely pagan backgrounds who start speaking in tongues right at conversion.... it is not the “initial” experience of having received the infilling with the Holy Spirit, nor does it grow out of a second work of grace because there are many who effectively witness to Jesus Christ, but who do not speak in tongues. It is entirely God’s grace, given not as a reward for holiness or maturity, but as an aid to our Christian development and service.⁴⁰

³⁷ For this writer, the church’s growth into a united and fuller understanding of God and His will take place as each denomination or tradition develops in theological maturity and outgrows its earlier (narrow) “distinctives” and embraces more mature (open) “distinctives” that can be shared by others.

³⁸ The Bible seems to teach that the sovereign Spirit is not only free to grant the known *charismata*, but also *new* (i.e., not mentioned in Scriptures) ones (cf. John 3:8; 2 Cor 3:17; also, none of the Paul’s listings of gifts was meant to be exhaustive). Records of past revivals also include holy rolling, holy dancing, holy barking and (recently) holy laughter!

³⁹ Duffield & Van Cleave, p. 308, characterize “Spirit-baptism” as “a free gift of God’s grace.” Pomerville, p. 92, seems to allow the absence of tongues in Spirit-baptism as “perhaps, a sovereign decision on the part of God, Acts 8.”

⁴⁰ By a Reformed neo-Pentecostal, W. Childs, “The Gift of Tongues Aids Christian Growth,” *PRRMI Renewal News* 128 (Fall, 1992), p. 8.

How big is Pentecostalism's God? May it be the God who deals with His people in creative, multifaceted patterns (with or without tongues) in their respective uniqueness in His unpredictable, sovereign way.

3.2 Reemphasis on Ultimate Evidence

Pentecostalism can then be free to emphasize other possible distinctives. One possibility is to return to one of its greatest contributions to modern Christian theology: that of building bridges across the gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxy.⁴¹

As an alternative to false ecumenism that rejected the importance of orthodoxy, Pentecostalism emphasized that orthodoxy must produce right experience or practice.

As shown above, the regular use of the charismata (right practice) would point less to visible "initial evidence" (tongues), but more to moral "ultimate evidence" (love). Such love will help believers to transcend gender, age and racial barriers (as was manifested in classical Pentecostalism), denominational divisions (neo-Pentecostalism)⁴² as well as social, economic and political gaps (Charismaticism). As "Mr. Pentecost," David DuPlessis said, "The Holy Spirit has never recognized barriers."⁴³ Can Pentecostalism recover such a high level of "evidence" doctrine?

3.3 Revival of Universal Priesthood

Another possible Pentecostal distinctive is the actualization of the "priesthood (or prophethood)⁴⁴ of all believers." Like most revivals, the Pentecostal movement reintroduced and developed the "universal priesthood" doctrine in a new way, where no earthly distinction hinders

⁴¹ The black American origins of Pentecostalism saw the call for true Christians to give sacrificial response to human suffering by working for the end of racism, prejudice and injustice; cf. Quebedeaux, pp. 210, 238f.

⁴² Pentecostal theologians should continue to take the lead in bridging the gaps between Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and various Protestant denominations; this sort of bridge-building does not appear to have gone beyond Brighton (1991); cf. M. Harper, *Three Sisters* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1979); Quebedeaux, pp. 72-85; and Snyder, pp. 45-47, 90, 96f.

⁴³ David Du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go*, rev. ed. (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1970), p. 27.

⁴⁴ Acts 2:17-18 seems to be quite clear on this.

any believer from serving the Lord with his/her particular mix of charismata.⁴⁵ But with the “initial evidence” doctrine, it brought in an inherent “logical contradiction” into this biblical truth: it necessarily leads to a two-tiered system, with a “spiritual elite” (glossolalics) and the rest as “second class citizens” of God’s kingdom. How do Pentecostals define themselves in relation to the rest of the Body of Christ? An important theological issue arises: Are non-glossolalics inferior or equal to glossolalics in spiritual status before God?

In contrast, if Pentecostalism reemphasizes the “universal priesthood” doctrine, its distinctive of orthopraxy will surely keep it on the cutting edge of theological development and global missions. It will call the churches to be constantly renewed by the Spirit (not just by one fixed pattern, but by any pattern which the Spirit sovereignly grants to each) to serve God’s kingdom as fellow priests, prophets and servant-leaders - with or without the initial evidence of tongues.

The failure to develop beyond its “initial evidence” doctrine may just be the reason why Pentecostalism’s three waves seem to have each “run out of steam.”⁴⁶ We await another wave of the Spirit of God - this time more biblical, universal and more truly Pentecostal.

⁴⁵ Hence each Christian (not just the “clergy”) should have a sense of calling or vocation, regardless of race, gender, age, educational attainment or economic status. All believers have equal status before God just by virtue of the fact that they are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13, cf. 12:4-30; Rom 12:1-8; Gal 3:28).

⁴⁶ Cf. Quebedeaux, p. 239.

GROANS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF TONGUES AS INITIAL EVIDENCE

Frank D. Macchia

[[HTTP://www.pts.edu/ajps/98-2/98-2-macchia.htm](http://www.pts.edu/ajps/98-2/98-2-macchia.htm)]

I asked for a show of hands one day in a pneumatology course at Southeastern College from those students who disagree with the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Only a small number of hands were raised. I then asked for a show of hands from those who agreed. To my surprise, only a small number of hands went up. I impulsively asked for a show of hands from those who did not understand the meaning of the doctrine. The majority of hands were raised. Though these students were still in the process of gaining a fundamental knowledge of doctrine, their lack of understanding is probably also related to the general neglect of theological reflection on tongues as initial evidence in the history of Pentecostalism. I suspect that what I experienced among these students could be repeated throughout many of our colleges and churches. It seems that the decades of polemics defending tongues as the "Bible evidence" of Spirit baptism have failed to allow for sufficient energy to reflect constructively on the possible meaning of this understanding of tongues theologically and how the "gospel intention" of the doctrine may be preserved without the dogmatic rigidifications that only serve to detach one from the living meaning of this in-depth response to God.

Without question, there is a lack of theological reflection on tongues. Research on glossolalia has centered on biblical exegesis, historical investigation, and psycho-social studies. In his guide to research on glossolalia, Watson Mills also mentions the role of theological reflection, but he includes only a brief paragraph discussing this approach in contrast to the rich and lengthy discussions of the other approaches. Mills recognized this lack of theological reflection available on tongues in his doctoral dissertation on the subject, stating that "Pentecostal groups need to be more creative in developing and articulating a theology of glossolalia."¹ Since then, a number of essays have been published, adding to the young but growing body of theological reflection on tongues that has attempted to build on the early, seminal thoughts of Carl Brumback and Wade Horton, and others. In addition to my work in this area, the more recent efforts by Simon Chan, Amos Yong, Jenny Everts, and Gordon Fee to reflect theologically on glossolalia hold promise for further dialogue.²

Despite these recent efforts, theological reflection on tongues as initial evidence of Spirit baptism is still very difficult to find. The significant collection of essays on the subject edited by Gary McGee only contains one theological essay. But this important piece written by Henry Lederle is nevertheless thoroughly critical of the doctrine. He is open to

a "gospel intention" behind the doctrine, which he defines as the vibrant life in the Holy Spirit. The implications in tongues speech for enhancing life in the Spirit is a helpful point of departure for a theology of tongues, but Lederle nowhere tries to show how the doctrine of initial evidence *per se* contributes anything to this spiritual life.³ In general, however, most theological reflections favorable toward the experience of glossolalia still consider the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence to be an embarrassment or even a serious theological error. Without theological reflection on tongues as initial evidence, the biblical and historical work on the doctrine will lack contemporary theological and practical significance.

1. CRITICISMS OF TONGUES AS PART OF THE CHRISTIAN CREDO

The Assemblies of God has a statement in its Fundamental Truths concerning tongues as the initial physical sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Glossolalia achieved doctrinal status as a fundamental "truth" or confession of faith through its linkage with the experience of Spirit baptism. Consequently, most of the recent theological criticisms of the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit concern the issue of whether or not the experience of tongues should be an essential part of a church's confession of faith. Many wonder how tongues, allegedly the "least" of the gifts according to Paul, could be essentially linked to the reception of the Spirit and, finally, to one's confession of faith. There are many who feel that the Pentecostals have elevated tongues far beyond the teaching of scripture in granting them such doctrinal and confessional status. Some would even conclude that we have thereby elevated our own sense of self-importance as among the only bearers of the Spirit's fullness, since we are among the only ones who speak in tongues. The criticism follows that we have neglected the exclusive place of love and holiness as the only really vital marks of life in the Spirit.

The theological criticism of the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence is forcefully expressed by Henry Lederle, who judges the doctrine to be an attempt to guarantee the vibrant life in the Spirit that begins in Spirit baptism. According to Lederle, one attempts through the dogma of initial evidence to nail down precisely when and how the Spirit decides to fill and empower people with the presence of God. Hence, a "law" or dogma of tongues is erected, much like apostolic succession in the Roman Catholic Church, which guarantees that the Spirit is possessed and experienced in the ongoing life of the church. For Lederle, however, tongues were never meant to be linked so inseparably with Spirit baptism nor formalized into a normative principle of the Spirit's work. The Spirit's work is free and cannot be regulated and formalized.⁴ Another way of stating Lederle's view is to say that tongues are "normal," but not "normative," namely, tongues can be expected to be as prolific as they were among the New Testament churches ("normal"), but this experience cannot be made into a dogma that regulates how the reception of the Spirit is to take place ("normative").⁵ Similarly, Pentecostal preacher, Jack Hayford, expresses an expectation that tongues will accompany the experience of Spirit baptism at some point in the believer's experience, but he also shares a hesitance to make tongues a doctrinal

norm, especially not an "ironclad" requirement. "Who would dare insist," he asks, "on an absolute requirement that tongues be an ironclad rule?"⁶

Michael Welker's criticism of tongues as initial evidence is similar to Lederle's except the focus is not so much on formalizing and guaranteeing the experience of the Spirit as on "proving it." Welker, of the University of Heidelberg, has written recently that the Pentecostal focus on tongues as the evidence of Spirit baptism wrongly involves a fixation on signs and wonders as proofs of the Spirit's work.⁷ Jack Hayford popularizes a similar viewpoint by seeking to steer clear of "evidential" language with regard to tongues, opting instead for a reference to tongues as the "provision" or privilege that accompanies the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He wants to avoid any notion of tongues as "proof" of one's baptism in the Spirit.⁸

Others sympathetic with the initial evidence doctrine still wonder what other term besides "evidence" might be more fruitful theologically for expressing the substance of the doctrine. For example, some are convinced that tongues as the initial "sign" of Spirit baptism is a fruitful direction to follow. The word "evidence" works well in scientific investigations in which one is seeking for clues or data that may lead to proving an intellectual hypothesis. But tongues may be said to do more than provide data for a hypothesis.⁹ Instead, tongues express an overwhelming experience of God through the Holy Spirit and they impact others to be open to the same experience.

The term "sign" can have a simple meaning as a reference to some external object or idea. When I see a stop sign I know that the civil authorities wish for me to stop! But the term "sign" can also have a complex meaning as a symbol that is integral to an experience and that actually serves to make that experience present for others. If I enter my home after being away at a conference and embrace my wife, that embrace is a "sign" of the deep love that I feel for her. But at that moment, the embrace may be said to do more than refer my wife to some external idea. That hug, as an integral aspect of the love that I feel at that moment, also makes my love present for her to feel and experience. Some theologians refer to sacraments as "signs" in this way, namely, as the ritual means by which God embraces believers and makes the divine grace and love present to experience. Thus, some have viewed the term "sign," especially as defined sacramentally, as a way of describing tongues that avoids the impression of a modernistic (positivistic) preoccupation with empirical proof. This use of the word "sign" is also truer to the substance of the initial-evidence doctrine than Jack Hayford's preference for the word "provision" (tongues merely as a provision for those who have been baptized in the Spirit).

Jean-Daniel Plüss is also concerned with the negative result of formalizing (Lederle) or proving (Welker) the experience of Spirit baptism through the dogma of initial evidence. Plüss finds value in tongues as symbolic of an in-depth experience with God and he finds power in the testimonies about such experiences, because they serve as metaphors that continue to encourage these experiences. Contrary to the power of metaphor or testimonies, the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence attempts to give a literal and scientific explanation of tongues in a way that distances Pentecostals from the ongoing

vibrancy of the experience. In his words, "some have tried to elevate the phenomenon of speaking in tongues to the level of doctrine, and thereby seemed to forget that speaking in tongues is primarily a symbol of God's blessing Spirit." In his view, "the perception of a spiritual phenomenon was changed into a shibboleth of orthodoxy." The way back from the initial-evidence doctrine to the experience of tongues will come when we replace the initial-evidence doctrine with testimonies. Such will only occur when "we learn to appreciate our past metaphorically" and resist seeking to quench our spiritual thirst "by mere deductive propositions and statements of doctrine."[10](#)

Juan Sepulveda is concerned to preserve the metaphorical power and flexibility of the Pentecostal understanding of "Spirit baptism" by detaching it from its necessary connection to tongues. He seeks thereby to resist a "glossocentric" understanding of Spirit baptism implied in the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence. In a brief but provocative essay, Sepulveda draws from his Chilean Pentecostal background to argue for a rich variety of metaphors to describe the Spirit's work in initiating a person to the life of the Spirit. All of these metaphors point to the importance of interpreting the Christian life as a dynamic and life-transforming experience of God. Implied is the conviction that the doctrine of initial evidence restricts Spirit baptism narrowly to a glossolalic experience. Sepulveda wants to broaden the definition of the term "Spirit baptism" so that it might function along with other metaphors to refer to that complex of events which initiates one to the new life of the Spirit. This necessitates in his view detaching Spirit baptism from its inseparable connection to glossolalia in Pentecostal dogma.[11](#)

2. QUESTIONING THE INTEGRAL CONNECTION BETWEEN TONGUES AND SPIRIT BAPTISM

Such criticisms cannot be ignored by Pentecostals, especially if they wish to teach Christian doctrine in a way that is sensitive to the full diversity of Pentecostal testimonies and to the broader Christian church. Pentecostal ministers will certainly be exposed to this broader context in their ministries. It is important for the sake of honesty and charity to listen carefully to what sincere Christian brothers and sisters have to say about a distinctive point of doctrine that we advocate. By way of response to the criticisms of initial evidence, I do believe that they help us to define the doctrine theologically in a way that avoids misunderstandings and abuses. And I believe further that the best Pentecostal teaching on tongues can be understood in a way that resists the understandings of the initial-evidence doctrine which these criticisms assume. For example, I think most of us would agree that tongues by themselves are no final guarantee, nor by themselves an adequate manifestation, of life in the Spirit. Pentecostal pillars, Ray Hughes and Vinson Synan, have argued that tongues in isolation from other works of the Spirit are no final confirmation of the baptism in the Spirit, but tongues only in relation to other evidences or works of the Spirit can be regarded as the genuine initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism.[12](#) And the Pentecostal tradition of "tarrying" for the filling of the Spirit as evidenced by tongues implies that the notion of initial evidence was

not fundamentally a "law" or dogma that contradicts the freedom and sovereignty of the Spirit to move and to act when and how God pleases.

Problematic is that the essential and necessary connection which the initial-evidence doctrine implies exists between tongues and Spirit baptism. The initial-evidence doctrine did attempt to account for the integral connection experienced among Pentecostals and believed to have been implied by Luke between one's experience of Spirit baptism and the symbolic expression of tongues-speech. As Lederle himself notes, W. T. Gaston stated in 1918 that "[t]ongues seems included and inherent in the larger experience of Spirit baptism" (perhaps one of the earliest theological statements about tongues as initial evidence).¹³ Pentecostals have explained the integral relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism in various ways. They have argued, for example, that tongues symbolize the total yielding of the self to the work of the Spirit so essential to Spirit baptism, since the tongue, as the most "unruly" member and the last "holdout" to one's submission to God, is finally brought into service to the Spirit.

Should this integral link between tongues and the experience of Spirit baptism be severed? Watson Mills argues that it should. He distinguishes between the substance of Spirit baptism, which is the overwhelming experience of the Spirit, and the formal symbolism of tongues. Since tongues are an archaic symbolic expression that no longer impacts the human psyche and community life as they once did, tongues should be "demythologized" and replaced by symbolic expressions of the Spirit's fullness more meaningful to the twentieth century.¹⁴ But, as Jacques Ellul notes, prayers never become outdated because the fundamental purpose of prayer is not to communicate but to participate in, and partake of, the presence of God.¹⁵ Mills fails to recognize that tongues as a mystical language play a unique role in the process of participating in the presence of God to empower the people of God for service. An argument can be made that they cannot be exchanged for something else without the people of God losing something valuable in the process. This is what Donald Gee implied when he stated that giving up the expectation of tongues as evidence of Spirit baptism will cause the church to lose a dimension of the "glory and power" of the experience.¹⁶ In part, the "sacramental" understanding of tongues seeks to account for the integral connection between the potential depth and breadth of the Spirit baptismal experience and the symbolic expression of tongues, but without the rigid, scientific, and glossocentric connections often implied by the initial-evidence doctrine. The "sacramental" connection between tongues and Spirit baptism need not lead to the conclusion that tongues are its only significant symbolic expression. Pentecostals struggled from the beginning to grant tongues a special relationship to Spirit baptism without restricting Spirit baptism to a glossolalic experience. This struggle must now find more profound theological formulation.

3. BECOMING AN ORACLE OF GOD: THE ORIGINAL CHALLENGE OF SPIRIT BAPTISM AND TONGUES

The initial-evidence doctrine goes back to Parham and the unique interpretation of his doctrine among the intercultural and largely poor worshippers at the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street. Tongues were understood at Azusa as the audible sign most integral to the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, because this spiritual baptism was understood as the latter-day restoration of apostolic power to share the gospel quickly with people of all nations before the end comes. Taken how Spirit baptism was understood, it was only natural that tongues as miraculously-learned foreign languages (xenolalia) would be understood as the initial and most important Bible evidence of this experience. The conviction at Azusa Street was that this global witness was inspired by God first among the lowly and oppressed of the earth, for even a "little orphaned colored girl" received the commission to share the goodness of God with other nations. Indeed, tongues implicitly served to dismantle the privileges of the rich and the educated and allowed the poor and devalued of society to contribute meaningfully to the latter-day witness of the Spirit of God to the coming kingdom and to the kind of justice and love that it inspires. Hence, the view of Spirit baptism shared at Azusa Street included the down-trodden helping to break down racial barriers between people. One "Indian preacher" was reported to have pointed to a racially mixed gathering including Native Americans, whites, and a "colored brother" and stated that God willed for them to become "one great spiritual family." The report concluded with the significant conclusion: "Tell me,...can you have a better understanding of the two works of grace and the baptism in the Holy Ghost?"¹⁷ Despite the limitations of this vision, it was way ahead of its time in capturing the thrust of the Spirit's work.

The view of Spirit baptism as the renewal of apostolic power to transcend national and cultural barriers to spread the gospel to the nations explains why tongues, understood as xenolalia, were given a privileged place as the initial evidence of the experience. This glossocentric understanding of Spirit baptism, though problematic, did point to the global, ecumenical, and missionary significance of tongues with a power and a vision unprecedented in the history of the church since the book of Acts. But early in the history of Pentecostalism there were those who sought to give spiritual fullness an independence from glossolalia, while still granting the latter a unique role to play in expressing the former with great power and depth. W. F. Carothers expressed skepticism toward Parham's understanding of glossolalia as end-time xenolalia and followed this with the confidence that others who did not speak in tongues obviously shared in the fullness of the Spirit. But this fullness alone is not yet "Pentecost." Pentecost for Carothers is an experience of praise that goes over the balconies of heaven in glossolalic splendor.¹⁸

What is interesting is the fact that both Carothers and those of the Azusa Street mission pointed to glossolalia as the experience which distinguished Pentecostalism from the Holiness Movement. Both assumed that this distinguishing role for glossolalia is due to the nature of tongues as a form of inspired speech which causes one to transcend the limits of one's human speech and thought in order to become an oracle of the Spirit in praise (Carothers) or witness (Azusa Street). The Apostolic Faith papers repeatedly distinguished Spirit baptism from the sanctification experience of the Holiness Movement because in the former it is God who speaks and bears witness to the divine presence.¹⁹ Implied in this assumption is the idea that through tongues the believer becomes the

oracle of God, an experience which in some ways transcends one's struggle to bear witness to God indirectly through spiritual fruit or works of love and holiness. Carothers is unique in granting spiritual fullness independence from glossolalia and in viewing the latter as overflowing praise. Seymour and others of the Azusa Street Mission were unique in attaching tongues as xenolalia to the intercultural witness of the poor and disenfranchised. But both sought to describe the new outbreaks of glossolalia as a breakthrough in the most characteristic sign of the Spirit's presence to empower the people of God in the latter days, namely, inspired speech. Tongues as cryptic and miraculous speech functioned as the final breakthrough in the Spirit's witness to, or praise of, God in the latter days.

As we will note, this early Pentecostal understanding of glossolalia raises difficult theological problems. But these problems are faced to a degree in the biblical witness as well. As Roger Stronstad, Robert Menzies, and J. Massynbaerde Ford have pointed out, Luke followed the Jewish tendency to associate the reception of the Spirit with inspired or prophetic speech.²⁰ Luke seems to focus on tongues as the most significant expression of inspired speech because of their role in miraculously uniting a diversity of people together in a common witness and praise in the light of the approaching kingdom of God. It is important to note in this context that the tongues of Pentecost in Acts 2 symbolized the bringing together of people from all nations in service to a united praise and witness, but not in the simplistic sense of merely pointing intellectually to the divine action. Tongues themselves were integral to the thrust of Spirit baptism in bringing all peoples together in this inspired speech. Tongues were an integral part of that diverse but unified witness and praise produced by Spirit baptism at Pentecost.

But Acts 2 only witnessed to the bringing together of Jews from every nation. For this reason, Acts 10:46 completes the picture by including Gentiles in the common praise and witness inspired by Spirit baptism and expressed in tongues. The Jews knew that the Gentiles had joined the diverse, international praise and witness "for they heard them speak in tongues" (10:46). Acts 11:15 elaborates on 10:46 with Peter's observation that the Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles "as he had on us at the beginning." The connection between Acts 2:4 and 10:46 implies that tongues played a significant role universally in the earliest churches to symbolize the power of Spirit baptism to unite the people of God in common participation in the eschatological renewal of language.

In other words, the theological importance of the connection between Acts 2:4 and 10:46 flows from the fact that tongues were viewed by Luke as integral to the thrust of Spirit baptism in bringing together all of the peoples of the earth in common praise and witness. But the fact that the language miracle began among the diaspora Jews, God's chosen people, who lived as strangers in their own land due to the oppression of Gentile powers, is not devoid of theological significance either. The connection between Acts 2:4 and 10:46 implies the theological significance of tongues for Luke as the initial sign of the Spirit's work in bringing together Jew and Gentile in common praise and witness in a way that does not neglect the significance of the experience among the "Jews first." (God began among the poor and the outcast at Azusa Street as well!) Acts 19:6 is an interesting addition, since Hellenistic Jews and followers of John the Baptist are now joining the

Christian prophetic movement in magnifying God in a Gentile land. The breaking down of the barriers continues.²¹ How many times tongues are mentioned in Acts is not important. The older polemic in support of tongues as the initial evidence was misguided here. Where and how tongues are mentioned and what theological meaning is implied are important.

It may be argued that the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in the diverse but unified praise and witness of the Spirit to the goodness of God is the central theme of Acts. Tongues, in this light, play a very important role for Luke, since they function as the most striking and outstanding involvement of God in this corporate praise and witness empowered in Spirit baptism. Tongues are the central feature of the first Spirit baptism at the start of the book (10 verses are devoted to them in Acts 2) and play a pivotal role in chapter 10 at the crucial entry of the Gentiles into the corporate praise and witness of the people of God, a topic picked up in chapters 11 and 15. The movement toward a diverse but united witness begun in chapter 2 continues in 19:6. Tongues in Acts thus reveal an ecumenical witness that is ours by the Spirit of God, but must also be gradually realized through the ongoing work of the Spirit and the struggle of the church to be receptive to it. The pivotal places in Acts in which tongues play a role as the characteristic result of Spirit baptism imply that tongues are much more important as a sign of the most significant breakthroughs inspired by the Spirit in the expanding diversity of the church's praise and witness than most non-Pentecostals seem willing to admit.

There are major non-Pentecostal scholars who have noted the importance in Acts of tongues in signifying the baptism in the Spirit. More than a decade before the Pentecostal Movement began, German biblical scholar, Hermann Gunkel, stated with regard to the teaching of Acts, "If we intend to understand the view of the Spirit cherished in the apostolic age, then we must begin from the Spirit's most striking characteristic activity, that of glossolalia."²² In a well-known ecumenical commentary on Acts, German exegete, R. Pesch, referred to tongues as the "initial miracle" (*Anfangswunder*) of the Spirit's new witness of the kingdom of God in the world.²³ More recently, Catholic scholars George Montague and Kilian McDonnell have stated as a result of their research in the book of Acts that tongues held, and still can hold, a "privileged position" among the signs of the Spirit's work for the people of God. Montague, who, along with McDonnell, is otherwise critical of Pentecostal doctrine, admits that the Pentecostal focus on tongues as the most significant sign of Spirit baptism has a basis in the Book of Acts. He is baffled at Dale Bruner's remark that Luke "just happens" to mention tongues in relation to Spirit baptism in Acts.²⁴ Reformed Charismatic theologian, J. Rodman Williams, has recently argued from Acts that tongues are the "primary" and "initial" evidence of Spirit baptism.²⁵

All of the above viewpoints come very close to the thrust of the initial-evidence doctrine. Whatever else one may say about the doctrine, it is not simply a strange teaching of classical Pentecostalism without any provocation from the narrative of Acts. Luke is fascinated with the miracle of inspired speech, especially tongues, and focuses on this as the characteristic sign of the significant breakthroughs of the Spirit to empower the people of God for united praise and witness. Such a Lukan focus is still not the initial-

evidence doctrine, but it provides the inspiration for later Pentecostal reflection in the direction of the doctrine. Whether or not the narrative of Acts and other parts of the New Testament can legitimately be developed in the direction of a full-blown initial-evidence doctrine remains to be seen. Whether or not this project is possible or desirable would depend in part on how the doctrine is defined.

The important theological question is what the tongues of Pentecost imply for the initial-evidence doctrine today. At Azusa Street, the assumption was that tongues allowed believers to proclaim the gospel in all nations without first having to learn their languages. We all know what happened among those who attempted to preach in tongues in foreign lands!²⁶ Centuries ago, as early as Irenaeus and Augustine, tongues were defined as prophetic speech. Luke, as well, gives tongues prophetic significance. But, as Jenny Everts has shown, tongues in the New Testament were not described as the means by which the gospel was preached to all nations.²⁷ Glossolalia accompanied the proclamation of the gospel in Acts 2, 10, and 19 but was not that proclamation itself. And Luke does not take for granted that tongues would communicate anything to anyone. In Acts 2, there were many who thought that the believers were besides themselves, implying that a significant part of the audience did not understand the tongues. Only those who were receptive to the gospel understood. The implication here is that something other than mere foreign languages lay behind Luke's report of the tongues of Pentecost. Azusa Street rediscovered the global, ecumenical, and missionary significance of Spirit baptism and tongues in Acts, though its notion of tongues as an xenolalic witness to Christ among all nations could not be sustained.

In the decades following the origin of Pentecostalism, the belief in tongues as an in-depth prayer language or a congregational gift, usually interpreted for a congregation as a prophetic message, came to dominate the Pentecostal understanding of tongues. Though xenolalia (tongues as foreign languages) did not pass completely from Pentecostal testimonies, glossolalia as a transcendent form of speech or a "heavenly language" came to represent the most common understanding of tongues. This development is understandable, since tongues in the Bible and in the ongoing life of the church have an enduring role to play in the spiritual lives of believers and churches in that tongues represent more than a supernatural capability to bear witness to God in an unlearned human language. How do tongues edify the self in private prayer (1 Cor 14:3, 14-15), if I am speaking to God in a human language that I have never learned and do not understand? And, as Gordon Fee noted, why would Paul refer to uninterpreted foreign languages as one analogy among others of uninterpreted tongues if the two were the same thing (1 Cor 14:7-11)?²⁸ Surely something other than xenolalia is implied here.

Theologically, the early Pentecostal view of tongues as the miraculous ability to share the goodness of God across national and cultural boundaries needs to be demythologized. If this is not done, we can promote the illusion that the Spirit in these latter days can simply transport us instantly over the cultural divides that require an ongoing and extremely difficult process of hard-won communication to scale, especially from the side of those who benefit the most from the injustices involved in the divisions of which we speak. If the New Testament reveals anything, it reveals that the language miracle of Acts 2

symbolized a unity in diversity that the churches would struggle to achieve with great difficulty and less-than-perfect results. Furthermore, the idea of both Carothers and the participants in the Azusa Street Mission that we can become veritable oracles of God also needs to be interpreted carefully. Theology in a post-modern, and especially post-Barthian, era cannot possibly assume that human speech can be associated with the divine self-disclosure without significant qualifications. Those who wish to proceed forward toward a constructive theology of tongues and their relationship to Spirit baptism must deal critically with the early Pentecostal belief in tongues as divine speech across cultural boundaries in these latter days, but not in a way that loses the global, ecumenical, and missionary vision that originally cradled the doctrine of initial evidence.

4. SIGHS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS: TOWARDS A REVISIONING OF TONGUES AS DIVINE SPEECH

The idea of tongues as turning one into an oracle of God in praise and/or witness needs to be qualified by another undercurrent in the Pentecostal understanding of tongues which we have not yet discussed, namely, tongues as deep and agonizing groans of human weakness that are changed by the Spirit of God into a cry for redemption, and even a foretaste of this redemption in the here-and-now. I do not deny the possibility of an xenolalic miracle. But if tongues are to enhance the spiritual vitality of the church in its ongoing Charismatic and devotional life, they must meet us all on a level deeper than our current cognitive or linguistic capabilities. As such, tongues reveal the limits of human speech to capture and express the mystery of God's redemptive presence in the midst of a suffering creation.

Such an understanding of tongues holds a number of theological implications for personal piety and corporate worship. Paul's insistence that the mind is unfruitful during tongues-speech fits well with the groanings that cannot be uttered in response to human weakness in prayer "for we do not know how to pray" (1 Cor 14:14-15; Rom 8:26). Rather than tongues being a sign of an escape from this world into heights of glory, they are expressions of strength in weakness, or the capacity to experience the first-fruits of the kingdom-to-come in the midst of our groaning with the suffering creation. They bring to ultimate expression the struggle that is essential to all prayer, namely, trying to put into words what is deeper than words.²⁹ They express the pain and the joy of this struggle. They are, in the words of Russell Spittler, a "broken language for a broken body until perfection comes."³⁰ As such, tongues edify the soul and confront the church with a "sacrament" of the presence of God to empower and heal us as we groan in solidarity with the needy and the lost in anticipation of the redemption-to-come.

The eschatological context for tongues as an in-depth response to God is also implied by Luke. The tongues of Pentecost were part of an awesome theophany of end-time signs and wonders (sound of a mighty wind, flames of fire) that foreshadowed the ultimate theophany at God's final appearance (with blood, fire, and billows of smoke) as Redeemer of the entire cosmos (new creation, Acts 2:1-4, 19-20). As such, tongues hold

potential for renewing our sense of awe and wonder in the presence of God that is so vital to a vibrant worship and personal piety. As an unclassifiable language, tongues point us to God's final self-disclosure and, therefore, prevent us from making an idol of our worship, religious language, and theological systems. Tongues push us ever forward to greater vistas of insight and commitment. They dismantle our culturally defined and self-serving idols and open us to the voice of God in new and unexpected ways. As such, tongues can imply a movement out of our comfort zone in openness to the voices of the powerless in our midst and among the victims of evil and injustice in our society.

The powerful role of tongues in self-edification and congregational edification (coupled with interpretation) must not preclude, therefore, Luke's assumption about tongues as the most significant sign of the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in the one mission of God. True, the assumption of Azusa Street that tongues merely functioned to aid in the latter-day spreading of the gospel needed to be abandoned and replaced by deeper insights into the role of tongues as in-depth communion with God. I fear, however, that we have "thrown out the baby with the bath water" so to speak by abandoning altogether the global, intercultural, and missionary vision implied in the early understanding of tongues as the Bible evidence of Spirit baptism at Azusa Street. Try to imagine what theological implications exist in that early vision of tongues as the "Bible evidence" of the Spirit baptism that was poured out in these latter days, especially among the poor and lowly, to enhance the church's capacity to share the goodness of God across cultural and national boundaries. Do not the groans too deep for words push me beyond the limits of my cultural boundaries so that I might bless, and be blessed by, people far different from myself? Certainly I cannot leap easily and instantly across cultural and national boundaries to communicate with people far different from myself. Tongues in fact expose my limits and how they shape my worship and theology. But do tongues not also reveal that these limits need not define me ultimately? Can I not eventually by the grace of God hear the voices of those who are different from mine, especially among those who suffer, and can I not still be shaped by them and impart something of myself to them? Whether they be xenolalia or glossolalia, do not tongues locate me already in that final chorus of people from all nations and tongues that will praise God one day at the throne of grace (Rev 5:9-10)?

Spirit baptism is not just about tongues. We cannot lock Spirit baptism into a glossolalic straight-jacket so that the former becomes inconceivable apart from the latter. But viewed in the context of our discussion, Spirit baptism is fundamentally and integrally about what tongues symbolize. As such, the initial-evidence doctrine has value even though it requires theological reflection and revisioning.

5. A PLACE FOR TONGUES IN THE CHRISTIAN CREDO

I appreciate the insight shared by Jerry Kamery-Hoggatt that a doctrine which is distinctive for a Christian movement is not necessarily central. Though Pentecostals have defended the importance of tongues, they have also resisted the notion that tongues are at

the core of the gospel for us.³¹ By including our distinctives, such as tongues, in our confession of faith, even if these distinctives are not central to the gospel, we preserve the unique gifts that we have to offer the broader Christian world and we communicate these clearly to other Christians. Therefore, tongues have a place in the Christian credo of Pentecostal churches. The presence of tongues as an aspect of our credo need not imply that we have given them too much importance in the life and mission of the church.

Donald Dayton has shown in his book, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, that Pentecostal theology consists of a constellation of themes borrowed from the Holiness Movement and centered on the figure of Jesus as Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Coming King.³² His book gives tongues only scant treatment. Though he was criticized for this lack of attention to tongues, most scholars were convinced that a paradigm shift had occurred in the research concerning Pentecostal theology from the centrality of Spirit baptism and tongues and toward a general *Gestalt* of themes concerning the work of Jesus in the world.³³ William Faupel's book, *The Everlasting Gospel*, has brought us further, pointing to the strong Christo-centric tendency of early Pentecostalism and to the eschatological nature of the movement. Early Pentecostalism emerges in Faupel's book as an end-time missionary fellowship with the express purpose of bearing witness to the nations of the soon-coming kingdom.³⁴ Though tongues played an integral role for Pentecostals in this end-time witness, tongues were not considered important as an end in themselves. They served a far more important and central purpose. It is also important to note that the initial evidence doctrine is not shared by all Pentecostals worldwide. Pentecostalism is not a "tongues movement," but a movement that supports the gospel of Jesus Christ in salvation, sanctification, empowerment for global witness, healing, and eschatological hope.

Yet, the unique Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism had a great deal to do with tongues.³⁵ As noted above, Carothers did not deny that advocates of the Holiness Movement experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he maintained that the fullness of the Spirit can only reach an expression that can be termed "Pentecost" once the overflowing and heavenly praise of tongues is spoken. In *The Apostolic Faith* papers, the "Pentecostal" Spirit baptism was distinguished from sanctification because in the former it is God and not humanity who bears miraculous witness to the gospel. The idea here is that holiness as an encounter with the fullness of the Spirit is itself to be transcended in order to leave room for God to come on the scene in a way so as to represent the divine presence directly to us. It was felt that tongues, because of their miraculous or extraordinary nature, do this, thus marking the Pentecostal Spirit Baptism off from sanctification, which, it was assumed, provided only an indirect witness to the gospel.

Whether tongues were viewed as xenolalia or some form of transcendent glossolalia, their importance was the same. Here was a "baptism" in the Spirit that allowed a weak human vessel to function as a veritable oracle of God. Though this is true of all prophetic speech, tongues as a cryptic language revealed the unfathomable depth and ultimate eschatological fulfillment of all prophetic speech, pointing to both the limits and the meaning of the language of faith. Without this "glossolalic" understanding of Spirit

baptism, there may not have been enough of a distinction between the Pentecostal and the Holiness understandings of the experience of the Spirit to warrant the founding of a separate movement. The difficulties involved in this theological understanding of tongues are complex and cannot be explored thoroughly here. Suffice it to say that the initial-evidence doctrine does express an important and distinctive feature of Pentecostal spirituality and theology that has meaning for the church today.

I do not believe that we should abandon the Pentecostal association of tongues with the divine self-witness in our effort to articulate the more theologically promising understanding of the symbolic role of tongues. Our response to the assumption of those at the Azusa Street Mission that God engages in self-witness uniquely in glossolalia must be encountered with a dialectical no and yes. The fact is that tongues as a cryptic or mystical language presume to symbolize a sacred space in which God can speak uniquely to us. If we have discovered that tongues actually arise from human creativity, what have we learned that is not also known of all symbols of the sacred? Paul Tillich has noted that, even though we must avoid an idolatrous association of the symbol and the divine self-disclosure, neither should we separate them. According to Tillich, God takes the visible/audible symbol up into the divine self-disclosure so that the symbol actually participates in the divine act of revelation.³⁶

I have argued elsewhere that tongues play a unique role as a cryptic language because they bring to the forefront the unpredictable and transcendent aspects of the divine self-disclosure, aspects that are only implied in more intelligible sacred symbols.³⁷ As such, tongues play a uniquely iconoclastic role *vis-a-vis* all symbols, bringing to sharp focus both human weakness and divine strength. Furthermore, is there not an element of mystery in all spontaneous and innovative artistic expressions that transcend mundane forms of thought and expression and that defy human explanation? Do they not have something in common with other forms of expressionistic art, thereby protesting the "tyranny of words" in worship?³⁸ Is there not a sense in which the human can be "seized" by the Divine to engage in forms of expression that seem to carry the speaker more than proceed from him or her? Do not tongues represent a heightened form of this kind of language in the community of faith?

It is important to explore further the conviction that we have moved away from the proper place and immediacy of tongues as an experience by formalizing its connection with Spirit baptism in the form of a doctrine. Tongues did not begin as a doctrine among Pentecostals, but as an experience that was expected to accompany Spirit baptism for obvious reasons explained above. The link between tongues and Spirit baptism did not begin as a doctrine either, but as a testimony that implied an integral relationship between the experience of Spirit baptism and the symbolism of tongues. All that the doctrine did was to provide a formal statement of this relationship in a language that can be corporately agreed upon.

The experience of tongues is at the base of how we come to talk about it, as well as the doctrine that we agree upon to govern the language of faith. As George Lindbeck has shown, doctrine provides the "grammar" or rules for how we talk about God or the truths

of scripture.³⁹ As such, doctrine seeks to guide how we talk about an experience, but also to influence the experience and to preserve it as an enduring aspect of the community's religious life. An integral relationship was suggested between Spirit baptism and tongues in the experience and language about tongues early on in Pentecostalism. The initial-evidence doctrine came to formalize this relationship in its effort to preserve it in the ongoing experience of the church. An argument can be made that the formalization of the link between tongues and Spirit baptism was already implied from the beginning of Pentecostal experience and testimony and was not imported from the outside and imposed on Pentecostal piety. Neither does this doctrinal development need to carry the negative connotations assumed among its critics. We need God's help to prevent the doctrine from becoming a substitute for the experience. Our critics, though one-sided, may help to bring this need to our attention.

6. TONGUES, PROPHECY, AND THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

What about the Pauline assumption that tongues are not as significant to the community of faith as intelligible prophecy? It is important at this point to look at the claim that the initial-evidence doctrine runs contrary to Paul, who allegedly makes tongues of less importance than other gifts, such as prophecy. The Pauline stress on prophetic clarity in the church through the "interpretation" of tongues and the gift of prophecy functions as a corrective for a situation in which tongues were abused. Paul's conviction that tongues are a negative sign of judgment for unbelievers, and that prophecy will lead them to repentance is also occasioned by the same abusive context (1 Cor 14:21-23). This preference for intelligibility over ambiguous ecstasy in public worship is functional and contextual for Paul, relative to the abusive situation in Corinth. Applying this corrective to the initial-evidence doctrine must be done with great care and with full consideration of the Lukan witness. For example, I do not believe that one can stretch Paul's correction of the Corinthian effort to gorge on ecstasy to the neglect of intelligible utterance to mean that no glossolalic utterance is of any value to others without an intelligible interpretation. If prophecy brings clarity and guidance to our in-depth groaning, tongues impress upon us the unfathomable depths from which such clarity emerges and toward which it is always directed. Hence, tongues have their own value in corporate worship, even apart from needed interpretations, and tongues and interpretation do not simply "equal" prophecy as many assume. There is an interesting dynamic going on in the interplay and symbolism of tongues and interpretation that are not fully captured in a prophetic utterance alone.

Luke complements Paul's insights by allowing tongues to provide a powerful witness in public of both promise and judgment, without any explanation whatever on how such clarity is granted. Some might view this absence of an explanation as a lack of specificity in Luke, which Paul is then imported to provide. But Luke's hesitance to address the issue of how tongues convey intelligible meaning may also be viewed as providing greater flexibility for how the power of tongues may confront people in public than can be gained strictly within the confines of Paul's pastoral guidance among the Corinthians.

In Acts, all believers may speak in tongues at once in public as a dramatic sign of the empowerment of the people of God for service, even where no understandable content is mentioned. Clearly tongues do not follow the same rules of guidance in Luke as they do in Paul. In our efforts to negotiate between Luke and Paul, we should not try to conform the former to the latter. Luke reminds us that not all public expressions of tongues require interpreters to be enlightening or to motivate greater commitment to God. On the other hand, Paul reminds us that restrictions may be necessary if unintelligible tongues begin to dominate a service that lacks prophetic discernment and explanation.

To complete our discussion of Paul on tongues, I think it is important to note that Paul does not subordinate tongues to prophecy according to some inherent or abstract value, since such ranking of the gifts runs contrary to his insistence that all of the gifts are significant only in their common source in the triune God (1 Cor 12:3-4) and in their function in edifying the people of God in the love of God (ch. 13), an end toward which all of the gifts may contribute equally well, each in its own unique way (14:26). Hence, not only tongues, but all of the gifts, including prophecy, are radically relativized by Paul in subordination to the love of God. Desiring the "best gifts" (1 Cor 12:31) depends on the context in which they are exercised and the end achieved, and not on some abstract judgment concerning which among the gifts in general are the "least" or "most" important, which seems to have been the game that the Corinthians desired to play. Gordon Fee has argued convincingly, that the notion of tongues as the "least" of the gifts in Paul is based on faulty conclusions drawn from assumptions which are read into the text.⁴⁰ I am reminded here of Krister Stendahl's insight into the bias against tongues that many exegetes take to the analysis of 1 Corinthians 12-14, assuming from the start that Paul is dealing with the problem of tongues in the Corinthian church. Stendahl suggests that a more enlightening point of departure would be to begin with the gift and blessing of tongues according to Paul and then to understand the Corinthian distortion as the problem.⁴¹

It seems that Rom 8:26 implies a positive sign value not found in 1 Corinthians 12-14 to glossolalic sighs in public worship.⁴² But, in the spirit of Paul's Corinthian instructions, the "groans too deep for words" in Rom 8:26 do not lead to a quest for self-aggrandizement or for glory in alienation from those who suffer. This is quite consistent with Luke's report that the Diaspora Jews were the first to initiate the tongues speech that invited people of all nations, even Gentiles (!), to join in the empowered witness to the coming Kingdom of God. But Luke does go further than Paul in showing the unique and "privileged place" that tongues are among the signs of the Spirit's empowerment for service. Paul has his own unique contribution to make in insisting that prophetic clarity be the most cherished contribution of inspired speech to a congregation. The different contexts and purposes of the writers account for their different emphases. Theologically, Luke prevents us from interpreting Paul to mean that tongues are the least significant of our responses to God and can play no special role among the signs of the Spirit in worship. But Paul prevents us from interpreting Luke to mean that tongues are to be ranked abstractly as inherently superior to other gifts and worthy, therefore, of dominating a worship service regardless of whether or not they are understood.

We can imagine what would be some of the practical results from really viewing Spirit baptism in our churches as an empowerment for one's gift or calling to serve the liberating and redemptive kingdom of God in the world. Without sacrificing the view of tongues as personal edification and admonition, we can also imagine what would happen if we were to recapture the global and missionary vision that originally cradled the initial-evidence notion. What new meanings and forms of praxis can evolve from viewing tongues as the sign that we are not bound by our cultural and linguistic conditioning, but may transcend these in significant ways to come into solidarity with those who suffer and to share the good news with those who are lost? How would the initial-evidence doctrine take on new meaning, even among its critics, if such a doctrine were at the forefront of a corporate witness that protests racism and models the movement of the Spirit of God to create a culturally diverse common witness to the liberating gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

7. TOWARDS A REVISIONING OF INITIAL EVIDENCE

How should the doctrine of initial evidence be revisioned? A clue might come from the most significant general superintendent and leader of the American Assemblies of God throughout its history, Joseph Roswell Flower. In his 1933 and 1952 testimonies printed in *Pentecostal Evangel*, Flower noted that he was baptized in the Spirit months before he actually spoke in tongues. When he eventually spoke in tongues, it occurred without his seeking them, and without his knowledge at the time of speaking that he was engaged in glossolalic prayer.⁴³ More significantly, Flower explains his testimony in a theological tract on tongues in which he does not deny the fact that believers can be baptized in the Spirit without tongues. But he hastens to add that these believers have not yet been baptized in the Spirit with the "full manifestation" granted in the "biblical pattern."⁴⁴

Whether Flower realized it or not, he provided a significant breakthrough in the doctrine of tongues as the sign of Spirit baptism with the distinction that he made. He shifted the focus from tongues as the necessary accompaniment of the reception of Spirit baptism to tongues as the fullness of expression toward which the experience leads. The doctrine as he reformulated simply states that there is a fullness to glossolalic speech which the language of faith cannot capture. Tongues as groans of weakness for the redemption-to-come and the anticipation of our final unity in diversity before the throne of grace would represent a form of expression among the people of God that brings to full expression what the Spirit is attempting to do historically through the baptism in the Spirit. What this reformulation of the doctrine implies for the use of the term "initial" as in "initial evidence" still needs to be discussed. Can the term "initial" refer to the fact that tongues initiate the language miracle that symbolizes the depth and breadth of the Spirit's work through Spirit baptism to unite the people of God in common praise and witness? Can it refer to the act of tongues in initially conveying the full "glory and power" of the Spirit baptismal experience for the believer who receives as well as for the community of faith? Here is where sacramental "sign" fits the thrust of the doctrine better than scientific "evidence." The important point to the doctrine of tongues as the initial sign of Spirit

baptism is that there is a depth of experience in the Spirit, the consequence of which will quite naturally be speaking in tongues, and that the experience itself does not come to full biblical expression and signification without tongues.

In the midst of our revisioning the initial-evidence doctrine, we should not forget that there need not be a competition between a most striking sign of the Spirit's empowerment in worship (tongues in the service of love) and the vital marks of the Spirit in life (holiness in the service of love), especially in the light of our founder, William J. Seymour's, insistence that the life of love and holiness is the ultimate expression of the Spirit's work. After all, without justice (Amos) and love (Paul) our worship, as important as it is, is totally discredited. This includes tongues, as Seymour passionately reminded us.⁴⁵ We need to think about whether our statement of faith clarifies this point sufficiently well.

Perhaps part of the confusion that some of my students expressed over tongues as initial evidence is due to a lack of theological reflection on the doctrine. The challenge is on us to engage in this reflection in a way that is passionate in its commitment to scripture but also humble and compassionate toward others with whom we dialogue. After all, all doctrine is fallible and seeks to be accountable to the experience of the Spirit and to the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the Holy scriptures. May all that we do or say continue to reflect this accountability in order to bring God glory. Amen.

Footnotes

1. Watson Mills, "A Theological Interpretation of Tongues in Acts and I Corinthians" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968), pp. 224-25; Note also his, "Reconstruction and Reappraisal," in Watson Mills, ed. *Speaking in Tongues: A Guide to Research on Glossolalia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987).
2. Frank D. Macchia, "Sighs too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), pp. 47-73; "Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), 61-76; "Tongues and Prophecy: A Pentecostal Perspective," in *Pentecostal Movement as Ecumenical Challenge*, eds. Jürgen Moltmann and K. J. Kuschel, Concilium (June 1996); and "The Tongues of Pentecost: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Promise and Challenge of Pentecostal/Roman Catholic Dialogue," forthcoming in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. Note also the classics, Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947), and Wade Horton, ed., *The Glossolalia Phenomenon* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Books, 1966). Note Simon Chan's response to my work: "The Language Game of Glossolalia, or Making Sense of the Initial Evidence," and Gordon Fee's, "Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia," both in *Pentecostalism in Context, Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. W. Ma and R. P. Menzies (Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 80-95 and 24-37,

- respectively. Amos Yong has a provocative piece on the "truth of glossolalia," which is soon to appear in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. Note also, Jenny Everts, "'Tongues or Languages?' Contextual Consistency in the Translation of Acts 2," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4 (1994), pp. 71-80.
3. Henry Lederle, "Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement," in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 131-141.
 4. Lederle, "Initial Evidence."
 5. Gordon Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), ch. 6.
 6. Jack Hayford, *The Beauty of Spiritual Language, My Journey Toward the Heart of God* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1992), p. 96.
 7. Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), p. 266. Note my review article of Welker's fine book, "Discerning the Spirit in Life: A Review of *God the Spirit* by Michael Welker," and his response to me: "Spirit Topics: Trinity, Personhood, Mystery and Tongues," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10 (1997), pp. 3-28 and 29-34.
 8. Jack Hayford, *Spiritual Language*, esp. pp. 95-98.
 9. I am grateful to Russell Spittler for this insight.
 10. Jean-Daniel Plüss, "Azusa and Other Myths: The Long and Winding Road from Experience to Stated Belief and Back Again," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), pp. 189-201.
 11. Juan Sepulveda, "Born Again: Baptism and the Spirit, A Pentecostal Perspective," in *Pentecostal Movement as Ecumenical Challenge*, pp. 104-109.
 12. Vinson Synan, *Charismatic Bridges* (Ann Arbor, MI: Word of Life, 1974), p. 34; Ray Hughes, "A Traditional Pentecostal Looks at the New Pentecostals," *Christianity Today* (June 7, 1974), p. 8.
 13. Quoted in Lederle, "Initial Evidence," p. 128.
 14. Mills, *Theological Interpretation*.
 15. Jacques Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man* (New York: Seabury, 1970).
 16. Donald Gee's address to the World Pentecostal Conference, 1952.
 17. *The Apostolic Faith* 1:1 (Sept. 1906), p. 1; 1:5 (Jan. 1907), p. 3.
 18. W. J. Carothers' pamphlet entitled, *The Baptism in the Holy Ghost and Speaking in Tongues* (Zion City, IL, 1906), p. 24.
 19. "When the Holy Ghost comes, he speaks for himself," *Apostolic Faith* 1:3 (Nov. 1906), p. 4; One is to "get justified and sanctified." Then the Holy Spirit will come in "and praise God himself in an unknown tongue." He will then "bear witness of himself," *Apostolic Faith* 1:6 (Feb.-March 1907), p. 3.
 20. Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991); J. Massynbaerde Ford, "Toward a Theology of Speaking in Tongues," in *Speaking in Tongues, A Guide to Research on Glossolalia*, ed. Watson Mills (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 263-294.
 21. Note Murray Dempster, "The Church's Moral Witness: A Study of Glossolalia in Luke's Theology of Acts," *Paraclete* 23 (1989), pp. 1-7.

22. Hermann Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit* (Reprint; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 25, 30.
23. R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte (1. Teilband)*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, eds. J. Blank et al., pp. 101-102.
24. George Montigue and Kilian McDonnell, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1991), pp. 39-40.
25. J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988-92), II, pp. 211-12.
26. Note W. Faupel's evaluation of the shift in emphasis from tongues as xenolalia to tongues as an edifying transcendent language. D. William Faupel, "Glossolalia as Foreign Language: Investigation of the Early Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Claim," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31 (1996), pp. 95-109.
27. Everts, "Tongues or Languages?"
28. Gordon Fee, "Towards a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia," p. 32.
29. I refer to tongues in this way in my earlier work, "Sighs too Deep for Words." I appreciated Gordon Fee's development of this theme in "Towards a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia."
30. Russell Spittler, "Glossolalia," *Dictionary of Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements*, eds. Gary B. McGee et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), p. 441.
31. Referred to by Murray Dempster, "The Search for Pentecostal Identity," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), p. 7.
32. For example, Wade Horton stated, "We did, and still do not, place as much importance on glossolalia itself...as others claim we do." "Introduction," in *The Glossolalia Phenomenon* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1966), p. 16; Similarly, Vinson Synan protested the characterization of Pentecostalism as a "tongues movement," since tongues, though distinctive, are not central to the faith for us. *Charismatic Bridges*, p. 34.
33. Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988).
34. D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).
35. I am grateful to Gary McGee for drawing my attention to the importance of tongues for the origin of Pentecostalism.
36. My "Tongues as a Sign," pp. 63, 69.
37. Note my, "Tongues as a Sign."
38. Note Harvey Cox's discussion of tongues as "primal speech" in his, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1995), p. 81-98.
39. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: John Knox, 1984).
40. Gordon Fee, "Tongues - Least of the Gifts? Some Exegetical Observations on I Corinthians 12-14," *Pneuma* 2 (1980), pp. 3-14.
41. Krister Stendahl, "The New Testament Evidence," in *The Charismatic Movement*, ed. M. P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 48.

42. Ernst Käsemann has noted that the groans of Rom 8:26 in the original language are "unutterable," and not "unuttered," thereby opening the door to see the text as an unutterable utterance, a paradox similar to knowing that (i.e., the love of Christ) which is beyond knowledge (Eph 3:19). Since a recognizable feature of worship provides the most likely object of Paul's reference to groaning, Käsemann identifies it with tongues. *Commentary on the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 237-38.
43. Joseph Roswell Flower, "How I Received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Pentecostal Evangel* (January 21, 1933; reprinted September 7, 14, 1952). The 1993 version of the testimony (July 18) omits Flower's description of the delay in his experience between Spirit baptism and tongues!
44. Joseph Roswell Flower, "Is It Necessary to Speak in an Unknown Tongue?" (n.d.), esp. p. 91.
45. Note Cecil M. Robeck's treatment of Seymour's views, "William J. Seymour and the 'Bible Evidence'," in *Initial Evidence*, pp. 72-95.

[AJPS 1/2 (1998), pp. 185-202]

ASPECTS OF INITIAL-EVIDENCE DOGMA:{PRIVATE }
A EUROPEAN-AMERICAN HOLINESS PENTECOSTAL
PERSPECTIVE

Harold D. Hunter

As the sole representative from the Holiness Pentecostal tradition in this special edition, it is impossible to contain all the pertinent information in one article. Therefore, historical data are used to illustrate the complexity of the discussion which I hope to continue at a later date.

1. PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE: DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

North American classical Pentecostal denominations were formed in and around the turn of the twentieth century. All of these denominations have been influenced in varying degrees by Charles Parham and W. J. Seymour. The general theological heritage of this movement is quite broad and includes distant groups like the Pietists along with recent millenarians and the nineteenth century healing movement. Among the most telling theological roots are the related Holiness and Keswick movements.¹

The story is often told that W. H. Durham introduced schism into the emerging Pentecostal movement with his doctrine of the “finished work.” However, it would appear that almost from the outset there were devotees who would not classify themselves as Holiness Pentecostals or at least not subscribe to prevailing formulas propagated by Holiness-turned-Pentecostal pioneers. By the time the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) was formed in 1948, it became apparent that the Keswick wing of the Pentecostal movement was winning the day on the

¹ For a complaint against Keswick, look at H. Olu Atansuyi, “Gospel and Culture from the Perspective of African Instituted Churches,” in *Consultation with African Instituted Churches: Ogere, Nigeria, 9-14 January 1996: World Council of Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1996), pp. 47ff.

sanctification debate for at least most European-American Pentecostals in the USA.

Holiness Pentecostals have paid much attention to what Spirit baptism accomplishes. Consider the history of a people who laid considerable emphasis on the practical outworkings of Holiness theology and their fixation on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit seems quite natural. For African-American Holiness Pentecostals like W. J. Seymour and C. H. Mason, emphasis was likewise placed on racial reconciliation. After the "temple" is cleansed, it must be filled, reasoned these warriors. Here glossolalia was the initial, physical evidence and empowerment was the prize. Also, it was generally expected that the congregation would accept public manifestations of tongues-speech, particularly the charism of tongues.

The most influential Holiness and Keswick North American classical Pentecostal denominations continue to agree on the basic issue, namely that Spirit baptism is to be understood as a work of the Spirit which is distinct from and (usually) subsequent to regeneration. The most influential version of the Spirit baptism formula in the USA designated speaking in tongues as the initial evidence. Although this logion has been written into many North American Pentecostal denominational creeds, tongues-speech as the initial evidence has never enjoyed complete acceptance in the USA, much less around the world.

When news of the Azusa Street revival came to C. H. Mason and C. P. Jones in 1907, they reacted differently. Jones was uninterested, but Mason traveled to Los Angeles and returned with the Pentecostal experience and doctrine. There was a division at the 1907 annual assembly of the Church of God in Christ, which resulted in presiding elder Jones withdrawing the right hand of fellowship from Mason who assumed the leadership of the church. W. J. Seymour would change the Parham formula. The United Holy Church of America did not adopt it, while the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) absorbed various former Pentecostals. T. B. Barrett and George Jeffreys, two important Pentecostal pioneers in Europe, did not insist on tongues-speech as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism. The Mühleim Association of Christian Fellowship not only has rejected tongues as the sole evidence, but has not made the usual distinction between the initial salvific event and Spirit baptism. Howard Carter at one time dissented from initial evidence and Donald Gee used the term "sign."² Leonard Steiner helped launch the Pentecostal World Conference in 1947,

² Ian M. Randall, "Old Time Power: Relationships between Pentecostalism and Evangelical Spirituality in England," *Pneuma* 19 (1997), pp. 60ff., 78.

but did not accept the initial evidence dogma. The imposing Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal in Chile no longer affirms this belief. The further one moves geographically away from North America, the more extensive becomes the list of varying Spirit baptism formulas among those identified as Pentecostal.³

In Australia, the Associated Christian Fellowship advocates conversion which is signified by water baptism, then initial-evidence Spirit baptism, with a third stage that makes one perfect. The perfect will avoid the Great Tribulation, meaning martyrdom for Christians.⁴

Although there is growing interest in house churches in Mainland China, North Americans have paid an unusual amount of attention to Korea. America's obsession with success draws them like a magnet to the world's largest church, the largest Presbyterian church in the world, and the largest Methodist church in the world. Categories used in North America are not applicable because some Korean Presbyterians are more demonstrative in their worship than their Pentecostal counterparts and a wide range of groups that sponsor early morning prayer meetings and all-night prayer meetings have people who speak in tongues. Some Holiness Pentecostals in Korea now have a cordial relationship with the former Pilgrim Holiness Church. Perhaps not a few Korean Pentecostals who are more Calvinistic than Arminian find themselves less interested in initial evidence dogma. Resistance to initial evidence dogma is also known in the Philippines.

This introduces the elusive nature of a satisfactory definition of that which is "Pentecostal." In contrast to the sometimes advertised monolithic character of Pentecostalism, it is the considerable diversity that complicates the process of clearly identifying that which is "Pentecostal." The ubiquity of the international Pentecostal-Charismatic movement as it launches into the twenty-first century outdistances current attempts of classification and clarification. The most prominent fabric woven into this tapestry is the doctrine of Spirit baptism and its relationship to tongues-speech.

Attempts at inclusive categories for Pentecostal positions are akin to unearthing "the" Protestant view. Even if the focus were limited to the USA, no single Pentecostal denomination, fellowship, communion, or

³ See the letter written by UK Pastor A. M. Niblock, "A Timely Invitation," *The Upper Room* 2:1 (January 1911), p. 3. George B. Studd, "The Holy Ghost Received," *The Upper Room* 2:4 (January 1911), had to repudiate the view that those without initial-evidence Spirit baptism had not received the Holy Ghost.

⁴ Philip J. Hughes, *The Pentecostals in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996).

association can speak authoritatively on behalf of all Pentecostals. Although the Assemblies of God is the most popular typology in current use, the danger of being narrow in scope is illuminated by looking at the Pentecostal Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA), the North American Renewal Service Committee (NARSC), the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS). There is also a growing body of independent churches that form various flexible alliances and networks.

Great elasticity is evident when dealing with the Pentecostal World Conference (PWC), Euro-Flame, International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelization (ICCOWE), European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Association (EPCRA), European Charismatic Consultation Theological Stream, Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Fellowship, Asia Pentecostal Theological Association (APTA), Asia Charismatic Theological Association (ACTA), Comisión Evangélica Pentecostal Latinoamericana (CEPLA), the Relevant Pentecostals (South Africa), Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies (Ghana), and the Association of Pentecostal and Charismatic Bible Colleges of Australasia. Pentecostalism is an amorphous mass constantly evolving around the world, which lacks a common confession.

The Theological Stream of Brighton '91 put the diversity of the Pentecostal movement on display. The summer of 1991 saw 150 scholars, most of whom were Pentecostal or Charismatic in full fellowship with their respective communions, from six continents and every prominent tradition, including African Instituted Churches,⁵ convene in Brighton, England. Professor Jürgen Moltmann was the keynote speaker of the gathering, unprecedented in its international and ecumenical character. Established conciliars such as the World Council of Churches, pan-continental organizations serving Pentecostal and Charismatic scholars (EPLA, ACTA, CPCRE, SPS), in addition to other international groups of some notoriety (WEF, Lausanne, PFNA, PWC, EPTA) were amply represented. This conference illustrated why Pentecostalism is not properly classed as a subcategory of (at least North American) Evangelicalism. Concrete evidence of social awareness was demonstrated by the input of the Relevant Pentecostal Witness, exposing self-criticism of their failure to

⁵ Harold D. Hunter and Peter D. Hocken, eds., *All Together In One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). The African Instituted Churches will be included in my forthcoming volume from Scarecrow Press entitled *Historical Dictionary of Global Pentecostalism*. See also Antansuyi, "African Instituted Churches," p. 51.

adequately confront apartheid in South Africa. Orthodox participation evoked the possibility of setting up an Orthodox-Pentecostal Dialogue, an effort now advanced by the ICCOWE conference Prague '97. Professor Jan A. B. Jongeneel told of the eventual formation of an endowed chair for Pentecostalism at Utrecht University and the now occupied slot filled by Martin Parmentier at the Free University of Amsterdam. An EPLA conference that convened in Brazil late in 1992 mentioned joint sponsorship by the WCC and CLAI.

2. ORIGINS OF THE "INITIAL EVIDENCE" DOCTRINE

It is difficult to ascertain when the North American version of the Classical Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism emerged. Exhaustive research of tongues-speech suggests there may not be a major period of church history without this phenomenon occurring among Christians. "Pentecostal terminology" (baptism in the Spirit, fullness of the Spirit, et al.) became more pronounced after the Reformation, gained momentum in the nineteenth century, and exploded in the twentieth century. While waiting for more study on the Molokans,⁶ many have noticed that the pneumatology formulated by Edward Irving (1793-1834) seems to run parallel to present day Pentecostalism. It has sometimes been argued that Irving understood tongues-speech as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism. However, such a position must reckon with: (1) Irving associating prophecy as well as tongues with the initiation of Spirit baptism; and (2) that Irving himself would not have been a recipient of this pneumatic experience in view of the fact that there is no record of his having spoken in tongues.⁷

⁶ William C. Fletcher, *Soviet Charismatics: The Pentecostals in the USSR* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983), see ch. 2; Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "A Pentecostal Witness in an Eastern Context," Paper presented to the Theological Stream of the ICCOWE/ECC conference held September 10-14, 1997 in Prague, pp. 11ff.

⁷ Edward Irving, "On the Gifts of the Holy Ghost," in *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving*, vol. 5, ed. Caryle (London: Alexander Strahan, 1866), pp. 524, 539, 544-46, 559; Edward Irving, "The Sealing Virtue of Baptism," Homilies on Baptism 2, *Writings*, II, pp. 277f.; A. L. Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle* (London: James Clark, 1871), p. 164. G. F. Atter, *The Third Force* (Peterborough: College Press, 1970), p. 35, says that Irvingites who came to Canada in the nineteenth century exercised Charismatic phenomena but did not teach Spirit baptism as subsequent to conversion nor tongues as initial evidence.

The term "Spirit baptism" as it is frequently employed by Classical Pentecostals in North America has often been traced back to Charles Fox Parham's Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. Mrs. Parham's account, entitled simply *Charles Fox Parham*,⁸ perpetuates the story that the theology was agreed upon before Miss Agnes Ozman's experience. Mrs. Goss, the wife of a minister friend of Mr. Parham, passes on much of the same story uncritically in her *The Winds of God*.⁹ Miss Ozman's personal account, published under the title *What God Hath Wrought*,¹⁰ and released earlier than these works, may confirm such a process. Entitled "Baptism with the Holy Ghost and the Gift of Tongues and Seal of the Church and Bride," Charles Parham's 1902 article published November 1906 in conjunction with W. F. Carother's pamphlet titled *The Baptism with the Holy Ghost and the Speaking in Tongues* sounds a cautious note on prior teaching. Dr. G. B. Cutten, Baptist pastor and later professor at Yale University, wrote in 1908 that the Apostolic Faith Movement started in Kansas in 1900 and declares "that speaking with tongues is the only Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit."¹¹ B. F. Lawrence's *The Apostolic Faith Restored*,¹² first published in 1916, suggests that study by the Bethel students plus the experience of Miss Ozman cemented tongues as "the evidence." The cryptic account in the first published Azusa St. version of Topeka entitled "Pentecost Has Come," published September 1906 in Seymour's inaugural *The Apostolic Faith*, acknowledges study, but then points to Miss Ozman as exemplifying the erasing of the Holiness equation of Spirit baptism and sanctification.

Writing in 1911, J. C. Vanzandt claimed to have heard Parham in 1891 espouse Holy Spirit baptism with other tongues "as evidence."¹³ Yet,

⁸ Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham: Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement* (Joplin, MO: Tri-State, 1930).

⁹ Ethel E. Goss, *The Winds of God: The Story of the Early Pentecostal Movement (1901-1914) in the Life of Howard A. Goss*, rev. and ed. by Ruth Nortje Goss (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame, 1958, 1977).

¹⁰ Agnes N. O. LaBerge, *What God Hath Wrought: Life and Work of Mrs. Agnes N.O. Laberge, Nee Miss Agnes N. Ozman* (Chicago: Herald, 1921).

¹¹ G. B. Cutten, *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1908), p. 57. Cutten interacted with S. A. Manwell's "Speaking With Tongues," published in *The Wesleyan Methodist* (February 20, 1907), pp. 8f. This periodical ran a series of articles on the subject by Manwell and P. B. Campbell up through an issue dated March 1907.

¹² (St. Louis: Gospel Publishing House, 1916).

¹³ J. C. Vanzandt, *Speaking in Tongues* (Portland, OR: J. C. Vanzandt [1911]

it is also possible that Parham's exposure to tongues at Frank Sandford's Shiloh helped to ferment such a concept. What has yet to be adequately researched is whether the Doughty connection from Sandford to the Gift Adventists to a Doughty patriarch actually shifts the search to a different location. This research project looks also at B. H. Irwin and a short-lived community in Bradley County, Tennessee once known as Beniah.¹⁴

James Goff argues that the Frank Sandford exposure, absorbed by the B. H. Irwin theory, produced in Parham the concept of missionary tongues as the reason for a distinct baptism of the Spirit. The only thing left, says Goff, was moving Bethel students squarely into his camp.¹⁵

Writing during the glow of the Azusa Street revival, V. P. Simmons claimed personal exposure of 42 years to those who spoke in tongues. Published in 1907 by *Bridegroom's Messenger* and circulated as a tract, Simmons began with Irenaeus and went on to introduce a troop from New England whom he personally observed as they drank from a spiritual baptism and manifested tongues-speech.¹⁶ Various identified as Gift People or Gift Adventists, they were widely known for their involvement with spectacular charisms. Early Pentecostal periodicals reported that tongues-speech was known among them since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Some of their audiences were said to number in the thousands.¹⁷

1926), p. 31.

¹⁴ See Harold D. Hunter, "Beniah at the Apostolic Crossroads: Little Noticed Crosscurrents of Irwin, Sandford, Parham, and Tomlinson," in *Memory and Hope*, ed. Grant Wacker (Wycliffe College, Toronto: Society for Pentecostal Studies, March 8, 1996). This article is available in the *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* (www.pctii.org/cybertab.html).

¹⁵ James R. Goff, "Initial Tongues in the Theology of Charles Fox Parham," in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 64; James R. Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), pp. 74f.

¹⁶ V. P. Simmons, "History of Tongues," *Bridegroom's Messenger* 1:3 (December 1907), p. 2; idem, *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:34 (March 15, 1902), p. 2; idem, *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:46 (September 15, 1909), p. 2. Simmons, while exempting Schaff and Bushnell, appropriately entitled one entry, "Historians Dodging Tongues," *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:39 (June 1, 1909), p. 2.

¹⁷ *The Apostolic Faith* [Los Angeles] 1:4 (1906), p. 3; V. P. Simmons, "History of Tongues," *Bridegroom's Messenger* 1:3 (December 1907), p. 2; *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:34 (March 15, 1909), p. 2; *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:46

Counted among that number was William M. Doughty who, by 1855, had spoken in tongues while in Maine. Elder Doughty moved to Providence, Rhode Island in 1873 and assumed leadership among those exercising the “gifts of the Spirit.”¹⁸ Doughty’s mantle was passed on to Elder R. B. Swan who, reacting to the Azusa Street revival, wrote a letter saying that the Gift People in Rhode Island had experienced speaking in tongues as far back as 1874-1875. F. B. Lawrence followed Swan’s letter with an independent account of a woman who spoke in tongues in New York, perhaps prior to 1874, as a result of contact with the Gift People.¹⁹

Stanley H. Frodsham quotes pastor Swan as claiming to have spoken in tongues in 1875. Swan speaks of great crowds drawn from five states and specifically mentions his wife, Amanda Doughty, and an invalid hunchback who was “instantly healed” among those who spoke in tongues during this time.²⁰

Simmons, speaking of Swan’s group, said that their self-description, applied after the advent of the Pentecostal Movement was The Latter Rain. Their activities extended throughout the New England states—especially Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut—with the 1910 Latter Rain Convention held October 14-16 in Quakertown, Connecticut.²¹

(September 15, 1909), p. 2; B. F. Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith*, pp. 39-43; Charles Shumway, “A Critical History of Glossolalia,” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; Boston University, 1919), p. 109; *The Apostolic Faith* [Baxter Springs] 2:6 (June 1926), pp. 1-7.

¹⁸ V. P. Simmons in *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 2:34 (March 15, 1909), p. 2. V. P. Simmons, “Forbid Not To Speak With Tongues,” *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 3:51 (Dec 1, 1909), p. 4, refers to a Rhode Island camp meeting run by Elder W. M. Doughty “many years ago” that featured “much talking in tongues.”

¹⁹ The letter, reproduced in Lawrence, *Apostolic Faith Restored*, pp. 38ff., concluded:

A large number have [already] received their baptism and fillings, and on April 9, 1906, when the Holy Spirit fell at Los Angeles, we were holding a convention on the same day and God’s blessing was present, one assembly was on the Pacific coast and the other on the Atlantic coast.

²⁰ Stanley H. Frodsham, *With Signs Following* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1946), pp. 10-11.

²¹ V. P. Simmons in *The Bridegroom’s Messenger* 2:34 (March 15, 1909), p. 2; *Word and Work* 32:11 (November, 1910), pp. 338-39; Lawrence, *Apostolic Faith Restored*, p. 39. It was specifically noted that the group in Rhode Island included African Caribbeans.

Frank Bartleman frequently referred to joint-speaking engagements with Swan, specifically recounting a 1907 tour that included a convention in Providence where he spoke 18 times.²²

Previously overlooked in related investigations is whether the Doughty family counted among the Gift People overlap with the Doughty who traveled with Frank Sandford. Lawrence attests that Swan's circle included William M. Doughty's daughter-in-law, Amanda Doughty, and her unnamed husband, an elder in the Providence congregation.²³ V. P. Simmons says that William Doughty had two sons; the oldest, named Frank, was ordained.²⁴

Could the unnamed brother of Frank be Edward Doughty, who at the end of the nineteenth century was part of Sandford's entourage?²⁵ This seems to be the case.²⁶

3. EARLY REACTION

At a convention and short-term Bible school conducted in Waco, Texas, in February, 1907, several questions respecting doctrine were raised, among them the matter of the evidence of Spirit baptism. Brother A. G. Canada suggested that any of the gifts could be the immediate, empirical evidence. Contending on the opposing side, W. F. Carothers argued so conclusively for the "orthodox Pentecostal position" that the question was settled for most of those present once and for all.

It was determined that a test case should be made. San Antonio had not yet received the Pentecostal testimony. Workers who went to San Antonio agreed not to mention anything about evidential tongues. Although seekers for the baptism in the Spirit at San Antonio, therefore,

²² Frank Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: 1925, second edition), pp. 126, 101, 105f.

²³ Lawrence, *Apostolic Faith Restored*, p. 39.

²⁴ V. P. Simmons in *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:34 (March 15, 1909), p. 2.

²⁵ See, *Tongues of Fire* 4:21 (Nov 1, 1898), p. 168; Frank S. Murray, *The Sublimity of Faith* (Amherst: Kingdom Press, 1981), pp. 232, 247; William Hiss, "Shiloh, Frank W. Sandford, and the Kingdom" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, 1978), p. 247; Goff, *Fields With Unto Harvest*, p. 57. Murray counts Edward Doughty among "the seventy."

²⁶ Edward and his wife Amanda moved to a remote island near Portland, Maine. Telephone exchange with Donna Doughty (2-3-93). Shirley Nelson provided (11-12-92) a familial connection that put this piece of the puzzle in place.

were “not looking for tongues;” when the outpouring came, seekers burst forth in other tongues, just as had happened elsewhere in the Great Revival.²⁷ This logic is as compelling as those responses to F. F. Bosworth’s *Do All Speak With Tongues?*, which cited examples of God the Father (Daniel 5:25), as well as Jesus (Matthew 27:46), speaking in tongues! This story is echoed in the angry exchange between A. J. Tomlinson and John B. Goins.²⁸

During the Azusa Street revival it was Bartleman’s 1906 reports in Pike’s *Way of Faith* which enabled A. B. Crumpler, founder of the Pentecostal Holiness Church (PHC), to learn of the Pentecostal mission. A North Carolina Holiness preacher in Crumpler’s church, Gaston Barnabas Cashwell, traveled to Los Angeles and obtained the Pentecostal experience first-hand.

After a hasty return to his hometown of Dunn, North Carolina, Cashwell rented a large tobacco warehouse and announced plans for a new year’s eve revival. Along with many laypersons, almost all of the ministers of the PHC, the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church (FBHC), and the Free-Will Baptist Church, sought and accepted the Pentecostal experience. Cashwell preached Seymour’s doctrine, but Crumpler made his opposition to Cashwell clear. Through his paper, the PHC leader insisted instead that tongues-speech was just one of many gifts of the Spirit that could accompany a spiritual baptism. But Crumpler was fighting a losing battle. In the same May 15, 1907, issue of the *Holiness Advocate* in which he unconditionally attacked the new doctrine, over a dozen testimonies from holiness people who had obtained or hoped soon to receive the tongues experience appeared, including one that scolded Crumpler for helping Satan and hurting God’s work by denying the essentiality of tongues.

Two parties developed in the church: Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal. This was an issue in the 1907 annual meeting in which Crumpler, the president, led the attack against the Pentecostal faction, and vice-president A. H. Butler defended them. Crumpler and Butler were both re-elected and the issue was put off for another year. The climactic battle occurred at the 1908 convention in the Holiness Tabernacle in Dunn, NC on November 26, 1908. Crumpler, who had been unanimously re-elected, finally brought the matter to a head by

²⁷ William M. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), pp. 125f.

²⁸ Harold D. Hunter, “Spirit Baptism and the 1896 Revival in Cherokee County, North Carolina,” *Pneuma* 5:2 (1983), p. 10.

walking out of the convention. Only a small portion of the church supported him. He was soon back in the Methodist church in Clinton, North Carolina where he lived the rest of his days as a layperson, occasionally speaking out for the cause of prohibition but never again in the cause of holiness.²⁹

The convention ended with A. H. Butler as the president and the church totally in the hands of the Pentecostal preacher. A Pentecostal view of Spirit baptism was incorporated into the Articles of Faith in 1908.

While visiting Canada, J. H. King,³⁰ general overseer of the FBHC, learned about the Azusa Street revival from a friend, Rev. A. H. Argue. Argue told him about the revival and gave him a copy of Seymour's *The Apostolic Faith*. King put it away for later reading. The Fire-Baptized reaction was mixed. Many Fire-Baptized were excited to hear Cashwell. Several members from King's Toccoa, Georgia congregation went to Dunn where they, along with several more Fire-Baptized people, received the Pentecostal experience.

King did not go to the meeting, but at some point in January spent ten days fasting for divine guidance. Apparently some in his congregation had already accepted the initial-evidence doctrine before he returned to his church or at least spoke favorably of it, and it was not tongues-speech itself but the initial-evidence doctrine that troubled him. King withstood Cashwell in private, as well as publicly, during his first three days at Toccoa. King felt that he had bested the new doctrine at each confrontation.³¹

King put together an issue of *Live Coals* prior to Cashwell's arrival at Toccoa which included an article written by J. Hudson Ballard that refuted the initial-evidence doctrine. Attention was drawn to the fact that while some passages in Acts refer to tongues in connection with Spirit baptism, other passages do not. Further, the article noted that tongues is not mentioned as an evidence in the epistles. Tongues could not be the

²⁹ Vinson Synan, *Old-Time Power: A History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs: Advocate, 1973), p. 119; Joseph E. Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church: 1898-1948* (Franklin Springs: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1951), p. 245.

³⁰ J. H. King, "My Experience"; J. H. King, and Blanche L. King, *Yet Speaketh: Memoirs of the Late Bishop Joseph H. King* (Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1949), p. 112; Synan, *Old-Time Power*, p. 112.

³¹ King, "My Experience," p. 13.

exclusive evidence since this would exclude an untold number of Christians throughout church history from the blessing. The article pointed out that the group mentioned most in connection with tongues, the Corinthians, were barely saved, and certainly unsanctified. Lastly, if the gift were for all Christians, it would have been included in the lists of spiritual gifts in Rom 12:6 and Eph 4:11. The study concluded that tongues should be used privately, that the church needs unction for evangelism instead of tongues, and that love is the chief evidence of the grace of God.³²

On February 14, King made a study of key Greek words in the New Testament and to his surprise, found that his anti-initial-evidence arguments were not supported by either Acts or the best commentators that he had at hand, especially Dean Alford's *Critical Notes on the New Testament* and Adam Clarke's *Commentary*. He was particularly impressed with the thought that when Acts 8 says Simon Magus "saw," the Greek term ἰδῶν can also mean "hear." On this basis he concluded that Simon Magus must have heard speaking in tongues. Although Dean Alford would not support the idea of initial-evidence Spirit baptism (especially involving permanent xenolalia), he did argue that both the Ephesian Pentecost and this episode in Samaria included speaking in tongues. With his arguments now brushed aside, that night (February 15, 1907) King sought for and received the Pentecostal baptism and spoke with other tongues.³³ In April, 1908 in Anderson, South Carolina at a meeting of the FBHC, the denomination changed the Basis of Union to incorporate the doctrine of Pentecost "according to its scriptural aspect."

4. EARLY REVISIONS OF THE "INITIAL EVIDENCE" DOCTRINE

Although this is not much publicized, the North American formula has undergone various revisions of substance. Charles Fox Parham's original version of Spirit baptism insisted that initial-evidence tongues were to be xenolalic rather than glossolalic. Parham's position had the threefold

³² J. H. Ballard, "Spiritual Gifts with Special Reference to the Gift of Tongues," *Live Coals* (Feb 13, 1907), pp. 2, 6.

³³ Synan, *Old-Time Power*, pp. 112f. G. F. Taylor, *The Spirit and the Bride* (Falcon, NC: 1907), noting that King quoted Dean Alford in *The Apostolic Evangel*, goes on to point out that Alford was "not trying to prove" initial-evidence Spirit baptism.

advantage of: 1) promoting missionary expansion, 2) offering potentially undisputed evidence of the miraculous, and 3) reproducing the original day of Pentecost. Pentecostalism at large dropped this part of Parham's theory within a decade because it was fatally flawed.

The list of variations on Parham's original formula seems endless. Among the issues raised is whether speaking in tongues is simply a prayer language. Are charisms manifest in the believer prior to the spiritual baptism?³⁴ The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the United Pentecostal Church International link repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and initial-evidence Spirit baptism to conversion.³⁵ I choose to illustrate the diversity of teachings by singling out Parham's emphasis on permanent xenolalia which may again show the fingerprints of Frank Sandford among others.

It is noteworthy that Miss Ozman's initial experience in Topeka was said to have involved speaking in Chinese. Parham never modified the understanding that tongues-speech was to be xenolalic, neither have his theological heirs in the Apostolic Church.³⁶ The 1901 Topeka and the 1906 Azusa St. revivals included reports of xenolalia. Among other leaders, the claim of xenolalia in the initial experience of Spirit baptism was made by Florence Crawford, T. B. Barrett, and A. J. Tomlinson. Also, many new Pentecostals went outside the USA with the expectation of being supernaturally endowed with the appropriate language. Similar reports marked the early years of both the Protestant Charismatic movement and the Roman Catholic Charismatic movement.

The first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* 1:1 (Sept 1906), refers to "esquimaux" as a language for deaf-mutes. By contrast, the early PHC magazine, *The Holiness Advocate* 7:3 (May 15, 1906), reports on deaf-mutes who were Spirit baptized but did not speak in tongues. Yet, G. F. Taylor firmly stated that deaf and dumb believers must speak in tongues to be certifiably baptized in the Spirit.³⁷ *The Apostolic Evangel* 1:1 (Feb 15,

³⁴ Anthony D. Palma, "The Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit," in *Conference on the Holy Spirit Digest*, ed. Gwen Jones (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1983), I, p. 94. He introduced this concept in his presidential address delivered to the Society for Pentecostal Studies at Valley Forge, November 30-December 1, 1978.

³⁵ J. L. Hall, "A Oneness Pentecostal Looks at Initial Evidence," in *Initial Evidence*, p. 170.

³⁶ Article 7 of the By Laws of the Apostolic Faith Bible College, Inc., as published in *Apostolic Faith Report* 38:4-6 (April-June 1992), p. 12, depicts Spirit baptism as "evidenced by the speaking in other languages."

³⁷ Taylor, *The Spirit and the Bride*, p. 50. Taylor was reacting to a story run in the

1909) carried a report from *Confidence* that claimed a deaf and dumb woman “began to speak under the power of the Spirit. She began to speak in Hindustani and testified to Mohammedians. Afterwards she lost Hindustani and got the Telegu, her native language.”

PHC leaders such as Cashwell and Taylor encouraged potential missionaries to trust God to provide the necessary languages. Cashwell wrote that if Pentecostals had to learn foreign languages in colleges, it would take too long and Jesus “will not come soon.” Taylor ridiculed “scholarly clergymen and high-steeple officials” who wondered how to spread the gospel for being “nineteen centuries behind the times.” So even as they struggled to spread their message throughout the Southeast, Pentecostal churches and periodicals solicited collections for foreign missions, and almost immediately after the Dunn revival a few laypeople and leaders like J. H. King and PHC minister T. J. McIntosh set out for places such as China, Japan, and India.³⁸

Pentecostal missionaries soon made the painful discovery that there was a difference between xenolalia and glossolalia. Reports that McIntosh and others were unable to communicate to people in their own languages caused considerable discomfort for Pentecostals and also elicited a new round of criticism from their opponents. McIntosh had left for China immediately after speaking in tongues in what he believed was Chinese, at the Dunn revival. In a subsequent report to the *Bridegroom's Messenger*, he lamented, “Oh! How we would love to speak to these poor people. Of course, God speaks with our tongues, but not their language.”³⁹

The teaching on Spirit baptism is modified in Cashwell's inaugural issue of *The Bridegroom's Messenger* 1:1 (October 1, 1907), where he specifically contrasts xenolalia to learning languages at colleges for the sake of evangelizing the world. He goes on to call the 1 Corinthians 12 “gift of tongues” xenolalic in contrast to initial-evidence tongues.⁴⁰

Cashwell argued that those like McIntosh who thought they had the gift of tongues were mistaken, but pure in their motives. He criticized the

Way of Faith which was repeated in *The Holiness Advocate* 6:5 (June 1, 1906), p. 4 and 7:3 (May 15, 1907), p. 1.

³⁸ *Bridegroom's Messenger* 1:1 (Oct 1, 1907), p. 1; Taylor, *Spirit and the Bride*, p. 104; Campbell, *PHC*, pp. 238-48, 344-48.

³⁹ The A. G. Garrs left the Azusa Street revival for China. The *Bridegroom's Messenger* ran stories of the Garrs and McIntoshs working together in China. Such stories can be multiplied.

⁴⁰ “Colleges vs. Gifts of the Spirit,” *The Bridegroom's Messenger* 1:1 (October 1, 1907), p. 1.

disunity that these failures were causing, and called on Pentecostals to pray for those abroad to attain the necessary gift. As for himself, Cashwell admitted that he realized in retrospect that he had only obtained manifestations of tongues, but he was “expecting the gift of tongues just as much as I expect to see Jesus.” The PHC continued and greatly escalated its missionary outreach in subsequent years, but also made concessions by adopting more stringent requirements for its missionaries, utilizing translators, and sponsoring a more traditional approach to acquiring foreign languages.⁴¹

5. FROM HERE, WHERE?

To date no scholarly monograph has been devoted to the subject of tongues-speech as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism. An entry in the *Dictionary of the Pentecostal Charismatic Movements* has been eclipsed by a volume entitled *Initial Evidence*, edited by Gary B. McGee. In a paper presented by Gordon D. Fee to the 1972 SPS meeting, it was argued that material from canonical history is subservient to material from the didactic parts of scripture. Since the doctrine of tongues-speech as the initial evidence is found in Acts and not the Epistles, such a doctrine cannot be viewed as normative for all Christians. By 1984, Fee would present a paper to SPS affirming the Pentecostal experience, but denying a Spirit baptism that was “subsequent and separable.” In 1982, the SPS replaced the 1970 charter statement taken from the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America. In the interest of ecumenism and research, the society instead affirmed its allegiance to the statement of purpose drawn up by the World Pentecostal Fellowship. The result has been that the executive committee moved beyond Holiness and Keswick classical Pentecostals from North American to include a Oneness Pentecostal, Protestant and Roman Catholic Charismatics, a Wesleyan and an Episcopalian.⁴² The same kind of concerns was conceded when Pentecostals from outside the USA were selected as paper presenters to the annual conferences.⁴³

⁴¹ *Bridegroom's Messenger* 1:8 (Feb 15, 1908), pp. 1, 4; 1:11, April 1, 1908, p. 1; 1:12, April 15, 1908, p. 1; Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church*, pp. 347-59.

⁴² I submitted the constitutional change to the 1982 session of the society meeting at Fuller Theological Seminary simply because the time had come.

⁴³ This was especially clear in 1988 when Jean-Daniel Plüss read a paper at the meeting. See his groundbreaking *Therapeutic and Prophetic Narratives in Worship* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988).

Preoccupation with initial-evidence dogma presupposes the glossocentrism of the movement. Globally, this is not an accurate representation.⁴⁴ Moreover, a distinctive emphasis does not define a movement. Furthermore, many denominations have a majority of members who have never spoken in tongues and, of those who have, it is often not a part of their ongoing spirituality. A Gallop-*Christianity Today* poll in the 1970s counted a little over 30% who actually spoke in tongues. The 1993 General Council of Assemblies of God, USA (AG) conceded that at least 50% of AG members had not been Spirit baptized and there was a 14.5% decline in Spirit baptisms between 1986-1991.⁴⁵ Although initial-evidence tongues are required of all ministers, the ranks are swelling with those like PHC Bishop J. H. King⁴⁶ who apparently spoke in tongues only once. Pentecostals with Reformed roots like those in Korea and South Africa may easily move away from initial evidence. Even Joel Edwards of the New Testament Church of God says that initial evidence is no longer a doctrine for which one “dies.”⁴⁷

A glossocentric definition would put first generation Charismatics ahead of classical Pentecostals. Ironically, while most early leaders of the Charismatic movements distanced themselves from the older Pentecostal formula, some Protestant Charismatics are reversing this judgment. The writings of J. Rodman Williams serve as a good example. A comparison of his *The Pentecostal Reality*, written in 1972, with his 1985 SPS Presidential Address reveals that Williams has become increasingly sympathetic towards the connection of tongues-speech to pneumatic experience. With the release of *Renewal Theology* in 1990, he now uses the term “initial evidence.”⁴⁸ Further, although Charismatic theologians who

⁴⁴ Jerisdan H. Jehu-Appiah, “An Overview of Indigenous African Churches in Britain: An Approach Through Historical Survey of African Pentecostalism,” in *Report on the Proceedings of the Consultation between the World Council of Churches and African and African-Caribbean Church Leaders in Britain at the New Testament Church of God, Harehills, Leeds, England, 30 November - 2 December 1995* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1996), p. 62.

⁴⁵ Peter K. Johnson, “AG Leaders Call for New Pentecost,” *Charisma* (October 1993), p. 84. The numbers would be similar for the Church of God of Prophecy.

⁴⁶ O. Talmadge Spence, *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril?* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1989), p. 18. Much the same is said about PHC Bishop Melton (p. 6).

⁴⁷ Joel Edwards, “African-Caribbean Pentecostalism in Britain,” *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 17 (1997), p. 47.

⁴⁸ Williams’ address entitled “A Pentecostal Theology” may be found in *Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology*, ed. Peter Hocken

are Roman Catholic have been the most emphatic in their denial of this “Pentecostal baggage,” many of their prayer groups have fostered more pressure for devotees to speak in tongues than found in classical Pentecostal churches.

Observers of Pentecostalism should note that cardinal doctrines are subject to redefinition when narrow sectarian interests are significantly challenged. Consider the World Council of Church’s document entitled *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)*. *BEM* and the official responses to it show maneuvering by major traditions in areas previously thought stationary. The earliest Pentecostals had neither the will nor the need to carefully paint a masterpiece. The formula simply put spiritual gifts as inoperative in the Pentecostal believer until initiated by an initial-evidence Spirit baptism. Since these same believers identified “spiritual gifts” exclusively with the nine charisms listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, this is less problematic than critics have claimed. Further developments through the decades showed pragmatic accommodation to the spiritual reality of giftedness by those prior to and outside the movement. Pentecostals accepted a variety of phenomena that could be at one and the same time likened to yet separated from the nine charisms. Again, the primary emphasis for the Holiness sector was not in this area; rather, they emphasized that the Spirit baptized believer was endowed with “power for service.” In light of the imminence-oriented eschatology that characterized the earliest days of the Pentecostal revival, it is not surprising that this “power for service” was often thought to manifest itself in gospel evangelism. When zealous evangelism decayed into stark proselytism, the lack of theological clarity in the Pentecostal formula became increasingly problematic.⁴⁹

The Pentecostal Movement’s universal predilection for oral narrative and praxis is not incidentally related to the belief that pneumatic experience

(Gaithersburg: Society for Pentecostal Studies, November 14-16, 1985); Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology*, II, pp. 210-12. A Baptist, Howard Ervin, *Spirit Baptism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), p. 82, says: “It bears repeating here that of all the Spirit’s supernatural gifts, tongues appeared first in order at Pentecost. There is no convincing evidence that this order has been changed.” Consider also Dennis Bennett.

⁴⁹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982); Michael Kinnamon, *Truth and Community* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988), ch. 3; Peter Hocken, “The Meaning and Purpose of ‘Baptism in the Spirit,’” *Pneuma* 7:2 (1985), pp. 125-34.

subject to extensive analysis can become entombed in layers of theological formulas which do not stimulate the faithful.⁵⁰

Studies in the Hebrew canon which have emphasized the power of the spoken word are relevant. For the Pentecostal masses, it is evident that the spoken word effects action.

Enrique Dussel argues that the 1492 discovery of Amerindia moved Europe from being a periphery of the East to the center of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Dussel's "trans-modernity" finds the Other not only diachronically, but also synchronically. Tensions between Pentecostalism and modernity have given rise to labels such as "pre-critical" and "sub-modern." With the advent of postmodernity, we can celebrate this as an accomplishment, not an embarrassment. However, Pentecostalism has unwittingly been radically influenced by Gutenberg's invention (1440), making possible the world-wide parade of Bibles, along with the proliferation of defiant commentators, spawned in part, by Luther's idea of direct access to God.

⁵⁰ Consider R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

INITIAL EVIDENCE:
A SOUTHERN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Mathew S. Clark

This article addresses a subject which has been the center of extensive debate both within the Pentecostal movement itself, and (particularly) in debate and dialogue with non-Pentecostal groups. The most heated debate has no doubt been between Pentecostals and Evangelicals, particularly in those societies in which both groups enjoy numerous adherents, and can boast well-developed teaching and academic institutions and structures. North America is a good example of such a society.

The perspective offered here is Southern African. However, Pentecostalism is sufficiently diverse at this end of the African continent to urge caution on any scholar claiming to offer *the* definitive position on the issue. I have also chosen to term it *Southern* African rather than *South* African, since the histories of the sub-continent's various countries and Pentecostal groups nevertheless reveal significant commonalities. Since no detailed study of this matter has been made by Pentecostal scholars in this region before (certainly none of which I am aware, nor which is commonly known), I am including insights and knowledge gleaned from my own personal ministry in South Africa (SA), Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and from contacts with the Namibian, Botswana, and Zambian churches.

In order to understand some of the significant differences between the Southern African approach to the issue of "initial evidence" and that of e.g., North Americans, it is necessary to provide a short sketch of Southern African history, both secular and Pentecostal.

1. HISTORY

1.1 Secular History

The original indigenous inhabitants of South Africa (if “original” can be taken to mean “predating both the European and Bantu migrations to this region”) exist today only in very small pockets and numbers. The most significant group is the so-called Kalahari Bushmen, a group whose most noticeable public relations opportunity was the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.¹ In the mid-seventeenth century (1652) the first European settlement was established at the Cape of Good Hope, not as a colony but as a way station for vessels plying the Holland-East Indies trade route. The Dutch occupants of this outpost were later (1688) joined by Huguenots, who were fleeing religious persecution in France. These refugees became permanent settlers, joining those adventurous souls who had penetrated inland from the way station and become farmers and miners. A fairly large contingent of Malays also settled at the Cape at this time, and have since maintained a distinctive culture. During this period the local tribes were virtually annihilated in the inevitable frictions between Europeans and locals.

While the European presence at the Cape was being consolidated during the eighteenth century, the migration of Bantu tribes from the North was growing. Following the eastern seaboard, or the fertile route through Zimbabwe, the forerunners of the vast Xhosa and Zulu tribes were making their way from central Africa into the southern sub-continent. These groups applied pressure upon the original inhabitants of the land, and between the Europeans and the Bantu tribes the Bushman presence in the eastern portion of South Africa was ended in the early twentieth century.

The wars between Britain and France at the end of the eighteenth century left the Dutch outpost in the Cape in a vulnerable position. Eventually the British used their superior naval strength to secure the Cape of Good Hope for their monarch, and the period of tension between Dutch settlers and British administration began. In the mid-nineteenth century the settlers (known later as Boers, Trekkers or Afrikaners) left the Cape Colony in dudgeon, and set out on the Great Trek. This culminated in the establishment of two Boer republics in the hinterland, and also led to

¹ This Jamie Uys comedy film proved to be extremely popular in Asia and Europe. It concerns a Bushman clan who encounter their first artifact from industrial society: a cool-drink bottle dropped from an aircraft. The head of the clan travels in search of the “end of the earth,” to throw the bottle back to the gods, and on his journey becomes embroiled in a typical African civil war.

military clashes between the Europeans and the Sotho and Zulu tribes. With the ongoing battles with the Xhosa on the Eastern Cape Border region, this period set the scene for the definitive clashes between the European migration from the south and the Bantu tribes from the north. The defeat of the Zulus by first the Trekkers (1838) and then the British (1879) led to the formation of the British colony of Natal and British suzerainty over Zululand. This colony imported indentured laborers from India in the mid-nineteenth century, leading to an Asian presence that today numbers over a million. Most of these are Hindus, while a powerful Muslim minority makes its presence felt particularly in politics, where today it is well-represented in the governing party in South Africa.

British imperial ambitions in the nineteenth century led to the fall of the Dutch Boer republics, the defeat and subjugation of the Xhosa and Zulu nations, and the establishment of protectorates over the Tswana, Sotho and Swazi people - who were nervous of the intentions of their Boer neighbors, and sought British protection from them. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Britain held colonial sway over a united South Africa, Rhodesia, and the three protectorates. South West Africa was wrested from the Germans shortly afterward, and Southern Africa, with the exception of the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, became British in name. However, in reality, it consisted of a cosmopolitan mix of nations and cultures: and into this volatile situation the first Pentecostal preachers brought the Foursquare message.

1.2 Pentecostal History

As in many other countries, the Pentecostal revival in South Africa had precursors that “prepared” the way for the Pentecostal movement itself.² These included a revival in the early 1860s in the Reformed Churches of the Western Cape, associated with a prayer movement in which Andrew Murray was involved; the so-called “Groenewoud sect,” who were the earliest Afrikaner practitioners of believers’ baptism in South

² These are recorded by e.g., W. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Minneapolis: Orbis, 1977), pp. 111-25; I. Burger, *Geloofgeskiedenis van die Apostoliese Geloofsending van Suid-Afrika 1908-1958* (Braamfontein: Evangelie Uitgewers, 1987), pp. 85-117; and L. du Plessis, *Pinkster Panorama: ‘n Geskiedenis van die Volle Evangelie Kerk van God in Suidelike Afrika 1910-1983* (Irene: Volle Evangelie Kerk van God Uitgewers, 1984), pp. 6-10. These last two works are the official histories of the two largest Pentecostal denominations on the subcontinent, the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA (AFM of SA or AFM) and the Full Gospel Church of God (FGCOG or FGC).

Africa; and the ministry of John Alexander Dowie's Zionist movement, which provided a holiness and divine healing emphasis, coupled with a distinctive three-fold baptismal immersion, that still marks its major successors, the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of SA and the Zion Christian Church.

The major impetus for the launching of a distinctive Pentecostal movement in South Africa was the ministry of John G. Lake and Tom Hezmalhalch.³ These ministers from America spent a relatively short time in South Africa, but their strong emphasis on divine healing struck a chord among an Afrikaner and Black population that was suffering severe deprivation after the British victory in the South African War. The Zionist movement provided an infrastructure of ministers and assemblies that was absorbed almost entirely when the AFM of SA was officially established in 1908. In 1913 its first South African President⁴ was elected, P. L. Le Roux. He had been a Dutch Reformed Church minister, a Zionist missionary among the Blacks in Wakkerstroom (SE Transvaal), and from 1910 a member of the Executive Council of the AFM. Lake and Hezmalhalch never returned to South Africa, nor did they maintain any close ties, and the largest Pentecostal group from then on developed very much as an indigenous movement. The majority of its members were Afrikaners or Blacks. Sadly, most of the Blacks left before 1920, primarily because of racial intolerance on the part of many Afrikaners, and became the core of the largest African Initiated Church, the Zion Christian Church.⁵

Although the Full Gospel Church of God has had a large percentage of English-speaking members, and the Assemblies of God has been primarily

³ Described in detail by Burger, *Geloofsgeskiedenis*, pp. 140-66.

⁴ The church was forced to register as a company, which it remained until 1961 when it was granted recognition by the state as a church. The chairman of its executive council has thus always been known as "president," rather than "bishop," "moderator," or similar more ecclesiastical titles.

⁵ The differences, commonalities and tensions between Pentecostal Blacks and the various types of "spirit" churches among the Black population of South Africa have been described in detail by A. Anderson, *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa, 1992). C. R. De Wet, "The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa 1908-1980" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1989), has described the development of a Black mission church within the AFM of SA. J. LaPoorta, *Unity or Division? The Unity Struggles of the Black Churches within the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa* (Kuils River: Japie LaPoorta, 1997), has described the process which led the racially divided AFM churches to structural unity at Easter, 1996.

English-speaking in its ministry and impact among Whites,⁶ the vast majority of Pentecostal membership in Southern Africa has been Afrikaners (from the White population), and Blacks. There has also been a significant impact among people of mixed race (the so-called Coloureds, most of whom use Afrikaans as a first language) and among the Indians in Natal, where the majority of Christians are converts from Hinduism to Pentecostal Christianity. Coupled with the relatively poor showing of the traditional Evangelical groups among these segments of the population, the Pentecostal movement in South Africa has developed as a largely indigenous movement, without major input from (although never totally isolated from) the issues that have determined Pentecostal-Evangelical relations in the western, English-speaking world. Debate between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostal groups has mainly been limited to two overriding and extremely emotionally-debated issues: the issue of infant versus adult baptism (for Afrikaners in debate with the Reformed churches, which have dominated Afrikaner religious culture since the first Dutch settlers arrived); and the issue of syncretism with elements of ancestor veneration and its associated rituals (between Black Pentecostals and the African Initiated Churches). The heat of these two debates has been so strong⁷ that the issue of “initial evidence” has never really been contentious for wider South African Pentecostalism⁸ - at least not in its relationship with non-Pentecostal Christian groups. The issue of tongues is also

⁶ The Assemblies of God has a relatively small White membership, with the overwhelming mass of its members being Blacks. This large Black group is primarily the product of the powerful evangelistic efforts of Nicholas Bhengu (Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, pp. 126-39). P. Watt, *From Africa's Soil: The Story of the Assemblies of God in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: Struik, 1992), has provided an informal history of the AOG in SA. Sadly, the group has splintered into a number of different factions who do not always relate well to one another.

⁷ F. P. Möller, *Die Sakrament in gedrang* (Johannesburg: Evangelie Uitgewers, 1951) was the definitive reply by a Pentecostal leader to the DRC charges of sectarian baptismal practice against the AFM of SA. Anderson, *Bazalwane*, pp. 74-76, enumerates (with statistics) the significant differences and disputes between Pentecostal Blacks and their counterparts in the African Initiated churches.

⁸ None of the histories of SA Pentecostalism noted above (Burger, de Wet, du Plessis, Watt) mention “tongues as initial evidence” as a contentious issue. It cannot be conclusively said of any prominent Southern African Pentecostal leader that he/she did not accept tongues as that evidence. I have asked current church leaders in most of the large Pentecostal groups if they have ever been involved in such a debate either inside or outside of their groups, only to discover that most were almost entirely ignorant of, and decidedly uninterested in it.

apparently not of particular interest to the self-understanding of South African Pentecostals, with only John Bond (leader of one of the small Assemblies of God groups) including it as *the* distinctive mark of Pentecostal religion, in a work that included a few South African essays on Pentecostal distinctives.⁹ Indeed, in the first ever publication of theological articles/essays by AFM theologians,¹⁰ of seventeen contributions not one discusses or even mentions the initial evidence question.¹¹

2. RELEVANCE

However, if the issue of initial evidence does not appear to have played a role in either the development of Pentecostal *self-understanding*, nor in the *relationship* of Pentecostals to other churches and groups, this should not be understood to imply that it is not an issue that needs urgent consideration in the context of Southern African Pentecostal *practice*. Indeed, the Southern African situation may actually provide a favorable theological climate for such consideration, since the matter might be discussed here without the heat and rancor that has marked so much of the Pentecostal-Evangelical debate in other parts of the world.

I would offer a number of reasons why the issue of tongues as initial evidence could be fruitfully discussed in the Southern African church, and indeed in the wider Pentecostal movement as well.

⁹ J. Bond, "What Is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology," in *What Is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* eds. M. S. Clark and H. I. Lederle (Pretoria: Unisa, 1989), pp. 134-35. Other contributors, including Lederle (Charismatic), Hattingh (AFM of SA) and du Plessis (FGCOG), as well as Clark (whose work the larger part of the publication is) prefer to speak of the notions of encounter and spiritual power as the *proprium* of Pentecostalism.

¹⁰ P. J. Gräbe and W. J. Hattingh, eds., *The Reality of the Holy Spirit in the Church: In Honour of F. P. Möller* (Pretoria: JL van Schaik, 1997).

¹¹ This does not mean that the issue has never been discussed in Pentecostal teaching material. F. P. Möller, *Ons Pinkstererfenis* (Johannesburg: Evangelie Uitgewers, 1955), pp. 28-40, and also *Die diskussie oor die charismata soos wat dit in die Pinksterbeweging geleer en beoefen word* (Johannesburg: Evangelie Uitgewers, 1975), pp. 89-150; M. Eloff, *Vrae en antwoorde oor die doping met die Heilige Gees* (Pretoria: Eagle Publications, 1993), pp. 13-16 are examples of such teaching. However, they merely reflect the traditional Pentecostal viewpoint without entering into debate (of any particular depth) with contrary views. Such views have been expressed in South Africa by Reformed teacher W. Marais, *Die hedendaagse spreek in tale ontmasker* (Cape Town: NG Kerk Uitgewers, 1981).

2.1 Diminishing Manifestation of the Charismata among Pentecostals

The AFM Theological College in Johannesburg inducts between 30-40 new students every year. These are representative of the wider AFM denomination, coming as they do from assemblies all over the country. The course “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” is offered as part of third-year New Testament studies, and I take the opportunity to ask the students about the manifestation of the charismata in their own lives, and in the liturgies of their local churches. The results in 1997 were something like this:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Speaking in tongues | 100% have done so, or do so regularly |
| Prophecy in worship | About 10% of the class have prophesied at some time or other |
| Other gifts | About 60% testify to praying for sick folk who were subsequently healed; A few spoke of receiving revelation via dreams/visions |

As far as speaking in tongues is concerned, the AFM of SA still insists that all candidates for ministry be baptized in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues as the initial evidence. The only candidates for theological training who may register at the College, and who do not comply with this requirement, are those who have no plans to enter the ministry in the AFM. (There have been two such cases in the 14 years I have lectured in the College.) The 100% for speaking in tongues is thus understandable. The high percentage of those who claimed to have exercised the gift of healing is also understandable in the light of the primacy of this gift in this denomination from the very beginning. The figure for prophesying is disappointing, and appears to be falling every year.

Students who report rich Charismatic manifestation in their local church liturgies usually come from rural assemblies or from medium-sized to small urban churches. In the larger and “hyper” churches Charismatic expression appears to be limited to individual ministers or to ministry teams, a tendency discussed below. Across the board, however, participation by the “laity” appears to be dwindling, particularly in terms of the charismata.¹²

¹² M. M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989) discerns similar trends in the largest North American Pentecostal denomination.

While the AFM College in Johannesburg is still attended primarily by middle-class White students, this is not true of students at Covenant Bible College in Durban. Attendance here has historically been Asian, although recent intakes have consisted of a majority of Black students. While the younger Asian students are not noticeably different from their white counterparts in Johannesburg, the Pentecostal communities they represent are markedly more Charismatic. This is probably because ministry on the Christian-Hindu interface regularly demands the ability to deal with occultic and demonic manifestations. Divine healing is also the single most common reason given by Hindus for converting to Pentecostal Christianity.¹³ The “missions” character of Pentecostal ministry on this interface thus places intense pressure on pastors and members alike to be endowed with spiritual power.

My experience of ministry among Blacks has been mainly in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Black graduates from the AFM College in Harare tend to reveal similar tendencies to their White counterparts in Johannesburg, although the church in Zimbabwe exhibits a far more rural nature than the urbanized communities of South Africa. This means that Pentecostal believers live in close association with tribal communities who are given to animistic and shamanistic beliefs and practices. This, as in the Pentecostal-Hindu interface in KwaZulu-Natal, places greater pressure upon members and ministers alike to “walk in the power of the Spirit.” Evangelistic ministry in particular emphasizes the Charismatic elements of healing and deliverance in these communities.

The situation in the AFM in Mozambique is radically different. I was privileged to offer the first training seminar for Christian workers held by the AFM in that unhappy country after the end of the civil war. The war had isolated the Mozambiquan church (which was a young church in a predominantly Roman Catholic country) from the larger Pentecostal movement for about 15 years. In that time there had been no visits from outside, no formal training, no evangelistic outreach. Indeed, under the Marxist government of Samora Machel, Pentecostals had been actively persecuted. They existed in greatest numbers in the central provinces, which were also the homeland of the rebel Renamo movement. The most vicious fighting therefore occurred where most Pentecostals lived.

¹³ T. Naidoo, *Indian Pentecostalism: A Hindu Assessment* (Durban: University of Durban-Westville, 1989), pp. 34-35, 42-44. Naidoo notes (pp. 34-35) that many Muslims also go to Pentecostals for healing, but do not officially convert to Christianity, as the social implications for such conversions are much more drastic than those for Hindus.

Some 100 workers arrived for the seminar. Of these, perhaps 10 had been baptized in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. Despite the fact that, as in Zimbabwe, most lived in rural tribal society, surrounded by animism and shamanism, their ministry had little Charismatic content. They nevertheless understood well the power of deliverance from such systems, and were dismissive of anything that smacked of syncretism. It was a privilege, together with a colleague, to pray for these workers that they might receive the enduement of power associated with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Diminishing Charismatic fervor or experience will perforce drive the Pentecostal groups to a re-consideration of their origins and distinctives. If these center on enduement with power and the demonstration of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, then it is precisely the initial experience of this power that is crucial. Initiation into the realm of the charismata, for Pentecostals, is synonymous and synchronous with the baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues. The issue of the “initial evidence” of this experience cannot be other than crucial to the consideration of current Charismatic practice within the Pentecostal churches. This leads to the next consideration.

2.2 Lessening Emphasis on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

South African Pentecostals have adopted the practice of the Reformed churches, of having a series of evening prayer meetings from Easter Monday to Pentecost Sunday. Initially these were directed primarily at praying for new converts to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. They normally continued until late at night, often into the early hours of the morning. Since the advent of television broadcasts in 1976, this practice has been gradually dying out, particularly in First World (white, middle-class) communities. Those few assemblies that still hold prayer meetings usually do so for the last three of four evenings before Pentecost, and normally everyone has gone home by 9 p.m.

The official statistics of the AFM reflect the impact of this trend: in the last two decades, on average the number of people recorded as “baptized in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues” in the church’s annual census has been one-third to one-quarter the number of those baptized in water. The membership of the church is thus becoming increasingly weighted toward those who have had no personal initial Charismatic experience.

The AFM nevertheless maintains its emphasis upon evangelism, church growth and divine healing. However, it has been the ministers and the ministry teams who were understood to perform these functions.

Renewed emphasis on the role of the laity is detected in the move toward a “cell-church” structure based on the model of Ralph Neighbour.¹⁴ Since this model defines cell-groups primarily as centers for evangelistic outreach, and therefore discourages their use as Bible-study or prayer-meeting groups, it is unlikely that the cell-church will promote a stronger emphasis upon either baptism in the Holy Spirit or charismatic gifts among the laity. There has certainly been no evidence of this at this (admittedly early) stage.

Theological discussion of the initial evidence issue in Southern Africa might be just one platform on which the inevitable consequences of the trend away from baptism in the Holy Spirit could be considered. Together with diminishing charismatic manifestations, this phenomenon implies that within the next generation the Pentecostal movement might well be distinctively Pentecostal in name and remembrance alone, and have little to offer in the realm of the experiential to distinguish it from its Reformed or Evangelical counterparts. Since the Southern African Pentecostal movement has been little influenced by Evangelicalism, it is not a group with strong emphasis upon Bible study, use of the Bible, or exegetical method. A religious group with neither strong experiential distinctives, nor a marked doctrinal or teaching basis, is the grim prospect that awaits the Pentecostal movement here if the current trend continues unabated.

2.3 Signs of an Incipient “Tongues Cult”

Some Pentecostal teachers were discussing the notion of a developing “tongues cult” in the Pentecostal movement as early as the 1970s.¹⁵ The definition of such a cult or tendency was that it emphasized the essentiality of tongues, and the desirability of the phenomenon as evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit, to the virtual exclusion of any other evidence. Since the church was already becoming aware of the disparity in numbers between conversions and baptisms in the Spirit, various ministers took upon themselves the role of traveling mediators of the experience. It soon

¹⁴ The white churches in the AFM have been involved in a transition program toward a cell-church structure since 1996. The model of Neighbour has been adopted virtually without modification. The realization of structural church unity in the AFM in 1996 has affected this program to a certain extent, since the assemblies from the black, Indian and colored churches have not all been willingly co-opted into the transition process.

¹⁵ The Rector of the AFM Theological College from 1969 to 1987, Pastor Frank Cronjè, made a point of discussing this matter with the students every year. I was thus confronted with it in 1970, 1971, 1972 and the following years.

became clear that for some of them the emphasis in their statistics was not on how many had truly received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but on how many had spoken in tongues.¹⁶

Discussion of the initial evidence issue will direct attention to such practices. There are hopeful signs among the pastorate of a growing awareness that tongues are intended to be *initial* evidence, and certainly not the *only* evidence of baptism in the Spirit. There is growing agreement that the emphasis in Acts 1:8 is on the power received by the believer when receiving the baptism of the Spirit, and not the phenomena accompanying it. This does not deny that the notion of accompanying phenomena is crucial to Pentecostal practice: however, it asserts that the marks of a truly Pentecostal life would be in the manifestation of Holy Spirit power and not in the experience (often never repeated) of speaking in tongues.

2.4 The Tendency toward “Guru Cults” in Pentecostalism

One of the developments in Pentecostalism in South Africa in the last few decades has been the ideal of an urban hyper-church, with a pastor who has absolute authority over the ministry team and members “under” him. The role model for this has been the prominent figures of the Faith Movement. The notion of a spiritual hierarchy of “anointed” pastors who have the “vision” for God’s work, and their underlings who have no anointing or vision of their own, is borrowed from the neo-gnosticism which flows logically from Kenyon’s teaching on revelation-knowledge. Such pastors attempt to function in a similar fashion to an eastern *guru*, with unquestioned authority.

The experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, as recorded by Luke in Acts 2, was strongly egalitarian. *All* spoke in tongues. Linked to Peter’s recorded use of Joel’s prophecy, this becomes even stronger: sons and daughters, old men and young men, female servants and male servants - no category is excluded from the experience

¹⁶ Or had made sounds that might possibly be explained as glossolalia. One such minister even produced a short booklet extolling tongues (rather than the Holy Spirit and His power): J. C. Louw, *The Speaking with New Tongues: A Heavenly Organ Recital* (Kempton Park: J. C. Louw, 1977). In her preface she comments: “Since 1970 I have traveled through South Africa and have spoken to many young people. Up to the present date (24.10.77) one thousand six hundred and eighty seven of our youth have been filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues as on the day of Pentecost.” The keeping of statistics was central to this particular ministry, but very few local assemblies were revitalized by the ministry, despite claims that some scores of people had received the Spirit.

of Holy Spirit power. If Stronstadt is correct, and Luke's aim was to categorize all Christians as a *prophethood* of believers,¹⁷ then the corrective to any notion of spiritual hierarchies is even more explicit.

If the baptism in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by the visible evidence of glossolalia, then the "common" believer is assured that he/she has become part of the egalitarian people of God, participating in the full blessing of the new covenant promise, as outlined in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36: knowing God for oneself, and being one of a people in *all* of whom God has put his Spirit. The initial evidence issue is therefore relevant to this challenge to mainstream Pentecostalism as well.

2.5 Religion Based on Spiritual/Emotional Sensation without Categories

The combined contribution to late twentieth century society of New Age spirituality and post-modern philosophy has been a renewed emphasis upon spiritual *experience* in religion. Those of us who can remember our schooling in the modernist system remember the cynicism that prevailed toward any notion of spirituality, including the existence of God. This has changed radically, and the notion of spirituality is now fashionable at all levels of society. Indeed, many direct their entire lives to the search for spirituality and spiritual experience.

Since the Pentecostal movement has been offering spiritual experience as part of its ministry ever since its inception, it is tempting to believe that some accord between post-modern spirituality and Pentecostalism can be found.¹⁸ However, this would be to ignore some real differences, not least the reality that Pentecostal experience is offered with very clear parameters and categories. The coupling of speaking in tongues to the baptism in the Holy Spirit is one example of such categories. In a Pentecostal-Charismatic milieu where it seems that experiences are becoming more and more sensational, and less clearly defined (whether by scripture or by tradition), a re-assessment of the initial evidence issue might also throw light upon this challenge to the movement. Pentecostals have always claimed that their teachings and experience in this area have been solidly Bible-based; indeed, it was Bible study that led to the seeking of the experience. A

¹⁷ R. Stronstadt, "The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. W. Ma and R. P. Menzies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), pp. 60-77.

¹⁸ This is the express view of T. Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), pp. 163-88.

strong emphasis on glossolalia as initial evidence for Spirit-baptism is also a strong emphasis on the use of Scripture to evaluate, promote or reject the experiences that are being offered in the market place of spirituality.

3. CONCLUSION: SOME PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

Although the initial evidence issue has never been hotly debated in South Africa, most ministers have had to develop personal clarity on the issue at some time or other. I first encountered skepticism on the matter as a teenager, when a Congregationalist minister challenged me on the traditional Pentecostal position. (A year or two later, while I was studying at Theological College, I received a letter from him, the first line of which read: "Dear Mathew: I have spoken in tongues...") In 1988 I participated in a discussion on hermeneutics initiated by the Evangelical Fellowship of South Africa's theological commission, in which I was asked to speak on the Pentecostal understanding of the Biblical canon, in the light of our belief in ongoing revelation. That was an interesting session! However, most of us South Africans have not devoted much time or energy to the matter, for the reasons specified above. Nevertheless, I would like to make a few personal observations.

Firstly, the linking of glossolalia to Spirit baptism functions pragmatically as a "protection" for the experience. This occurs in a similar way in which believers' baptism operates as a "protection" for the experience of regeneration based upon personal faith in Christ. How one would "justify" such a notion scripturally is not immediately clear, hence my choice of the term "pragmatic" above. Yet it soon becomes obvious that where speaking in tongues is not essentially linked to Spirit baptism, such baptism no longer regularly occurs. This is most evident in the lack of power and enthusiasm that accompanies such a trend. At the risk of committing a gross generalization, I would argue that perhaps the reason Baptist movements have retained their Evangelical thrust, whereas Methodism has not (in South Africa, at least), is because regeneration in baptism has been associated with believers' baptism. And perhaps the reason why so many Charismatic groups have lost virtually all Charismatic manifestations, and Pentecostalism has not (yet), has been because Pentecostals have maintained the link between glossolalia and Spirit baptism.

Secondly, Pentecostal hermeneutics must be understood to differ substantially from that of Evangelical groups. This is true in a very basic sense, in that Pentecostals understand the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an

experience and not a *doctrine*. Whereas one would peruse the didactic portions of the Scriptures to validate a doctrine, experience is validated and promoted by the narrative portions. It is these portions that *testify* to events and experiences. The Book of Acts (with the gospels and also with Old Testament narrative) will thus always be crucial to Pentecostal self-understanding, since the movement is an experiencing movement as well as a believing or confessing movement.

Thirdly, Pentecostals need to bear in mind that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience that Scripture describes as being *observable* to the bystander. The bystander did not need to have any particular spiritual insight to see that something was happening to the recipients. This is most evident in Acts 8, where Simon wishes to add the ability to induce such an observable experience to his repertoire of tricks, so spectacular was it. Without marketing the experience in same way, as have been many of the content-less, category-less spiritual experiences of the New Age, Pentecostals will reduce it to some mystical inner experience at their peril. That it is public, observable, and has dramatic impact upon the recipient and upon bystanders is part of our Pentecostal heritage and ethos. It is this that led Pentecostals to speak of tongues as “evidence” of spiritual experience. Perhaps, however, we do need to emphasize again that this evidence is *initial*, and that it should be followed up by further evidence of spiritual power and zeal.

Fourthly, Spirit baptism accompanied by tongues, promoted on as broad a basis as possible, can be a ready corrective to the development of *guru*-cults in the movement. Admittedly this has not always been the case. However, where the vast majority of believers in a given location has had that experience, one can appeal to them as Paul did to the *guru*-deceived Galatians: “How did you receive the Spirit...?” The essentially egalitarian nature of the experience, and the generality of the sign, assures all believers at all stages of spiritual development, that God is not a respecter of persons. Fifthly, it is obvious that there is an increasing lack of real and genuine spiritual power in the Pentecostal movement.¹⁹ In the face of the challenges offered by pagan religions and the New Age movement, this is deplorable. The coupling of glossolalia to Spirit baptism, and a re-emphasis upon its generality for believers, might enable us to cope better with the crisis. On the other hand, devaluation of tongues may well bring with it devaluation

¹⁹ This fact, particularly its reality among Pentecostal academics, is the challenge to which Tarr directs his address, transcribed as: D. Tarr, “Transcendence, Immanence and the Emerging Pentecostal Academy,” in *Pentecostalism in Context*, pp. 195-222.

of other spiritual manifestations, to the detriment of the witness to which the movement has been called (Acts 1:8).

The tone of this article makes it obvious that the writer is a “traditional” Pentecostal who understands that there is a strong scriptural basis for understanding tongues as the initial evidence that accompanies the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is probably because he comes from, and has operated in, a Pentecostal milieu where this has never really been contested or queried. This perspective from Southern Africa, where Pentecostalism is a strongly indigenous movement that is nevertheless challenged by many different cross-cultural interfaces, may challenge or affirm insights which Pentecostals from other regions have gained along the way. I do not apologize for accepting and arguing the fact that a discussion of initial evidence inevitably becomes a discussion of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and that therefore the relevance and authenticity of the one reflects on the relevance and authenticity of the other.

TONGUES: AN EXPERIENCE FOR ALL
IN THE PAULINE CHURCHES?

Max Turner

INTRODUCTION

In 1 Cor 12:30, Paul poses the question, “Not all speak in tongues do they?,” in a grammatical form which invites his reader to respond with a firm negative. For many, that settles the question implied in the title, once and for all. Unfortunately, few issues are that easily dealt with. Some of my Pentecostal friends would immediately respond that by starting with 1 Cor 12:30 we have begun at the wrong place. It is implicit, they would say, from the narrative of Acts that *Luke* thought tongues was universally received as initial evidence of a Spirit-baptism promised to all believers. And Luke clearly belonged to the Pauline churches, at least in the general sense that he knew them well, and considered Paul as prominent among the apostles. Nor (they would claim) is Paul himself univocal on the issue. In 1 Cor 14:5 does he not explicitly state, “I want every one of you to speak in tongues”? So in the fight between 1 Cor 12:30 and 1 Cor 14:5, we cannot grant a knockdown victory to the former without more careful assessment. Closer scrutiny of the context (it is claimed) suggests 1 Cor 12:30 deals only with *public manifestation* of tongues in the congregational worship of the church. Not all receive this gift. But Paul knows another kind of gift of tongues which is related to private prayer (cf. 1 Cor 14:4a). It is the latter gift which Paul believes to be widespread and at least potentially universal (so 1 Cor 14:5).¹ While Luke tells us nothing about tongues in congregational worship, and Paul provides no hint of glossolalia as “initial evidence,” we may harmonize their evidence with little fear of

¹ This position has most recently been defended by Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), ch. 13.

distortion. From the New Testament perspective provided by the apostle and his co-worker, we should conclude that all believers in the Pauline churches normally manifested tongues on reception of the Spirit's empowering, and Paul encouraged all believers to re-activate this as a form of private praise and prayer (1 Cor 14:5). At the same time, he was aware that *some*, but perhaps a minority, exercised a "ministry" of tongues in the assembly - that is, these people were specifically prompted and inspired for the special manifestation of tongues which (when coupled with interpretation) edified the congregation. And all this (it would be added) is in complete accord with experience in the majority of classical Pentecostal churches, and it may be supported by more general considerations from biblical and systematic theology.

It is not the purpose of this paper to re-investigate the potential contribution of the Lucan evidence. I have argued elsewhere that if anything Luke poses something of a challenge to this sort of construct.² I think it has to be read *into* the texts before it can be read *from* them.

I suggest it cannot be demonstrated with any degree of certainty that Luke thought Spirit-reception would *normally* be attested by an immediate charismatic manifestation. In the Judaism out of which Christianity arose such would usually only have been *expected* where some form of public legitimation before the people of God was particularly appropriate (as at Num 11:25; 1 Sam 10, etc.). Given this, it is then hardly surprising charismatic fireworks feature at Pentecost, in the case of the first admission of *Samaritans* [cf. 8:14-19]), and in the (implicitly even more controversial) conversion of the first *Gentiles* to be admitted to the people of God (Acts 10-11 [cf. 15:8]). Otherwise the conversion-initiation accounts in Acts are silent about such "initial evidence," even where much other detail is given (most notably in the case of Paul, but also in that of the Ethiopian eunuch). An exception is Acts 19:1-6. But as the question whether these "disciples" had received the Spirit or not was the *whole issue* in the incident, it does not come as a surprise that when the gift is given it is also *attested* by some charismatic manifestation. The point is that, for Luke, reception of the Spirit of prophecy brings not merely "prophetic empowering" (for mission, or whatever), but *also* God's self-revealing, restoring and transforming presence, especially in spiritual wisdom and understanding,³ and that

² Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 393-97; 446-49; idem, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), pp. 225-26.

³ Some have disputed this: most notably R. Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of Saint Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984); Menzies, *Empowered*; John

would normally be self-attesting to the recipient and to the community (at least over a period of time), and in a wide variety of ways.

Furthermore, while Luke *may* have considered Spirit-reception to have been accompanied occasionally (perhaps often?) by an immediate flush of charismata, it cannot be demonstrated that he considered tongues had an especially privileged place in this respect. Invasive charismatic praise or some other form of prophetic utterance were just as characteristic of the Spirit of prophecy (cf. 10:46, “extolling God”; 19:6, “prophesying”), indeed, *arguably more so*. The majority of Pentecostal interpreters have read Acts 10:46 and 19:6 to mean each individual *both* spoke in tongues *and* “extolled God”/“prophesied,” but in the first-century context these texts would as naturally be taken to mean that some experienced glossolalia while others experienced invasive praise or prophetic utterance. It would thus not be possible to demonstrate that Luke expected tongues in each and every case of Spirit-reception - at best such a construct represents one “possible” reading in the marketplace of competing and often more plausible readings.

Would Luke have considered such tongues to be “available” to be “re-activated” by the believer, beyond the initial manifestation? Again, we have no way of knowing. But if one were to judge by the analogous traditions in Judaism, he was as likely to have thought that when the Spirit came upon Cornelius’ household, or on the Ephesian “twelve,” “they spoke in tongues and prophesied. But they did *not do so again*” (cf. Num 11:25, one of the more influential biblical stories in Judaism). In short, he may have thought “initial evidence/legitimation” (where appropriate) was just that, with no further implications for repeated experiences beyond the initial event. I am not saying this *is* the case; merely that Luke provides no sure ground for the hypothesis that those who initially experienced tongues received this as a permanent possibility.

All in all, the Lucan evidence is simply too ambiguous to provide a firm foundation for traditional Pentecostal teaching that “initial tongues” is normative and provides the basis for ongoing universal availability of tongues for private prayer.⁴ Indeed, it would be difficult to explain the

Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). But others have felt that their position represents an unacceptable narrowing of the gift: cf. G. Haya-Prats, *L'Esprit Force de l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1975); Turner, *Power*; James D. G. Dunn, “Baptism in the Spirit: A Response to Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts,” *JPT* 3 (1993), pp. 3-27.

⁴ This is increasingly recognized even by Pentecostal scholars seeking to defend some form of “initial evidence” doctrine. Thus, for example, Menzies notes “it is difficult to argue that Luke, through his narrative, intended to teach this doctrine... This does not appear to be his concern” (*Empowered*, p. 246). Similarly Simon Chan insists Luke’s position is too ambiguous to provide the

relative silence concerning tongues in the sub-apostolic church if Luke thought this gift was commonplace, and was even commending it as normative, in the closing decades of the first century.⁵ It is little wonder that other Pentecostals and Charismatics (not to mention virtually all scholarship outside those streams) have come to quite different interpretations of Luke's narrative.⁶

It would also be methodologically dangerous to use Luke's account to flesh out Paul's, when one of the issues in dispute is precisely the extent to which Luke and Paul shared similar perspectives on pneumatological issues.⁷ In this study we shall attempt, rather, to assess the *Pauline* evidence bearing on our question. Did Paul, or did he not, distinguish two types of gift of tongues - one universally available for private use and one for public "ministry" to the church. But we will go on (in Part 2) briefly to assess the significance of some arguments from systematic theology which have been brought to bear on the topic. May I clarify at the outset that this inquiry is a genuine one. While writing the article there came a significant phase when I was unsure where the evidence was leading (and realized how inadequate were my earlier comments on the matter).⁸ If this study has taken the wrong track, I hope contributors to this journal will be able to guide me back, through further dialogue.

PART 1: THE PAULINE EVIDENCE

The relevant evidence is restricted to 1 Cor 12-14 (with the possible addition of Rom 8:26), and we may divide our discussion under different heads.

foundation for a doctrine of "initial evidence," and that such a reading is only one of many possible readings. ("The Language Game of Glossolalia or Making Sense of the 'Initial Evidence,'" in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], pp. 80-105, esp. pp. 82-83).

⁵ But see Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), pp. 75-84.

⁶ For a brief (and rather one-sided) review of the debates within Pentecostal/Charismatic movements, see V. Synan, "The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence," in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams*, ed. Mark W. Wilson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 67-82.

⁷ Cf. Menzies, *Empowering*, ch. 12.

⁸ Turner, *Holy Spirit*, esp. pp. 234-35.

1.1 The Setting - Tongues as a Problem at Corinth?

It is important at the outset to recognize that 1 Cor 12-14 is not simply pastoral advice in answer to some Corinthian general question about “spiritual gifts” (cf. 12:1). Rather, from start to finish it is intended as a *corrective* to what Paul considers problematic in the Corinthian attitude to and use of tongues. If Paul starts with more general considerations, that is simply to provide the theological backdrop for the issue which emerges explicitly in chapter 14. Tongues appears in each of the samplings of gifts in these chapters (12:8-10, 28-30; 13:1-3; 14:6, 26). Furthermore, as Fee observes, the placing of tongues,

at the *conclusion* of each list in ch. 12, but at the beginning in 13:1 and 14:6, suggests that the problem lies here. It is listed last *not* because it is “least,” but because it is the problem. He always includes it, but at the end, after the greater concern for diversity has been heard.⁹

What then was the problem? The simple answers are: 1) some Corinthians gave pride of place to tongues over other gifts (hence 1 Cor 12 asserts the divinely ordained diversity and distribution of spiritual gifts, and 1 Cor 14 sets tongues below the intelligible gifts of prophecy and interpretation); 2) there were too many incidents of glossolalia (hence Paul’s restriction to two or at the most three in 1 Cor 14:27); 3) some outbursts of glossolalia were perhaps concurrent (the “if all speak in tongues... [the outsider] will say ‘you rave’” of 14:23 may well be an overstatement of a real scenario, and cf. the corrective “and each in turn” of 1 Cor 14:27);¹⁰ 4) the tongues were not being interpreted, so their use (in

⁹ G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), p. 149. For a similar analysis see G. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), p. 272.

¹⁰ Theissen sees traces of “uncontrolled collective ecstasy” or “ritual *mania*” behind 14:23 (“if you are all speaking in tongues” when an outsider enters), influenced by typical hellenistic attitudes. 1 Cor 14:27 would then be Paul’s corrective: see Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, p. 281. While the language of “ecstasy” may be inappropriate unless carefully understood (see Turner, *Holy Spirit*, pp. 235-38 [cf. pp. 200-204] and Forbes, *Prophecy*, chs. 5-7), Theissen may be right that there was corporate and relatively uncontrolled tongues at Corinth by the self-styled “spirituals” (cf. also Fee, *Presence*, p. 243). Against the view, however, stands the parallel in the following verse. Paul does not envisage “uncontrolled collective prophecy”: the “all prophesying” would need to be serial, rather than concurrent, to elicit the outsider’s response envisaged in vv. 25-

contrast to prophecy) did not build up the church in any way (cf. 14:2, 4, 5, 12, 17, 19, 26); and indeed, 5) they were being used in a way that failed to express the cardinal virtue of love (hence ch. 13).

But the simple answers probably do not take us to the heart of the matter. More probably, as Fee suggests, “the crucial issue is their decided position over against him as to what it means to be pneumatiko¹⁶ (‘spiritual.’)”¹¹ For them it means to belong essentially to the order of the Spirit as opposed to the material world, and Paul sees this as a failure to recognize our relation to both creation and new creation. It is an over-spiritualized and over-realized eschatology.¹² Fee thus suggests:

The key probably lies with 13:1, where tongues is referred to as the “tongues of angels.” The Corinthians seem to have considered themselves to be already as the angels, thus truly “spiritual,” needing neither sex in the present (7:1-7) nor a body in the future (15:1-58). Speaking angelic dialects by the Spirit was evidence enough for them of their participation in the new spirituality, hence their singular enthusiasm for this gift.¹³

This perhaps allows too much place for the “tongues of angels” (1 Cor 13:1; inspired “tongues of men” also need explanation),¹⁴ and, as Forbes has argued, the Corinthian understanding probably involved a more hellenistic appraisal of tongues (along with prophecy) as both “direct communion with God” and also as thereby “speaking divine mysteries” brimming with “knowledge” and “wisdom” (14:2, cf. 13:2,8 and the whole Corinthian focus on wisdom/knowledge in 1:18-3:23; 8:1-11; 14:6).¹⁵ On either view, the Corinthians exalt it because it has become for them perhaps *the* sign of the “spiritual” believer (hence, in part, Paul’s reversal of such an affirmation at 14:22?) and of participation in heavenly existence.

26.

¹¹ Fee, *Presence*, p. 150.

¹² For the over-realized eschatology, see A. C. Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” *NTS* 24 (1978), pp. 510-26, and the standard Introductions.

¹³ Fee, *Presence*, p. 150.

¹⁴ See Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 14-16 and 182-87; Turner, *Holy Spirit*, pp. 227-29.

¹⁵ Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 171-75, 260-64. His point is that over-realized eschatology does not itself explain the Corinthian focus on tongues, because there was no significant pre-Christian expectation of participation in angelic languages (especially ones unintelligible to the speaker).

What is less clear is whether the Corinthians as a whole thought this way (as Fee argues),¹⁶ or whether the church itself was divided on the issue (as Theissen and Forbes have argued).¹⁷ The latter is the more generally held view.

Certainly only “some” at Corinth denied that the spiritual order would involve any form of bodily existence (cf. 15:12), and the evidence suggests there was a self-styled “strong” group of “spiritual people” (cf. 1 Cor 2:4-3:2; 12:1) who thought of themselves as “perfected” in spiritual knowledge (8:1, 4; cf. the irony in 2:6; 14:20), and correspondingly thought of others as the “weak” (8:7, 9, 11-12). Those who claim “we ‘all’ have (revelatory) knowledge” (8:1) turn out to be but a segment of the church. Paul has to remind them that not all at Corinth have the “knowledge” that “an idol is nothing” (8:4, 7), and this very “knowledge” is threatening to destroy not merely the “weak” (who do not have it), but also the “strong” themselves (for they have terribly misunderstood, when they deduce they are safe to eat and drink in the cultic setting of pagan temple/restaurants: so chs. 8-10).

If Forbes is correct, there is the probability that tongues was used to reinforce the elitism of the “spirituals,” partly because it was especially associated with the authoritative founder of their congregation (14:18, and with the Jerusalem apostles at Pentecost [if they knew of it]), but also because it pointed to their participation in divine knowledge/mysteries.¹⁸ Regular manifestation of the gift would then be explicable as part of the minor power games “the spirituals” were locked into (and which, by the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, had substantially alienated them from Paul). Such an understanding of the Corinthian abuse of tongues would give especially sharp point to Paul’s insistence that *all* believers have the Spirit manifest in a wide *variety* of gifts (1 Cor 12), and to the implicit charge of loveless use of tongues (1 Cor 13). *But if such a view is anything like correct, it suggests that tongues was a relatively restricted phenomenon.* After all, if all or most could speak in tongues - if only as private prayer and doxology - then manifestation of the gift could provide no grounds for elitist claims. One would then be left wondering *why* some were crowding out the meetings with tongues, when there is no “gain” in it.¹⁹ The

¹⁶ As Fee thinks: cf. *Presence*, p. 150.

¹⁷ Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, pp. 294-303; Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 171-75, 260-64.

¹⁸ See also especially Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, pp. 294-97 (and cf. pp. 297-303).

¹⁹ Widespread and relatively uncontrolled tongues might well have been

distinction between whether tongues were used at home or at church would inevitably have appeared somewhat irrelevant; unless, of course, there were two sufficiently sharply *distinguishable* types of gift, and the “church” one was somehow recognizably “superior” to the other. It needs to be said that the latter situation has never (to my knowledge) been seriously defended, and the case against it is compelling. But let us address the question more directly.

1.2 Two Types of “Tongues” at Corinth?

Did Paul distinguish two quite different *types* of speaking in tongues, one available to all (but only for private use) in accordance with 1 Cor 14:5, the other available for manifestation in the congregational worship, but *not* available to all (as indicated by Paul’s question in 12:30)? If he did not make such a distinction, then it becomes difficult to see why Corinthian readers should take the restriction implied in 12:30 to apply purely to “tongues in the assembly” (unless there are other clear textual markers to indicate this - which we shall examine below).

While it is relatively clear that Paul distinguishes two spheres of *use* of tongues - public and private²⁰ - it is by no means so clear that he thinks of them as different *types* of *gifts*. The terminology is exactly the same in the two verses appealed to as evidence of two different *types*: glwssai" lalou'sin (“[they] speak in tongues”) in 12:30, lalaih glwssai" (“to speak in tongues”) in 14:5. What is more, Paul moves backwards and forwards between private tongues and public, often without clear demarcation (cf. 14:2, 4a, 5, 14-16, 17-19), and without suggesting any difference of essential *content*. Historically, Pentecostals have at times tended to think of “congregational” glossolalia as “a message in tongues,” equivalent (when interpreted) to prophecy (on the basis of a misunderstanding of 14:5?),²¹ while private tongues has been understood as prayer/doxology expressed to God (cf. 14:2, 15-16). In this they have recently received a small measure of scholarly support from Christopher Forbes, who has argued (on the basis of 14:2) that the revealing of divine

anticipated in initial enthusiasm for the gift, but the congregation was founded by Paul c. 51 AD, and Paul writes to the Corinthians c. 55 AD.

²⁰ See Turner, *Holy Spirit*, pp. 232-34; Fee, *Presence*, pp. 172-173, 217-21, 229-35, 889-90; cf. also Fee’s “Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia,” in *Pentecostalism*, pp. 24-37, esp. p. 29.

²¹ See Fee, “Pauline Theology,” p. 33.

mysteries is central to Paul's understanding of congregational tongues.²² But, as Forbes himself notes, the "mysteries" spoken of in 14:2 are addressed "to God" (not as a "message to the congregation" = i.e., "not to other people"). Interpretation, it would then appear, merely unfolds this type of prayer/doxology to the congregation, and "builds them up" (14:5) by involving them in the Spirit-inspired worship. In that case there is no indicator of any material difference to the form or "content" of the tongues used in private and in public. All this would suggest that for Paul it is not a matter of different *gifts*, as much as of whether or not individuals who already have the gift for private use are ever divinely prompted to use it as a form of inspired public address to God within the congregational worship. That naturally leads us to the next question.

1.3 Is 1 Corinthians 12:30b Exclusively Concerned with Gifts of Tongues in the Worshipping Assembly?

Can the reader be expected to understand that the implied restriction - "Not all speak in tongues do they? (12:30b) - relates purely to the use of tongues in congregational worship?

To be sure, Paul has been addressing problems related to congregational worship in chs. 8-11, and the whole of 12-14 will emerge as a corrective to congregational abuse of tongues at Corinth, but the perspective of ch. 12 is also more general. Admittedly, 12:28 focuses on what God is doing *ἐν τῷ ἐκκλησίᾳ* ("in the church"), and Paul uses a similar expression in 1 Cor 11:18 where he speaks of divisions "when you gather together *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*": here he must mean "when you gather *as an assembly*" (cf. also 14:19, 23, 28, 33b, 35). But this is unlikely to be the sense in 1 Cor 12:28, however, for there Paul says that "God has set 'in the church,' first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, the gifts of healings, helpful deeds, acts of guidance or leadership, kinds of tongues." There were not regularly (if ever) a *plurality* of apostles in the Corinthian meetings.²³ The reference seems to be to the church universal (of which "the churches in Corinth" are the local expressions) rather than

²² Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 93-99.

²³ Fee, *Presence*, p. 191, notes the "surprise" provided by the plural here, and takes it as a reference to Paul and his co-workers (cf. 9:5; 15:7-11): in which case Paul is not thinking of what happens in any single "assembly," but of what God has "set" in the church at Corinth over the totality of its existence, past and present, inside and outside specific "church meetings."

specific to the Corinthian believers “in assembly.”²⁴ Even if Paul has the Corinthian church primarily in mind (cf. 12:27), his description of what God has set “in the church” cannot easily be restricted in reference to what goes on when “the church in Corinth” meets in formal assembly for public worship, as opposed to what happens through believers (individually or as groups) in the variety of contexts that Corinthian life provided. The members of Christ’s body are “the church in Corinth,” whether or not they are formally “in assembly” (Paul has to remind them they are so even when they are prosecuting law-suits against each other in the pagan courts; hence the irony of 1 Cor 6:4). So it is not clear that anything prepares the reader to think Paul’s question, “Not all speak in tongues do they?” refers exclusively or primarily to the use of tongues in public worship.

Five brief observations support this conclusion:

(1) When Paul asks the similar questions - “Not all are apostles are they?,” “Not all are prophets are they?,” “Not all work miracles do they?,” and “Not all have gifts of healings do they?” (1 Cor 12:29-30a) - few would be prepared to suggest Paul is only talking about what happens in congregational worship. Paul is an apostle “in the church” even when he is shipwrecked for nights and days in the Mediterranean, or when he is being lowered from the walls of Damascus hidden in a linen basket (2 Cor 11:32) - that is very much his point over against the more triumphalist conceptions of apostleship in Corinth (cf. 2 Cor 11-12).

(2) Similarly, when he asks the question, “not all are prophets are they?,” he must anticipate that his readers will be well aware from the Jewish scriptures that prophets were very often active, and prophecies regularly given, *outside* formal congregational settings - and this was probably also the case in early Christianity, though the direct evidence is sparse (cf. Acts 21:4, 11). So the reader is hardly likely to infer that Paul’s question in v. 29 (“not all are prophets are they?”) pertains only to “prophets-in-the-worshipping-assembly.”

(3) Immediately before his question about the distribution of tongues he asks two parallel questions about the working of miracles and gifts of healings. These charismata are never elsewhere described as happening in

²⁴ It is often held that in the uncontested Paulines Paul uses the word *ἐκκλησία* only of individual congregations, never as “the church” in a broader sense, let alone a universal one. However, when Paul speaks of himself as having formerly persecuted “the *ἐκκλησία* (singular) of God” (Gal 1:13), he is not referring merely to a single local congregation (cf. also Phil 3:6 and 1 Cor 15:9). Similarly, here, a broader understanding seems indicated (with R. P. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in 1 Corinthians 12-15* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], p. 31, against Fee, *Presence*, p. 189).

formal Christian *congregational* settings (which is not to say none happened there), except perhaps in the extraordinary case of Eutychus in Acts 20:7-12. Normally such healings were worked *outside* the assembly, wherever the sufferers were - whether the unevangelized sick (as throughout Acts; and this is the most obvious context for the collocation of expressions of “powers” and “healings”) or believers being restored in their homes (e.g., Tabitha [Acts 8:36-41]; Publius’ father [Acts 28:7-8] and cf. the instructions in James 5:14-15).

(4) In the light of the above, how can the reader suddenly be expected to make the assumption that the apostle is only asking about what happens in *public worship* when Paul then asks his very next question, “Not all speak in tongues do they?”

(5) In 12:28, Paul had referred to “*diverse* kinds of tongues.” If the Corinthians are aware of a private gift, distinct from one for public use, Paul’s reference to “different kinds of tongues” would surely evoke that distinction (among others), and then his question, “Not all speak in tongues do they?,” will most naturally be taken to refer to *any* of the kinds and *all* of them, not merely to one type.

In short, the series of questions (in 1 Cor 12:29-30) of the form, “Not all are/have X, are/have they?,” directs the reader to the more general context of Christian life and experience, including what happens in public worship, before he turns back more specifically to conduct in the assembly. So the question in 1 Cor 12:30b would most probably be read to imply that *not* all believers were able to “speak in tongues” (whatever the setting).

1.4 Does 1 Corinthians 12:30b Refer Exclusively to Those with a Special “Ministry” of Tongues-Speaking?

Another way in which interpreters have sometimes sought to imply that 12:30b refers only to people exercising a public kind of glossolalia is by appeal to the contrast between prophets and prophecy. It is observed that Paul’s similar question, “Not all are prophets are they?” (12:29), might suggest prophecy is limited. But this must be interpreted (it is argued) by the apostle’s positive assertions that he wishes “all” might be able to prophesy (14:5), and that “all” can and may prophesy as long as it is done in orderly fashion and with discernment (14:31). This means not all are “prophets” (in the sense of having regular, public, and proved ministries of prophecy), but all may occasionally and in lesser fashion “prophesy.”

By analogy, it is suggested that the question about speaking in tongues in 12:30b is all about something approaching church “ministries” of the gifts referred to in vv. 28-30 - and that these are indeed restricted - *but all*

might experience the gifts in more humble fashion.²⁵ To be more precise, concerning tongues, 12:30b could be taken to imply “not all have *ministries* of tongues,” without excluding the possibility that “all” might have tongues for private prayer and/or for occasional congregational use.

The distinction between the narrower circle of those recognized as “prophets” and a broader one of those “able (occasionally) to prophesy” is quite widely accepted.²⁶ But it is not easy to justify the view that Paul is making a parallel distinction between the smaller circle of those who “speak in tongues” in 12:30b and some wider circle in 14:5. The problems with such a view should be clear. The position advocated fails to note that while the categories of apostles, prophets and teachers in 12:28 and 29 are clearly “established ministries” of some kind, 12:28 switches focus from “ministries” to “gifts.” To establish that the question, “Not all speak in tongues do they?,” denotes a *ministry* of speaking in tongues, Paul would need at very least to use some noun or participial construction that would subvert the reader’s anticipation that he is talking more generally. He would have had a slight problem here, of course, because while there was a word to designate a “prophet,” there was none available in the first century world to designate, “one who has a ministry of glossolalia.” The phenomenon was a *novum*. So if Paul wanted to distinguish someone with a regular “ministry” of tongues for the church from others who had a more infrequent gift, or a gift experienced only in private, he would have had to create a new noun phrase, such as ol glwssol alwh (= “the tongues-speaker”). But even this may have been too ambiguous for his purpose, given the shift from the first three categories in 12:28 to those that follow. More probably, he would have needed a much more explicit question such as $\text{mh; pante}^{\prime\prime}$ *diakonia*” $\text{e}^{\prime}\text{cousin glwsswh}$ (“Not all have *ministries* of tongues do they?”).

1.5 Does the Traditional Pentecostal Distinction Between the Private and the Public Gift of Tongues Explain the Corinthians’ Mistake?

It is heuristically worth pondering how the Corinthian abuse of tongues could possibly have come about on the traditional Pentecostal

²⁵ The argument receives recent support from Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 248.

²⁶ See, e.g., J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1975), pp. 171-72, 281; W. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982), pp. 235-38; D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), pp. 117-18; Turner, *Holy Spirit*, p. 212; Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 251-63.

understanding that all were in fact able to speak in tongues. On such a view, the Corinthians should know that people will only speak in tongues publicly as part of the church's worship when they have a special "anointing" to do so (for that is precisely the [sole] difference between the majority [whose gift is merely for private use] and those "who 'speak in tongues'" in church as at 12:28-30). If so, how have the church's "tongues speakers" made their mistake? Does it all boil down to the fact that they wrongly *thought* they were so "anointed" or "led," and used their "ordinary" gift at the wrong time? One might then be tempted to explain the Corinthian failure to interpret tongues along similar lines: because the tongue has not truly been initiated and orchestrated by God, the Spirit inspires no corresponding gift of interpretation.

But if that is the explanation, Paul's lengthy discourse does not really address the problem. We might have anticipated him to *major* on the themes of waiting on the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, and discerning the Spirit's prompting. But these topics only receive the scantiest attention. Instead he gives a careful defense of the view that there is a God-ordained diversity of mutually useful gifts, and that not all has each, with the result that we become dependent upon each other (so ch. 12), reminds the church that expression of gifts without love gains nothing (chapter 13), and spends a long time arguing for the need for mutually edifying intelligibility (ch. 14). His answer makes more sense if we may assume he thought the problem was that only a *part* of the congregation have any ability to speak in tongues at all, that they think it is a special sign of spirituality that they have it, and that they have flaunted it in the congregation to exalt themselves within it.

In the light of sections 1.2-1.5 above, the form of Paul's question in 1 Cor 2:30b suggests he did not consider *any* kind of tongues to be universal to believers. That conclusion should be allowed to stand unless there is weighty evidence against it.

1.6 How Does 1 Corinthians 14:5 Relate to This?

Menzies makes the appeal that just such weighty evidence is to be found in 1 Cor 14:5 (qel'w de; panta' uma" l'al ein gl'wssai" ...), which he renders, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues." According to Menzies, this means that for Paul "*every Christian may - and indeed should - be edified through the private manifestation of tongues.*"²⁷

²⁷ Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 248 (italics his).

Menzies reproaches Carson for not giving due consideration to the possibility that 1 Cor 12:30 is restricted to public manifestation of tongues.²⁸ Unfortunately, Menzies himself in turn finds he has no space to discuss the different possible interpretations of 1 Cor 14:5 in New Testament scholarship.

In the first place, the *pante* here (as anywhere) *could* mean “all without exception,” so “every one of you,” but (like the English “all”) it often means far less than that. In the first place, it can mean “all without distinction” rather than “all without exception.” Second, it can be used in a weaker generalizing sense. Thus when Mark tells us that “all Judea and all Jerusalemites” came to John and were baptized (1:5), he means little more than that many did so. Similarly when Paul says the Gospel has been proclaimed “to every creature (*ep̄i p̄s̄h/ktisei*) under the heavens” (Col 1:23), one should not press the “all/every” too hard. “All” can sometimes mean little more than “a representative group,” “a majority,” “the group as a whole”²⁹ or even just “many,” and to secure a *universal* meaning in an otherwise ambiguous context a writer would prefer *ēkastō* (“everyone, each one”).

More to the point is the question of the possibly concessive force of the whole construction, “I would like... but rather...” The verb *qelw* can mean anything from the strong “I want” to the weak and concessive “Although I could wish,” the latter especially in polemical situations or where the writer wishes to identify in respects with those he opposes, but does *not* expect the substance of the wish to be fulfilled.

An obvious parallel case, noted by the commentators, is 1 Cor 7:7: *qelw de panta ajqrwpou eijhai wj kai ejnauton +ajllav..* (“I would like all men [and women] to be as I am: but...”). Paul is addressing the *Corinthian* claim that it is better not to be married, and not to engage in sex within marriage (because, according to them, believers belong to the angelic and/or eschatological order). In this context he expresses the “wish” that all could be celibate and as free to serve the Lord as he is. But I suspect Menzies would not want to press this to mean Paul really does set

²⁸ Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 248 (taking issue with Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 50).

²⁹ It is this sense that is most probably meant in 1 Cor 14:23 and 24. I.e., the clauses “if all speak in tongues...” and “if all prophesy...” stand for “the church as a whole” - which could in practice mean a quarter or a third (say) are actively involved and the rest “counted in” merely by not offering an alternative. Little can be deduced about actual practice at Corinth from these clauses, however, as they are hypothetical cases for the purpose of drawing out the advantages of prophecy over tongues.

forth that *everyone can* and (perhaps) *should* be unmarried and celibate. Paul himself has just said the opposite (7:2-6) and he immediately qualifies his assertion in v. 7 with a comment to the effect that each has a different gift from God, one to celibacy and the other to marriage. The expression of the wish in 7:7 is thus hyperbolic and in measure merely conciliatory - his way of getting alongside those whose view he opposes, and trumping their position.

Not surprisingly a number of interpreters have detected a similar rhetorical device in 14:5. Paul's comment has thus occasionally been taken as almost entirely conciliatory: he grants with 14:5a what he will effectively withdraw through the strategy of the *whole* discourse.³⁰ This reading, however, is unsatisfactory. Taken with 14:18 ("I thank my God I speak in tongues more than you all"), 14:5 more probably expresses what he could truly *wish* to be the case. Paul values tongues quite highly (certainly for private use, and, with more hesitation, even in public worship - providing it is accompanied by interpretation).³¹ There is little obvious trace of irony in his commendation of it.

But 1 Cor 14:5a does not necessarily imply that Paul thinks his wish is liable to become a reality, far less that it is *already* a reality, which he merely wants to affirm and see, continued. His greater wish, according to the same verse is "rather that you might prophesy," yet that was apparently *not* fulfilled in the measure he had hoped for (hence his different encouragements to seek prophecy in 12:31; 14:1, 5). Correspondingly, the very expression of the wish in the first clause of 14:5a may suggest that tongues was *not* as widespread at Corinth as Paul might have liked.³² Given Paul's restriction of public tongues to "two or at the most three" (14:27), Menzies must be correct that this wish that "all" might speak in tongues refers primarily to its use in private prayer. But as Paul's wish is

³⁰ Cf. H. Chadwick's assertion: "The entire drift of the argument of 1 Cor xii-xiv is such as to pour a douche of ice-cold water over the whole practice. But Paul could hardly have denied that the gift of tongues was a genuine supernatural *charisma* without putting a fatal barrier between himself and the Corinthian enthusiasts.... Paul must fully admit that *glossolalia* is indeed a divine gift; but, he urges, it is the most inferior of all gifts" ("All Things to All Men," *NTS* 1 [1954-55], pp. 268-69; the first part of this quote is cited with approbation by F. F. Bruce, *I and II Corinthians* [London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971], p. 130); similarly, F. W. Beare, "Speaking with Tongues: A Critical Survey of the New Testament Evidence," *JBL* 83 (1964), pp. 229-46, esp. pp. 243-44.

³¹ See Fee, *Presence*, pp. 889-90; Turner, *Holy Spirit*, pp. 231-34.

³² Cf. F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954), p. 319.

immediately coupled with the qualifying one “but rather that you be able to prophesy” (an evidently “public” gift), Paul perhaps does not mean private tongues *alone*. While Paul can hardly be taken to mean he wants more instances of public tongues than were taking place in any one service (cf. 14:27!), he could nevertheless mean that he wished tongues were not restricted to the practicing elite, and that others might experience the gift in the course of time, whether inside or outside the assembly.³³

When it came to prophecy, Paul had good scriptural grounds for hoping it would be universal to the people of God, even if not all would emerge as “prophets” of significant stature. Jewish tradition based on Numbers 11:29 (cf. 25-29) and Joel 3:1-5 (EW 2:28-32) made this clear: cf. the specific statement attributed to Rabbi Tan \check{u} uma in *Numbers Rabba* 15:25:

The Holy One, blessed be He, said: “In this world only a few individuals have prophesied, but in the World to come all Israel will be made prophets,” as it says: *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men, etc.* (Joel 3:1), (and compare similar explicit statements in *Midrash Psalms* 14:6 and *MHG Gen* 140).

Some such understanding may well lie behind Paul’s encouragements to seek prophecy (14:1, 5, 39) and his affirmation that “you may all prophesy, so that all may learn,” etc. (14:31).³⁴ But there was no similar

³³ That in turn also indicates it is unlikely he distinguished two quite separate *gifts* of tongues in terms of the private and the public. His earlier mention of “diverse kinds of tongues” (12:28), is thus more likely to be played along the axis of “tongues of angels” and “tongues of men” (and perhaps different *sounding* tongues), than to be conditioned by whether the use is in private or in public.

³⁴ H. Conzelmann would restrict the “all” to “all upon whom the Spirit of prophecy comes” (*First Corinthians* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974], p. 245), by which he means “the prophets.” But his position is betrayed in the very attempt: from the perspective of Luke, Paul and John the “Spirit of prophecy” is given to all: see Turner, *Holy Spirit, passim*. Against the argument that Paul has in mind here only “the prophets,” see esp. Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 254-59. Fee and Forbes are probably right to discern that while Paul limits tongues to three at most in the assembly (14:27), he does not so limit prophecy - as the explicit *dunasqe gar kaq jefa pante* *profhteuein* of 14:31 makes clear. The apparent restriction in 14:29 means either there should be no more prophecies till the first batch have been weighed (so Fee, *Presence*, pp. 249-50) or only two or three of the self-styled “prophets” may speak before others must get a turn (so Forbes).

basis in the Old Testament or in Judaism for the hope of a universal outpouring of tongues, even though it was obviously related to prophecy as form of inspired speech. Tongues was simply unprecedented in Judaism.³⁵ And - in contrast to prophecy - there are correspondingly no unambivalent encouragements to seek tongues in 1 Corinthians.

In short, I think Menzies goes well beyond the evidence when he claims that 1 Cor 14:5a establishes that “*every Christian...should...be edified through the private manifestation of tongues.*” This is to press Paul’s incidental wording too hard for a conclusion on a topic his discourse does not address. Even if 14:5a expresses a real wish, it is by no means clear he thinks it a divinely willed state of affairs, whether actual or merely potential. There does not then appear to be any significant tension with 1 Cor 12:30. If anything, 14:5 *confirms* the assumption in the earlier reference - not all *did* speak in tongues (whether privately or in public). Of course, if one already “knows” (on some other grounds) that Paul did in fact think all believers had the gift of tongues for private use, and if one already knows that he sharply distinguished this from the “ministry of tongues,” then one can read 1 Cor 12:30 and 14:5 in a way that makes them agree with the known position - albeit at the cost of having to say Paul did not express himself well. But the point is that we do *not* know from “elsewhere” that Paul held these distinctions - these two texts are themselves precisely and alone the texts regularly appealed to for the distinction - unless of course we merely “know” on the basis of our church’s confessional or traditional positions! But there can be no security there, for the various Pentecostal and Charismatic streams differ on precisely the point at issue.

PART 2: RECENT PENTECOSTAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BIBLICAL AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

I need to limit myself here to brief remarks on two contributions of especial interest - those by Menzies and Chan.

³⁵ See Forbes, *Prophecy*, pp. 182-87. Of the passages usually appealed to as Jewish exemplars, none is clearly Charismatic speech unintelligible to the speaker, and two (*1 Enoch* 71:11 and *Apoc. Abr.* 17) may well be in the speaker’s (earthly) vernacular. In *Apoc. Zeph.* 8, the seer speaks with the languages of angels, but he has come fully to understand them. The remaining texts (*Test. Job.* 48-52 and *Mart./Asc. Isa.* 7:13-9:33) are *Christian* (cf. the specifically trinitarian mentions of the Father, the Beloved/Christ and the angel of the Holy Spirit [*Mart. Isa.* 7:23; 8:18; 9:33-42] and more frequent mentions of them individually).

2.1 Menzies

Menzies offers a methodologically nuanced argument for tongues as the normative evidence of Spirit-baptism. He concedes that it is impossible to demonstrate that either Luke or Paul held such a belief, for neither addresses the question directly and with sufficient clarity. But together they may provide a biblical theology of the gift of the Spirit which acts as a forerunner for a Pentecostal systematic theology. Paul portrays tongues as a gift available to all (1 Cor 14:5). Luke portrays Spirit/baptism exclusively as the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, that is (according to Menzies) the empowerment for “inspired speech” for effective witness.³⁶ If one now attempts to fuse the horizons, and inquire from the perspective of systematic theology which manifestations of the Spirit of prophecy might most appropriately serve as “initial physical evidence,”³⁷ in the sense that they would “verify” reception of the Pentecostal gift, then one can only conclude “tongues.” The other two gifts - inspired praise or witness and Charismatic revelation/prophecy - are too ambiguous: the former is too easily replicated by natural abilities, the latter is not “physical evidence” at all. By contrast, “tongues-speech uniquely “fits the bill” because of its intrinsically demonstrative character.”³⁸

I agree entirely with the need for systematic reflection of the type Menzies advocates. But is this particular line of argument cogent? Why would the systematic theologian think that initial evidence would necessarily be “physical”? If Menzies laid hands on a convert to receive the Spirit, and that convert came to him subsequently with prophecies and revelations, but no tongues, would Menzies really doubt he had received the Spirit? Indeed, in Lucan terms, might it not be thought these gifts (along with inspired praise and witness) had an *even more* “transparent” correlation with reception of the Spirit as the “Spirit of prophecy”?³⁹ And is “tongues” really a less ambiguous “evidence”? It might be thought so in cases where tongues burst upon the individual seeker as utterly spontaneous inspired speech. But for many charismatic believers today, their initial speaking in tongues was not manifestly spontaneous. They

³⁶ *Empowered*, pp. 248-250.

³⁷ *Empowered*, p. 250.

³⁸ *Empowered*, p. 251.

³⁹ The point is well made by Chan, in his critique of Menzies: “Given the preponderance of prophetic utterances in Luke-Acts, it would seem equally, if not more, plausible to infer prophecy as initial evidence” (“Language Game,” p. 83 n. 12).

needed (e.g.) to be encouraged to “step out in faith” or to “follow” someone’s example, and they “progressed” from stuttering repetition of short phonemes to greater variety, complexity and length as confidence and facility grew. For such believers, the first experience of tongues was barely “spontaneous”: it felt more like a “learned” phenomenon. And there is reason to suspect their feelings might be right. As it happens, there is evidence that the great majority of taped examples of tongues prove to have no genuine linguistic structure. They appear on careful analysis rather to be “strings of syllables, made up of sounds taken from among all those that the speaker knows, put together more or less haphazardly.”⁴⁰ Secular researchers also get similar results in tests when they encourage groups simply to “free-vocalize.” These observations put together may suggest that some sorts of tongues-speech (perhaps most?) are “natural” or “learned” phenomena rather than miraculous foreign or heavenly languages.⁴¹ I am certainly not seeking to deprecate such tongues when evoked in a spiritual setting. If God can use our inarticulate groanings as a gift of the Spirit himself, communicating our inner longings (Rom 8:26),⁴² much more might he be expected to take over and inspire such “natural” glossolalia when we direct them to him and ask the Spirit to speak through them. My point is only that the phenomenon of tongues speech *as such* is no more “intrinsically demonstrative” or unambiguously “evidential” than most other expressions of the Spirit.

More to the point, *why* would systematic theology suspect there should necessarily - or even usually - be “initial” evidence at all? It may theologically be predictable that God would confirm his gift of the Spirit in some demonstrable way *where otherwise the church* (or parts of it) *may have doubts* (e.g., in the admission of Samaritans or Gentiles to the people of God). But it is not clear why he should be expected to do so in regular circumstances. One does not receive the impression that the God of the

⁴⁰ See Turner, *Holy Spirit*, p. 309, quoting the pioneer linguistic analyst of tongues, W. Samarin.

⁴¹ For broader discussion and bibliography see *Holy Spirit*, ch. 17.

⁴² Fee is surely right to see tongues as a prime symbol of our present weakness, rather than a symbol of power. In this gift, God, who indwells us as his eschatological temple, only speaks in us when we abandon our own striving for words, and then he only speaks in fashion that is unintelligible to us (!); we await with groaning the day when such “distance” will be overcome: “Theology,” pp. 34-36. Whether Fee is also right (“Theology,” pp. 29-34) that Rom 8:26, 27 refers to glossolalia is, however, much less certain. It is not clear *stenagmo* “aj al hito” can mean groanings which *are* spoken, but not comprehended; the adjective more obviously means “unspoken” or “inarticulate.”

bible looks particularly favorably on the human search for “proofs” of such a kind, and if anything it is “subsequent” and “ongoing” evidence - does the life and service of the believer demonstrate the presence and power of the Spirit? - that are the real issue, not the phenomenological character of some initial “moment.”⁴³ Christians do not usually look for some single clear “sign” from God at the moment of conversion-initiation to confirm that a person has genuinely “received Christ” (they would usually take the person’s confession and ongoing commitment as evidence enough, unless there is reason to doubt it), yet this is a much more momentous transition. Why then should “initial evidence” be expected always to mark what on Pentecostal terms is a lesser rite of passage?

2.2 Chan

Chan too recognizes that the New Testament witness on “initial evidence” is fragmentary and inconclusive. Consequently he turns to his own discipline of systematic theology to bring out the inner meaning of tongues in its relation to other theological symbols. He locates this inner meaning of tongues in *relationships*, for that is what language is about. More specifically, the unintelligibility of tongues marks it as a *language of intimacy and love*, like the idiolect of lovers, or the affectionate prattle of infants. From this, he rightly deduces that its manifestation in Spirit-baptism indicates the later has as much if not more to do with intimacy of life in relation to God as it has with empowering for service.⁴⁴ But is there any suggestion that tongues will be normative in connection with Spirit-baptism? Chan argues that as Spirit-baptism is the moment in which our whole being is submerged into intimacy with God, we should expect spontaneous tongues to mark the moment - they are as naturally the correlate of the encounter with the divine lover as tears are of sadness.⁴⁵ Indeed they are precisely what one would expect of a moment in which the *mind* is submerged too. In this respect Chan differentiates initial tongues from all subsequent ones: the latter (according to 1 Cor 14) are under the control of the anointed mind.⁴⁶

Once again, this is perceptive and creative, and one could point back to Philo’s discussions of the eclipsing of the human mind at the moment of the arrival of the divine Spirit of prophecy as a possible parallel (see esp.

⁴³ See my introductory comments above, and *Power*, ch 14.

⁴⁴ Chan, “Language Game,” pp. 93-94.

⁴⁵ Chan, “Language Game,” pp. 86-90.

⁴⁶ Chan, “Language Game,” p. 88.

Who is the Heir of Divine Things, 265; cf. *Special Laws* 4:49).⁴⁷ But questions remain. It is not clear from most testimonies that the moment of what people call their Spirit-baptism was essentially characterized as one of the profound intimacy of lovers (for example, people talk of “tingling,” “electricity,” “power,” etc., as often or more often than of loving intimacy). Nor is it clear that such moments *necessarily* involved any greater “submerging” of the mind than on many subsequent occasions. The logic of Chan’s argument comes close to affirming that the first instance is “ecstatic” and subsequent ones not (in which case, incidentally, there would be no reason to expect that all with “initial evidence” of tongues would necessarily experience it thereafter), but that pushes too hard an antithesis not found in the NT, nor clearly matched today. As we have noted, testimonies of “initial tongues” do not suggest they are always or usually “spontaneous.”

If, however, the first moment is not entirely “ecstatic” - and even when it is - why should tongues be the exclusive or privileged marker? One might argue silent awed adoration or outspoken loving praise are as appropriate manifestations of intimacy as idiolect or baby-talk. So we might as readily anticipate powerfully inspired praise and adoration in the speakers *own language* (certainly so for *1 Enoch* 61:11-12 and 71:11), or the “abba” cry (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15), or spiritual song (cf. Eph 5:19), or profound silence, or the groan of Rom 8:26 - any of these, and more besides - to accompany and mark theophanic moments. It is thus barely surprising that Pentecostal interpreters have themselves been divided from the very beginning over whether tongues is “the” initial evidence of Spirit-reception, or whether prophecy, or shouts of acclamation, or dance, or some other manifestation, might not equally well serve.⁴⁸

Again, Chan believes his argument about the inner meaning of tongues points in the direction of the doctrine of “subsequence.” But this too is unclear. The language of intimacy and union more naturally fits the coming into being of that mutual indwelling of Christ (by the Spirit) in the believer, and of the believer (by the Spirit) “in Christ.” In other words, it better suits post-Pentecost *conversion-initiation* than any subsequent essentially repeatable moment of deepening intimacy beyond it, however theophanic, short of the *parousia* itself. Might that not in turn suggest Spirit-baptism is about the whole of that “life” (and the multiplicity of empowerings for different sorts of service) that normally commences with response to the call of the gospel, rather than something distinct and

⁴⁷ But see Turner, *Holy Spirit*, pp. 200-202, for the limits on this.

⁴⁸ Synan, “Role,” *passim*.

subsequent? But to pursue that question would lead to another and quite different paper.

CONCLUSION

As is becoming widely agreed, there is not sufficient evidence to show that any type of tongues was regarded as normative by Luke or Paul. Nor do their writings provide a basis from which we might safely *infer* such a conclusion, even if the writers themselves did not. To the contrary, 1 Cor 12:30 and 14:5 if anything suggest the opposite conclusion. But the evidence is so fragmentary, that careful considerations from systematic theology are inviting. Pentecostal scholars like Macchia,⁴⁹ Fee, Menzies and Chan are certainly leading the field in the exploration of the biblical and dogmatic significance of tongues. They are opening up the whole subject with great creativity and insight. That said, however, there is not yet any clear basis in systematic or empirical theology for giving *pride of place* to tongues, let alone a normative place, as “initial evidence” of Spirit-reception.⁵⁰ It might be possible to argue for the universal availability of tongues on the basis that some kinds of tongues simply involve the appropriation - in the Spirit - of an otherwise intrinsically “natural” ability to free-vocalize. Such an approach would evidently not establish any necessary link between initial Spirit-reception and tongues, and might tend to undermine, rather than strengthen their character as “initial evidence.” It could even be mooted that Paul empirically “discovered” that all could thus speak in tongues (without suspecting the mechanism), but there are much more probable explanations of 1 Cor 14:5 and its whole context.

I recognize that tongues as “initial evidence” and tongues as a universally available form of private prayer are cherished tenets of a majority of Pentecostals. I belong with the minority of Pentecostals and other Charismatics who value tongues, but do not understand them in such a way. I do not expect to be able to convince the majority - the relevant evidence is perhaps too incomplete and ambiguous to mount a major

⁴⁹ F. D. Macchia, “Sighs Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia,” *JPT* 1 (1992), pp. 47-73, cf. also H. N. Malony, and A. A. Lovekin, *Glossolalia: Behavioural Science Perspectives on Speaking in Tongues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁵⁰ Cf. M. Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), p. 265: “it is *undisputed* that the descent of the Spirit is not necessarily bound up with the gift of speaking in tongues” (my italics): here speaking as a systematician.

“assault.” My hope is rather that this paper will help the majority understand more clearly why some of us are unconvinced, and where the weaknesses in their case are perceived to be. May that call forth the sort of responses that lead us into deeper understanding of scripture and greater respect for each others’ traditions.

Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method

Robert P. Menzies

[[HTTP://www.pts.edu/ajps/98-2/98-2-menzies.htm](http://www.pts.edu/ajps/98-2/98-2-menzies.htm)]

1. INTRODUCTION

The Pentecostal movement is facing an identity crisis. Any discussion of the doctrine of evidential tongues, if it is to be meaningful, must face this fact. This crisis is the product of an historical process which has been at work since the middle part of this century: the assimilation of the Pentecostal movement into mainstream Evangelicalism. This process of assimilation, although gradual and unobtrusive, has significantly impacted the theology and practice of both the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements. And, while it is the Pentecostal movement, which now finds itself at a strategic crossroads of self-definition, the direction it takes will inevitably impact the broader Evangelical world. The following essay will seek to describe the origin and nature of this self-identity crisis, outline the central questions which have emerged, particularly as they relate to evidential tongues, and suggest how Pentecostals might constructively face these challenges.

2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The theological roots of the Pentecostal movement are firmly planted in the nineteenth century Holiness movement and American revivalism. This fertile soil nurtured the fundamental affirmations that characterize Pentecostal theology and the approach to scripture upon which they stand. These theological affirmations were, for a variety of reasons, produced in isolation from other sectors of the Christian community. However, with the advent of the Second World War, this quickly changed. Pentecostals frequently found themselves in close proximity to their Evangelical brothers and sisters. New relationships developed, fostering an atmosphere of openness. The Pentecostal movement rapidly began to identify with the broader Evangelical world. Pentecostal Bible colleges featured textbooks produced by Evangelical scholars; their students flooded into Evangelical seminaries. Evangelical institutions and publications impacted the ethos of Pentecostal churches and significantly influenced the outlook of the laity. Now, almost a century after its genesis, the Pentecostal movement finds itself in a new environment: American revivalism has given way to modern Evangelicalism. The major tenets of Pentecostal theology remain the same; but the way we as Pentecostals approach scripture - the hermeneutic, which supports our theology - has been significantly altered. The hermeneutic of Evangelicalism has become our hermeneutic.

The newly adopted Evangelical hermeneutic supports most of the theological doctrines Pentecostals hold dear - those we share with our Evangelical brothers and sisters.¹ Yet this hermeneutical shift represents a very real challenge to those doctrines distinctive to Pentecostalism. Specifically, I refer to the Pentecostal belief that baptism in the Spirit is an experience subsequent to (or distinct from) conversion and that glossolalia represents its initial physical evidence. These cardinal doctrines, formulated prior to the assimilation of the Pentecostal movement into the larger Evangelical community, are based on an approach to scripture that is not entirely compatible with the new hermeneutic shaped by Evangelicalism. Thus, Pentecostal ministers frequently find themselves espousing a theology which is based on an approach to scripture that (if not they themselves) a significant portion of the members of their congregation no longer accept as valid. Now this does not mean that Pentecostal theology is wrong, but it does suggest that we cannot simply rely on the legacy of the past, if we hope to offer credible biblical support for our theological positions. The

context - and, indeed, the very character of the Pentecostal movement - has changed, and we must deal with the tensions this change has produced.

There is then a need to rearticulate our Pentecostal theology, and to do so in a manner, which addresses the pressing questions of our new context. What are these questions? Or to state the problem differently, Why are the old answers not adequate for the present? To this question we now turn.

3. LESSONS FROM THE PAST

3.1 The Inadequacy of Two-Stage Patterns

The doctrine of evidential tongues is inextricably linked to the Pentecostal understanding of baptism in the Spirit as an experience subsequent to (or logically distinct from) conversion. Before Pentecostals can speak of evidence, we must first establish the validity of the experience which it purports to validate. The foundational question then, is this: What is the nature of the Pentecostal gift (Acts 2:4)? For the Evangelical, the answer to this question has been shaped largely by James Dunn's influential book, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Dunn asserts that the Pentecostal bestowal of the Spirit is the means by which the disciples enter into the new age and experience the blessings of the new covenant. Thus the Evangelical equates Spirit-baptism with conversion. By way of contrast, Pentecostals insist that the Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, not as the source of new covenant existence, but rather as the source of power for effective witness. For this reason Pentecostals describe Spirit-baptism as an experience (at least logically if not chronologically) distinct from conversion which unleashes a new dimension of the Spirit's power: it is an endowment of power for service.

Although the foundational nature of this question can hardly be doubted, it is precisely here where we Pentecostals face our first hurdle. Simply put, traditional attempts to offer biblical support for our doctrine of subsequence are no longer viable in our new context. They fail to speak the language of modern Evangelicalism. Indeed, over twenty years ago James Dunn pointed out the methodological flaw characteristic of traditional Pentecostal arguments. Dunn's critique was specifically aimed at arguments for subsequence based on a conflation of John 20:22 with Luke's narrative in Acts, but it has wider implications:

The common error...is to treat the NT (and even the Bible) as a homogeneous whole, from any part of which texts can be drawn on a chosen subject and fitted into a framework and system which is often basically extra-biblical.

In accordance with the prevailing scholarly consensus, Dunn suggested that there was a better approach. We should,

take each author and book separately and...outline his or its particular theological emphases; only when he has set a text in the context of its author's thought and intention...only then can the biblical-theologian feel free to let that text interact with other texts from other books.²

Dunn went on to state that this method "is always liable to give the truer picture of the biblical thought than the former." And, I would agree. Dunn may be criticized for inconsistently applying his own method, but his method is sound and it has been widely embraced within our Evangelical context. The lesson to be learned is this: We must take seriously the theological perspective of each biblical author if we are to provide convincing answers. No other approach to biblical theology will do. The central question then is not simply whether we can find some two-stage pattern in the New Testament; but rather, what are the implications of the pneumatological perspectives of the various

New Testament authors (taken on their own terms and understood in their own context) for our understanding of the Pentecostal gift?³

3.2 The Problem of Historical Precedent

Once the foundational question concerning the nature of the Pentecostal gift has been addressed, the issue at hand comes into focus: What is the nature of the relationship between this gift and tongues? Of course the Pentecostal affirms that "speaking in tongues" is "the initial physical evidence" of Spirit-baptism. Yet, once again, traditional arguments offered in support of this position have not been convincing. These arguments generally focus on the five episodes in Acts (Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 19) where it is maintained that glossolalia accompanied Spirit-baptism. Again, the Bible is treated as a homogeneous whole and texts are arranged together with little regard for the author's intent or overall theological scheme. The difficulties of this position have been highlighted by many, most notably Gordon Fee. Fee declares that this approach ultimately fails to convince because it is unable to demonstrate that Luke intended to present in the key narratives of Acts a normative model for Christian experience. The problem is actually twofold. First, the evidence is not uniform: If Luke intended to teach evidential tongues as normative, why does he not consistently present tongues as the immediate result of Spirit-baptism (e.g., Acts 8:17; 9:17-19)? Remember, the key question is not whether Paul or the Samaritans actually spoke in tongues; but rather, why did Luke not explicitly mention tongues if it was his intention to establish the pattern? Secondly, even when tongues is connected to Spirit-baptism, it is doubtful whether this connection is made in order to present evidential tongues as a normative doctrine. In other words, it is difficult to argue, simply on the basis of the repetition of events (historical precedent), that Luke intended to teach the doctrine. More is needed in order to establish normative theology.

Here again James Dunn's methodological observations are helpful. Rather than focusing on isolated passages in an attempt to establish a normative pattern (as we have seen, this approach is destined to fail), we should rather seek to reconstruct the theological (in this case, the pneumatological) perspective of the author and assess its relevance for the question at hand. This approach will necessarily draw from the full range of the biblical author's work (in Luke's case, the breadth of his two-volume work) in an attempt to elucidate his theological perspective. After the perspectives of the relevant biblical authors have been faithfully reconstructed, we can then bring them together to form a holistic biblical perspective.

It is worthwhile to note here that the value of a passage for assessing the theological perspective of a given author cannot be reduced to its "primary intent." A passage must be understood in terms of its original setting and intention, but the theological freight it carries may transcend its "primary intent." Each piece of evidence must be taken seriously as we seek to reconstruct the theological perspective of the biblical author.

An exclusive focus on an author's "primary intent" or "intention to teach" too often leads to a form of tunnel vision which ignores the implications of an individual text for the theological perspective of the author. This myopia is illustrated in Fee's treatment of the Samaritan episode in Acts 8:4-17.⁴ He argues that this passage is ultimately irrelevant to discussions concerning the doctrine of subsequence for Luke's "primary intent" lies elsewhere. Now, the primary intent of the narrative, as Fee suggests, may be to stress that the expansion of the gospel beyond the bounds of Judaism had "divine and apostolic approval." And, I would agree, it is unlikely that Luke consciously sought to teach here that the gift of the Spirit is normally separate from saving faith. Yet this does not allow us to ignore the clear implications of the narrative for Luke's pneumatology. Indeed, the fact that Luke does separate the gift of the Spirit from saving faith clearly reveals his distinctive pneumatological perspective.⁵ Furthermore, this separation refutes the commonly accepted interpretation of the Lukan gift as "the climax of conversion-initiation."

The lesson to be learned is this: In order to elucidate the theological perspective of a particular biblical author, we must deal with all of the relevant evidence. An examination of isolated passages or a survey of the "primary intent" of these passages will not do. Another key question then emerges: What does a careful analysis of the biblical author's text reveal about his theological perspective? Here, a variety of tools - if they help elucidate the historical meaning of the text [6](#) - can and should be employed. For years, Evangelical scholarship has been judiciously utilizing and benefiting from historical, redaction, and various forms of literary criticism.[7](#)

3.3 The "Intention to Teach" Fallacy

A focus on the theological perspectives of the various biblical authors inevitably raises an additional question, one that has rarely been voiced by Pentecostals: How do we put it all together? This takes us into the realm of systematic theology. The difference between the approaches of biblical and systematic theology has been artfully presented by G. B. Caird. Caird describes the task of biblical theology as one of listening to the dialogue of the biblical authors seated at a roundtable.[8](#) In biblical theology, we listen to their discussion. By way of contrast, in systematic theology we frequently begin with the agenda and questions of our contemporary setting. We bring the pressing questions of our day to the biblical text and, as we wrestle with the implications that emerge from the text for our questions, we seek to answer them in a manner consistent with the biblical witness. We do not simply sit passively, listening to the discussion at the roundtable. Rather, we bring our questions to the dialogue and listen for the various responses uttered. Ultimately, we seek to integrate these responses into a coherent answer.

I would suggest that the question concerning the relationship between tongues and Spirit-baptism is a question of systematic theology. This point has been largely missed by Pentecostals and Evangelicals alike. This omission has resulted, on the one hand, in our inability to present a convincing case; and on the other, in a cavalier dismissal of our position by Evangelicals. We have needlessly hammered away at attempting to demonstrate that Luke intended to teach evidential tongues. Yet "the question of what constitutes 'the initial evidence' of a person having received the 'baptism in the Spirit' simply is not raised in the New Testament."[9](#) That is to say, neither Luke nor any other biblical author deliberately sets out to demonstrate that "tongues" is the initial physical evidence of that empowering experience (and dimension of the Spirit's activity), which Pentecostals appropriately call, "baptism in the Holy Spirit." This conclusion, however, does not necessarily "render the doctrine invalid" nor indicate that the questions associated with the doctrine are inappropriate.[10](#) It is not only legitimate, but often necessary, to bring our questions to the text or (as Caird might put it) to the dialogue at the roundtable. Here we must also carefully listen to the voice of scripture. The lesson to be learned is this: Although the biblical authors may not directly address our questions, our goal is to identify the implications for our questions, which emerge from the various theological perspectives they represent. A rigid attempt to argue that Luke (or any other biblical author) intended to teach evidential tongues will not do. Thus, another key question has been identified: What implications emerge from the perspectives of the various biblical authors for our question pertaining to the relationship between tongues and Spirit-baptism?

I have identified three crucial questions, which Pentecostals must address if we are to communicate effectively in our context, shaped as it is by modern Evangelicalism. Each question highlights a weakness in past Pentecostal approaches and clarifies our task for the future. They may be summarized in the form of imperatives:[11](#)

1. Rather than seeking to find a two-stage pattern in the NT by conflating texts from various authors, we must seek to elucidate Luke's distinctive pneumatology and demonstrate how this necessarily impacts our understanding of the Pentecostal gift.

2. Rather than seeking to find a pattern of evidential tongues from isolated texts in Acts,¹² we must carefully analyze all of the relevant information from the biblical author's text (utilizing all of the tools available to us) in an attempt to uncover his distinctive theological perspective?
3. Rather than seeking to demonstrate that the biblical authors intended to teach evidential tongues, we must wrestle with the implications which emerge from the perspectives of the various biblical authors for our question pertaining to the relationship between tongues and Spirit-baptism?

Let us now turn to a discussion of these tasks.

4. FACING THE FUTURE

4.1 Luke's Distinctive Pneumatology

We have noted that for the issue of subsequence (the foundation for any Pentecostal understanding of tongues), the key question is: What is the nature of the Pentecostal gift (Acts 2)? It is abundantly clear that Luke intended his readers to understand that this gift (whatever its nature) was available to - and indeed, should be experienced by - every believer. Virtually all Evangelicals accept this fact. However, Evangelicals, while acknowledging that divine enabling is prominent in the narrative, affirm that this aspect of Luke's account is simply a reflection of his special emphasis. Luke and Paul, it is assumed, shared essentially the same pneumatological perspective, and thus broader, soteriological dimensions of the Spirit's work are also understood to be present. The universal character of the Pentecostal gift is then easily explained: all should experience the gift because it is the means by which the blessings of the new covenant are mediated. Some may (or again, they may not) receive additional gifts of power for witness.

Yet, if it can be demonstrated that Luke views the work of the Spirit exclusively in Charismatic or prophetic terms (that is, unrelated to soteriological themes such as justification, cleansing, sanctification),¹³ then it is not possible to associate the Pentecostal gift with conversion or salvation. Indeed, by placing the Pentecost account within the framework of Luke's distinctive theology of the Spirit, Pentecostals are able to argue with considerable force that the Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, not as the source of new covenant existence, but rather as the source of power for effective witness. And since the Pentecostal gift is Charismatic rather than soteriological in character, it must be distinguished from the gift of the Spirit which Paul associates with conversion-initiation. Here then, is a strong argument for a doctrine of subsequence - that is, that Spirit-baptism (in the Pentecostal or Lukan sense) is logically distinct from conversion. The logical distinction between conversion and Spirit-baptism is a reflection of Luke's distinctive theology of the Spirit.

Note that this argument is not based on biblical analogy or historical precedent. It does not seek to demonstrate that the disciples had received the Spirit, at least from Luke's perspective, prior to Pentecost. Nor is it dependent on isolated passages from the Books of Acts. Rather, drawing from the full scope of Luke's two-volume work, it focuses on the nature of Luke's pneumatology and, from this framework, seeks to understand the character of the Pentecostal gift. The judgment that the gift is distinct from conversion is rooted in the gift's function: It provides power for witness, not justification or cleansing. The universal character of the gift, established in Luke's narrative rather than historical precedent, is the basis for its normative character. I would suggest this sort of approach, which actually follows Dunn's methodology (and that of modern Evangelicalism) in a consistent manner, enables us to articulate in a convincing way a fully Pentecostal theology.

4.2 The Synthetic Task

As we move more specifically to the question of evidential tongues, we face the systematic challenge (see imperatives 2 and 3) outlined above. We are called to identify the implications, which emerge from the various theological perspectives of the biblical authors for our question concerning the relationship between tongues and Spirit-baptism. Elsewhere I have outlined what this sort of enterprise might look like.[14](#)

I have argued that the Pentecostal doctrine of evidential tongues is an appropriate inference drawn from the prophetic character of Luke's pneumatology (and more specifically, the Pentecostal gift) and Paul's affirmation of the edifying and potentially universal character of the private manifestation of tongues. My argument may be summarized as follows:

1. Paul affirms that the private manifestation of tongues is edifying, desirable, and universally available. In short, all should speak in tongues.
2. Luke affirms that the Pentecostal gift is intimately connected to inspired speech, of which tongues-speech is a prominent form, possessing a uniquely evidential character.
3. Therefore, when one receives the Pentecostal gift, one should expect to manifest tongues, and this manifestation of tongues is a demonstrative sign (evidence) that one has received the gift.

Furthermore, we might add that although the doctrine of evidential tongues is formulated in modern language and addresses contemporary concerns, it is linked to a process of doctrinal development which extends back into the apostolic age. The question it addresses undoubtedly accompanied the expansion of the church among the Gentiles and it appears to be unavoidable for those who would try to reconcile Paul's gift-language with Luke's Pentecostal gift. The doctrine calls us to retain a biblical sense of expectancy, for it reminds us that the manifestation of tongues is an integral part of the Pentecostal gift, edifying, and universally available. Above all, the manifestation of tongues is a powerful reminder that the church is, by virtue of the Pentecostal gift, a prophetic community empowered for a missionary task.

My own attempt to apply this methodology to the issue of evidential tongues is clearly just a beginning. I do hope, however, that it will serve to encourage others to pursue what I believe to be a fruitful course.

4.3 Central Affirmations

I have attempted to pinpoint several (largely hermeneutical) issues which will be important for Pentecostals as we face the future and attempt to rearticulate our theology. Our goal is, of course, to do so in a way that is faithful to the biblical text and relevant to our contemporary setting. As we reflect on how we can best rearticulate our theology, we will inevitably be confronted with the fact that the text imposes limits on what we can say. With this in mind, it might be helpful, as a way of concluding this section, to outline the various affirmations often found in the Pentecostal movement. The affirmations listed below move from those which (in my opinion) are most fundamental and clearly supported in the scriptures to those which are less so. Which of these affirmations are consistent with the biblical witness and important elements of our Pentecostal heritage?

1. Baptism in the Spirit (i.e., the Pentecostal gift) is an empowering experience logically distinct from conversion.
2. Tongues is a gift available to every Christian.
3. Tongues is a gift which is desirable for every Christian.
4. Tongues is evidence or proof that one has been baptized in the Spirit.

5. Tongues always occurs at the moment one is baptized in the Spirit, thus without tongues one cannot be baptized in the Spirit.

I have argued elsewhere that points one through four are all valid and defensible.¹⁵ Point five, as it is worded above, appears to be more difficult to support from the text. There are those who, with some justification, would maintain that while tongues is the biblical accompaniment of baptism in the Spirit, speaking in tongues may not always transpire at the moment one reports Spirit-baptism. For example, Joseph Roswell Flower, an early and influential Assemblies of God leader, testified on several occasions that he first spoke in tongues some two months after he was baptized in the Spirit.¹⁶ In any event, we need to reflect on what we can and should say, and how to say it effectively. It is hoped that the affirmations listed here might serve to stimulate discussion concerning where the methodology outlined above might take us.

5. Conclusion: A Strategy for the Future

By way of conclusion, I would like to outline a strategy for addressing "the tongues" question. This strategy moves beyond the methodological considerations highlighted above and suggests concrete steps which Pentecostals might take in order to deal with the issue in a meaningful way.

First, we should emphasize that Spirit-baptism (in the Lukan sense) is a missiological enabling (power for witness) distinct from conversion. We cannot and should not allow our contribution to the broader Evangelical world to be reduced simply to the question of tongues. Pentecostals are raising two crucial questions ("What is the nature of the Pentecostal gift?" and "What is the relationship between this gift and speaking in tongues?"), and both need to be heard. The question concerning the nature of Spirit-baptism is logically prior to the question of its relationship to tongues, more significant for the life of the church, and (I would suggest) more clearly supported in the scriptures.

Secondly, we must recognize the limitations, as well as the strengths, of "initial physical evidence" language. All theological formulations are the product of human beings and thus, for better or for worse, are human attempts to come to terms with the significance of the word of God. All such formulations stand under the judgment of the word of God. The phrase, "initial physical evidence," as all theological formulations, has its limitations. The focus on "evidence" can easily lead to a confusion of the gift with the sign. The Pentecostal gift is not tongues. It is rather an empowering which enables its recipient to effectively participate in the mission of God. The manifestation of tongues is an evidence of the Pentecostal dimension of the Spirit's work, but not the gift itself. An inordinate focus on "evidence" may result in Christians who, looking back into the distant past, can remember the moment they "got it," but for whom the Pentecostal dimension of power for witness is presently unknown.¹⁷

Thirdly, we need to stress the relevance of our doctrine of evidential tongues. To many of our pastors and people, the doctrine seems to be simply irrelevant. Yet I do believe that the doctrine holds much promise. "Initial evidence" may indeed be a human formulation, but it does capture well the sense of expectation called for by Luke and Paul: Tongues-speech is an integral part of the Pentecostal gift, edifying, and universally available; thus, when one receives the gift, one would expect to manifest tongues. Furthermore, the manifestation of tongues is a powerful reminder that the church is, by virtue of the Pentecostal gift, a prophetic community empowered for a missionary task. This, of course, does not exhaust the theological significance of glossolalia. Frank Macchia has given helpful direction here and hopefully others will help him blaze this trail.¹⁸

Fourthly, we need to stress the fact that tongues-speech is not a badge of holiness nor does it signify that one has entered into a higher degree of spiritual maturity. At a popular level, we are frequently guilty of falling into this Corinthian trap. If we can be clearer on this point, many barriers of resistance might come down.

Fifthly, we need to encourage the production of literature at a variety of levels, especially the scholarly, on this and other related topics. There is no substitute for sound scholarship and it needs to come from a variety of sources (individuals and institutions) and be made available through a wide range of publications and forums. The challenge before us is clear: We must influence the larger Evangelical world or they will influence us! In short, if we are to have an impact on this and especially the next generation, we must produce articles and books which speak the idiom of our day and which provide a strong theological basis for our doctrines. It will take time, effort, and encouragement from institutions, but our voice can be heard.

Footnotes

1. Although Pentecostals represent a diverse sub-group within Evangelicalism, for the purpose of this paper we shall distinguish between Pentecostals (assuming their identification with traditional Evangelical values) as those who affirm a baptism in the Spirit subsequent to conversion which is associated with tongues and Evangelicals as those who do not subscribe to this view.
2. James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), p. 39.
3. When I refer to "the NT authors" or "their perspectives," I am not in any way minimizing or lessening the role of the Holy Spirit as the One who has inspired these authors to write God's word. With this terminology, I simply acknowledge the beauty and the richness of the Bible, and more specifically, the New Testament. In the Bible, God has chosen to reveal himself to us by inspiring real people, who lived in a specific historical and cultural context and who faced and dealt with real issues, to write His word. Thus, when I refer to the theology or perspective of Luke or Paul, I understand this to be entirely consistent with a high view of scripture. I wholeheartedly affirm that the Bible is the divinely inspired, infallible, and authoritative word of God.
4. Gordon Fee, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), pp. 94-96; see also Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 97.
5. In other words, the way in which Luke narrates these events reveals that his pneumatology is different from - although (I would add) complementary to - that of Paul. A high view of scripture does not rule out theological differences between various biblical authors. Rather, it suggests that the differences which do exist are "differences in harmonious development rather than irreconcilable contradictions." (I. H. Marshall, "An Evangelical Approach to 'Theological Criticism'," *Themelios* 13 [1988], p. 83). I would suggest therefore that a high view of scripture demands, not that Luke and Paul have the same pneumatological perspective; but rather that Luke's distinctive pneumatology is ultimately reconcilable with that of Paul, and that both perspectives can be seen as contributing to a process of harmonious development.
6. Note the concern for historical meaning expressed in the excellent hermeneutics textbook penned by William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993), p. 133: they define textual meaning as "that which the words and grammatical structures of that text disclose about the probable intention of its author/editor and the probable understanding of that text by its intended readers."
7. See for example Donald John's fine article, "Some New Directions in the Hermeneutics of Classical Pentecostalism's Doctrine of Initial Evidence," in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. G. McGee (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 145-67.

8. Caird's approach is summarized by L. D. Hurst, "New Testament Theological Analysis," in *Introducing New Testament Study*, ed. Scott McKnight (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), p. 145.
9. Larry W. Hurtado, "Normal, but not a Norm: Initial Evidence and the New Testament," in *Initial Evidence*, p. 191.
10. Hurtado, "Normal," p. 191.
11. This is not intended in any way to denigrate our forefathers and mothers. Rather, it is simply an acknowledgment that each generation must address the new and pressing questions of its context.
12. Note the appeal often made to 1 Corinthians in discussions of Acts 9: Paul spoke in tongues didn't he?
13. Roger Stronstad (*The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984]) and I (*Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994]) have maintained this position.
14. See chapter 13, "Evidential Tongues," in R. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*.
15. See my *Empowered for Witness*.
16. One of J. R. Flower's former students, the Rev. Jim Allen, personally heard Flower testify in this manner and alerted me to this fact. Note also the written sources documented by F. Macchia in his article which appears in this volume.
17. The phrase "accompanying sign" is a possible useful alternative.
18. Frank D. Macchia, "The Question of Tongues as Initial Evidence: A Review of *Initial Evidence*, edited by Gary B. McGee," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), pp. 117-27.

Salvation in Christ and Baptism in Spirit: A Response to Robert Menzies, "Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method"

Roli G. dela Cruz

[[HTTP://www.aps.edu/ajps/98-2/98-2-delacruz.htm](http://www.aps.edu/ajps/98-2/98-2-delacruz.htm)]

INTRODUCTION

This reaction essay seeks to review the current article of Robert P. Menzies, "Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method." My aim is not only to review this present work but also to assess many contributions of R. Menzies to Pentecostal literature. In this essay I will react to his outlook in articulating the Pentecostal claim. Then, I will review his methodology and product. It is also vital to integrate his endeavor to my region, Asia in general, and the Philippines in particular. Thus, I will discuss the relevance of his contributions to my locality. Finally, since R. Menzies asserts that the Pentecostal gift is an empowerment for witness, I will reflect on the missiological implications of his presentation of Pentecostal empowerment.¹

1. PROGRESSIVE PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

First, I commend R. Menzies for a fine article concerning the Pentecostal distinctive. He attempts to secure honestly and objectively the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit and the evidential nature of glossolalia. I feel that his contributions to the current Pentecostal-Evangelical² debate concerning how we might best articulate a truly biblical doctrine of the "Pentecostal gift" are crucial for the direction of future Pentecostal scholarship.³ In "Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method," Menzies takes the Evangelical hermeneutic seriously. He recognizes that Pentecostals generally accept Evangelical presuppositions. Thus, his analysis of the biblical data follows methodological principles widely accepted within the Evangelical world. His analysis centers on the doctrine of "subsequence," which he notes is "the foundation for any Pentecostal understanding of tongues." Menzies concludes that there is an important theological distinction between salvation in Christ and baptism in the Spirit.⁴

Secondly, as an Asian Pentecostal, I value the invitation to respond to R. Menzies' stimulating work. My heritage leads me to believe that "speaking in tongues" is the "initial physical evidence" of receiving the Pentecostal gift. Menzies highlights the holiness roots and the revival setting of the Pentecostal pioneers who gave me my heritage. He then contrasts the context of early Pentecostalism with the contemporary

setting of the movement. Presently, the Evangelical hermeneutic provides the basis for the Pentecostal approach to the Scriptures.⁵ Through the application of these interpretive tools, Menzies establishes a sharp contrast between the pneumatologies of Paul and Luke.⁶ While he emphasizes this diversity, he also maintains that a clear, harmonious fusion is possible. Consequently, as he investigates glossolalia in Luke and Paul, a deductive and systematic synthesis of the two biblical authors emerges. Menzies asserts that this synthesis provides a plausible argument for the "normative character" of evidential tongues.

Thirdly, I adhere to R. Menzies' belief that Pentecostals have something beneficial to share with the larger Evangelical family. It is obvious that Menzies thinks that Pentecostals can trailblaze a path that the Evangelical mind can fruitfully follow. He carefully tracks and critiques the Evangelical hermeneutic in its treatment of the Pentecostal gift in Luke-Acts.⁷ As Menzies demonstrates, a clear articulation of the Pentecostal position, particularly as it relates to common Evangelical assumptions, might greatly help us all recognize our particularities and commonality. Unless Pentecostals can clearly define their distinctive doctrine, they, in one way or another, may succumb entirely to the Evangelical theological system and lose the unique dimension of our experiential theology.⁸ Therefore I hope that the kind of approach that Menzies has taken will help shape future reflection on the biblical validity of the Pentecostal experience. The ultimate purpose of this endeavor is to produce a clearer presentation of Pentecostal theology - one that might open the way for Evangelicals to consider it seriously, if not to affirm it entirely.⁹

2. SIGNIFICANT SYSTEMATIC SUMMATION

R. Menzies, through careful treatment of the biblical material in Luke and Paul, forms the fruit of his studies into a coherent synthesis. His methodology enables Luke to speak for himself and not merely parrot the perspective of Paul. Menzies then allows Paul to interact with Luke. Thus he brings the goal of biblical theology into focus. As he deals with the issue of the "initial physical evidence" of baptism in the Spirit, he acknowledges that it belongs to the realm of systematic theology.¹⁰ I concur with Menzies that the question of evidential tongues is neither a part of Paul's agenda nor the concern of Luke. Hence, the question cannot be addressed through a purely descriptive approach. Instead, the resolutions drawn from Luke and Paul are systematically consolidated in order to come up with a holistic solution to the question concerning the pertinence of glossolalia.¹¹ The foundation for this systematizing of data is not overly dependent on our contemporary theological agenda; rather, it is rooted in the agenda of the scriptural writers.¹² In this way, Menzies establishes theological inferences, which strongly support a Pentecostal understanding of tongues.¹³

However, this sort of argument, based as it is on implications or inferences, may raise further questions. It should be acknowledged that this systematizing or consolidation of material inevitably involves a subjective inclusion and exclusion of categorized data. Thus the dialogue of the biblical writers is put into a classified system in order to answer present questions. The end result may mean that those things that do not fit into the

system are simply set aside. The choices a systematic theologian makes - whether to include or exclude various data in his or her scheme - are often quite subjective. Nonetheless, the integrity of the systematic theologian is not diminished. We need to recognize that the theologian is placed in a position, which requires him to make necessary choices: What material will help us answer the current theological question and what material may we safely ignore? Yet, it is possible that Menzies, in his attempt to deal with the question concerning the evidence of baptism in the Spirit, will be criticized for overemphasizing the role of tongues-speech and setting aside prophecy.

Let me illustrate the problem of R. Menzies' process of drawing the relevant answer to the question of evidential tongues. If we evaluate the way he handles the biblical material gathered from Luke and Paul, the result of that method suggests that prophecy might also serve as an accompanying sign for baptism in the Spirit.¹⁴ Luke's pneumatology, as R. Menzies admits, implies that the Spirit is prophetic.¹⁵ In fact, when one traces the Spirit in Luke-Acts, the occurrence of prophecy is much more prevalent than speaking in tongues.¹⁶ Menzies' argument for the normative character of tongues is based on the universality of the gift as presented in Luke-Acts.¹⁷ Yet, even the quotation of Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:17-21 highlights prophecy as an indication of the reception of the Spirit. The same may be said for Paul as well. The apostle encourages everyone to prophesy for the edification of the body and at the same time encourages everyone to speak in tongues for their own edification (1 Cor 14:1-5, 31, 39). Therefore, it appears to me that the very strength of Menzies' methodology is also its point of weakness. Menzies concludes that speaking in tongues is a prominent accompanying sign, but using the same method one might also argue that prophecy functions in the same manner.¹⁸

3. THRIVING THEOLOGICAL TREND

In presentations of Pentecostal theology, such as that provided by Menzies, it is vital to establish that the movement's experience of the Spirit is genuine. The veracity of the Pentecostal encounter with the Spirit should not be negated or minimized; rather, it must be upheld and highlighted. In the beginning stage of the movement, i.e., the pre-Evangelical recognition, the simple dismissal of the validity of the experience led Pentecostals to be apologetic or defensive.¹⁹ Hence, a variety of literature was produced which sought to defend the experience of tongues as authentic and biblical.²⁰ As Pentecostals were welcomed in the Evangelical world, the focus shifted from questions pertaining to scriptural legitimacy of the experience of tongues to the validity of the hermeneutical underpinnings, which supported the doctrine of initial evidence.²¹ In this regard, Menzies' work is significant, for he attempts to address the key issues in the current Pentecostal-Evangelical debate. As such, he interacts with key dialogue partners such as James D. G. Dunn and Gordon D. Fee. Menzies has also responded adequately to the critiques of his work and argued cogently for the prophetic nature of Luke's pneumatology.²²

Menzies, who is a third generation Pentecostal, has clearly set the context for the current debate concerning the nature and validity of Pentecostal theology. In this present article, he provides a framework for theologizing which holds much promise for Pentecostal

thinkers. I concur with him that there is a desperate need to come up with a reinterpretation of the Pentecostal experience that might communicate more clearly to our Evangelical brothers and sisters. The present generation of Pentecostals, those to whom Menzies speaks, largely adheres to Evangelical tenets of faith and hermeneutical methods.

The Pentecostal acceptance of the Evangelical hermeneutic is indeed an important development. With this in mind, Menzies appropriately reviews the deficiencies of "two-stage patterns" as noted by James Dunn. Menzies recognizes that the Pentecostal interpretive model of "two-stage patterns" in Acts does not adhere to hermeneutical principles accepted within contemporary Evangelicalism. The traditional presentation of Pentecostal theology, based as it is on "historical precedent," is therefore no longer convincing. Dunn's critique was indeed devastating. Thus, Menzies concedes that Dunn is correct when he challenges us to consider the whole theological emphasis of a biblical author such as Luke, not simply isolated texts.

Another eminent scholar, a son of the Pentecostal movement, Gordon Fee, is noted by Menzies for his critique of the Pentecostal treatment of pertinent passages such as the Samaritan episode in Acts 8.²³ Again, Menzies acknowledges that Fee's treatment of this particular passage is largely valid. Menzies wisely recognizes that Pentecostal interpreters should learn from Dunn and Fee in their concern for a biblical approach, which considers "all of the relevant evidence." Menzies' work is significant, for it calls us to recognize our hermeneutical weaknesses and yet, by highlighting Luke's distinctive theology, also points to a valid alternative.

Menzies has offered a constructive critique of traditional Pentecostal presentations which emerged in the polemical context of an earlier era. While these traditional presentations served their purpose in the history of Pentecostal interpretation, contemporary Pentecostal scholars should seek to utilize the hermeneutical tools of Evangelicalism in order to express Pentecostal claims. In other words, Menzies challenges us to be consistently Evangelical in our scriptural interpretation, but distinctively and faithfully Pentecostal in our theology. This, I believe, is the real significance of Menzies' contribution.

Menzies clearly feels called to harmonize Pentecostal interpretive methods with those utilized by Evangelicals. As I have noted, this is precisely why his work is significant. Nevertheless, I do believe that we as Pentecostals should not feel constrained simply to harmonize our hermeneutical model with that of the Evangelicals. This might attract the attention of the Evangelicals and perhaps influence their thinking. Be that as it may, I still believe that we should feel free to explore different hermeneutical methods as we seek to rearticulate our Pentecostal heritage.

I commend Menzies for seeking to explain our theological position to our Evangelical counterparts in a way that they can appreciate. However, we need not fear innovative ways of critiquing our own position,²⁴ approaches which perhaps might set aside the Evangelical agenda for a while and which might enable us to refine it. Here the emphasis

should be on the maturation of Pentecostal theology, for every generation needs a fresh interpretation of what we believe. However, if we kept on following the trend of Evangelical hermeneutics simply for the sake of acceptance, we will become stagnant and disintegrate.²⁵ We will simply keep in step with Evangelical theology. Perhaps, we will simply be satisfied with harmonizing our Pentecostal theology with Evangelical tenets of faith. Therefore, I do not think that the Evangelicals should dictate how we as Pentecostals approach the arena of biblical interpretation.

Particularly here in Asia, I do not believe the western Evangelical perspective should dictate how we interpret the Bible,²⁶ for the logic and norms of our Pentecostal pioneers are acceptable to Asians. Nevertheless, our western Pentecostal counterparts need to respond to the deductive and linear Evangelical model of western biblical interpretation. Asians, however, should not be satisfied with ready-made western theology and instead address their own issues.²⁷ The declaration issued by the East Asia Christian Conference is worth considering:

A living theology is born out of the meeting of a living church and its world. We discern a special task of theology in relation to the Asian renaissance and revolution, because we believe God is working out his purposes in these movements of the secular world. The Asian churches so far, and in large measure, have not taken their theological task seriously enough, for they have been largely content to accept the ready-made answers of Western theology or confessions. We believe, however, that today we can look for the development of authentic living theology in Asia.²⁸

Let me illustrate my point. Before the work of I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian Theologian* (1970), we Pentecostals were criticized for drawing our doctrine from narrative portions of scripture. Thus Evangelicals emphasized that Paul should interpret Luke. Marshall's declaration that Luke should be treated as a theologian in his own right became the foundation for the works of R. Stronstad (*Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* [1984]) and R. Menzies (*The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* [1991]). In the work of Marshall, Stronstad, and Menzies, the basis for a Pentecostal theology has been established. Now we can move on and address other issues, such as the issue, which compelled Menzies to write his article on evidential tongues.

With all respect to the development of Pentecostal scholarship in the west, the struggle for a valid basis for Pentecostal theology and attitudes toward various Pentecostal interpretive approaches might conceivably be different if the theological debate had started here in Asia.²⁹ Wonsuk Ma, an Asian Pentecostal thinker, observes how "less prominent attention" is given by Asians to the debate concerning the role of glossolalia. Asians, he states, have "assumed the consequence of the western debate."³⁰ In Asia, the didactic purpose of the narrative genre is taken seriously. John C. England, from New Zealand, a westerner in the Asia-Pacific region, declares:

In seeking to understand and respond to the realities of our people's experience nothing has been more important in recent decades than the recognition of *story-telling as a theological process* - stories in folk-literature or scriptures, from people-movements, tribal groups or urban communities, and especially the stories of women in all these.... How can we clarify further the movement between human life and scripture (or tradition)? A simple drawing of parallels or the assembling of related texts will not be adequate. We must come to recognise the framework and assumptions for our use of scripture, to critique any self-serving, imperialist or patriarchal interpretations, and to discern the prophetic and gospel story *within* our stories.[31](#)

Hence, to say that Luke teaches the theology of the Spirit in his "stories" in Luke-Acts is not a problem. In other words, Asian Pentecostals, who are familiar with "using folklore as a way of doing theology,"[32](#) do not face the same struggles as those of their western counterparts. It is interesting to think of what might have happened if we had started with the assumption, widely accepted in Asia, that Luke sought to teach theology through his narrative. Would we not be way ahead in the development of Pentecostal theology? Instead, Pentecostals exerted their energy in an attempt to harmonize Pentecostal doctrine with basic western Evangelical presuppositions. Of course, the Pentecostals are correct to emphasize that the narrative of Luke-Acts can be a source of sound theology. This is very clear to the Asian mind. Here we see that Menzies' contributions to the development of Pentecostal theology are very relevant to the Asian context. I wonder, however, if Menzies is willing to set aside his western Evangelical assumptions and accept the Asian perspective in his theological method so that he might articulate more clearly an Asian Pentecostal theology and make his contributions more relevant to the context and region where he is serving as a missionary.[33](#)

Therefore, whether the Evangelicals accept it or not, our Pentecostal experience has brought us to believe ahead of them that Luke-Acts has "didactic" value.[34](#) Our Pentecostal forefathers and mothers were not wrong after all. Let us admit then that, whether our presuppositions are Pentecostal or Evangelical, they are human. If Pentecostal assumptions are scrutinized by Evangelicals, are we not allowed as Pentecostals to critique Evangelical assumptions pertaining to the interpretation of the Scriptures? As Fee comments:

[B]eing a Pentecostal within the larger framework of North American evangelicalism has also brought tensions from this side as well. Whereas for the most part there has been a genuine, if not at times wondering, acceptance of "this strange oxymoron among us" - a Pentecostal New Testament scholar is considered by many a contradiction in terms - there are others for whom such a person is something of an anathema. This has been especially true of many within the Dispensationalist and Reformed traditions on the matters of Spirit and women in ministry to be particularly full of inconsistencies - not to mention resulting in some less than satisfactory exegesis. [35](#)

Is it not the Spirit who inspired the biblical authors to write the scriptures the same Spirit who started the modern Pentecostal movement? Would not the same Spirit interpret the Pentecostal experience the way he illuminates Evangelical biblical interpretation?

Another observation that is relevant to the discussion is the present openness of Evangelicals toward the miraculous. A significant number of Evangelicals, better known as the Third Wave movement, are experiencing miraculous manifestations of the Spirit in a manner similar to the Pentecostals.³⁶ In the early days of the Pentecostal revival, testimonies of miraculous occurrences were looked down upon by the larger Evangelical bodies. But now there has been a shift from a closed outlook to a new openness. Again, we can only wonder what would have happened if the Pentecostal revival had started in Asia, where people are aware of the supernatural.³⁷ Perhaps the reactions and responses would have been different. Instead of focusing on the cessation of the miraculous as the point of biblical debate, the discussion might have been focused on the power and sovereignty of God.³⁸ The Asian worldview, which centers on the spirits which permeate our world, would have encountered (as it now does) the Pentecostal claim of the Spirit's power. Accordingly a challenge is given by Yeow Choo Lak:

The spirit-world is alive and is doing well in Asia. Seemingly, education (eastern or western) has done little to dampen the influence of the spirit-world. Whilst writing these few lines, a neighbour is having his front yard done up. He is highly educated and is doing well in the corporate world. Yet, before the workmen started digging up his garden he was burning joss papers and joss sticks. That was his way of ensuring success and prosperity in this venture. One cannot say that he is uneducated and uninformed. In spite of his high education he is still very much influenced by the spirit-world.

It is in the midst of the influence of the spirit-world that Christians in Asia are endeavouring to make sense of the Spirit's movement in Asia. What is the Spirit telling us of its activities here? How do we discern its actions? What meaning can we make of the Spirit's movement in the people's struggles in Asia?³⁹

I am not trying to make the long, complicated Pentecostal-Evangelical debate that we have inherited here in Asia as simple as I may appear to put it. I do not want to be misinterpreted as having no regard for the history of Pentecostal interpretation. I am indeed grateful for the scholarly contributions of western Pentecostals in my region. I believe that I have a basis for what I say because of the history of biblical interpretation, which includes Pentecostal and Evangelical contributions. I also believe that Menzies would agree that the Asian Pentecostal setting is different in that it must confront a unique range of issues. Nevertheless, I believe that we Pentecostal thinkers, particularly here in Asia, should not be afraid to think freely with regard to interpretative methods and the analysis of the biblical data. The purpose of our theologizing, after all, is to respond to the concerns and demands unique to the circumstances of the Asians.⁴⁰ Such an attitude would facilitate the development of a theology, which is relevant for Asian

Pentecostals and Evangelicals alike. It is from this creative posture that Asians can also greatly contribute to the development of theology in the west.

4. RELEVANT RESPONSIBLE REFLECTION

R. Menzies makes a clear theological separation between salvation in Christ and baptism in the Spirit. This distinction is based on his conclusion that Luke has his own pneumatology, one that is separate from that of Paul. According to Menzies, the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence can be defended by using the assumptions of biblical theology - i.e., that every biblical writer must speak for himself. I compliment Menzies for his achievement. His methodology provides a basis for a clearer articulation of the Pentecostal position. By highlighting the differences between the pneumatologies of Luke and Paul, Menzies is able to establish a clear distinction between the experience of regeneration and empowering.

When the mainline Evangelical organization Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) accepted the Pentecostals,⁴¹ some of the anti-Pentecostal/Charismatic Evangelicals formed the National Association of Conservative Evangelicals (NACE). Why would they react like that? The PCEC are more open to the Pentecostal experience, while the NACE continues to challenge the validity of the Pentecostal claim.⁴² It is obvious that this is a reasonable response for any Christian tradition, which fears being swallowed by a new, thriving revival movement. They would like to preserve their belief system, for they do not want to lose their identity.

Menzies' conclusions regarding the nature of the Pentecostal gift and evidential tongues have important implications for the Philippines. On the one hand, Evangelicals in the Philippines, which is a Roman Catholic country, generally consider Catholics to be unsaved.⁴³ Thus, theologically speaking, Roman Catholics cannot be baptized in the Spirit, for they have not been saved. On the other hand, Pentecostals in the Philippines believe that the Evangelicals in general and perhaps some among the other mainline Protestants are saved and thus prime candidates for the Pentecostal gift. But something phenomenal took place when the Charismatic movement came to the Philippines. The Catholics experienced the same baptism in the Spirit that the Pentecostals had experienced. The experience of the gift of Spirit among Charismatic Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals brought - and continues to bring - "spontaneous ecumenicity."⁴⁴ Sadly, fewer mainline Evangelicals speak in tongues, regardless of whether they believe that tongues have already ceased or is still a valid gift for today. Interestingly, in the Philippines, Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants are experiencing the Pentecostal gift in their Charismatic services with more frequency than the Evangelicals.⁴⁵

This kind of phenomenal experience raises questions that need to be addressed. What enables a person to be baptized in the Spirit? Is it a person's theological presuppositions or experiential openness?⁴⁶ As I have visited our Pentecostal churches in the Philippines, I have noticed that the genuineness of the Catholic's experience, their glossolalia and baptism in the Spirit, is often doubted. Pentecostals readily accept that an Evangelical

might be baptized in the Spirit as evidenced by glossolalia, but it is hard for Pentecostals to believe that a Catholic might have had a genuine experience of speaking in tongues. However, Koichi Kitano concludes that "in general, the Catholic church is much more open" to the Pentecostals message.⁴⁷ Let us learn from the story of Mr. Pentecost, David J. Du Plessis, who was disfellowshipped by the Assemblies of God due to "pressure"⁴⁸ from Evangelicals who were offended by his ecumenical work among the Roman Catholic and mainline churches.⁴⁹ Du Plessis noticed, however, that "the Pentecostal experience" was happening among the mainline churches, but "this was not occurring amongst the Evangelical leaders with whom the Pentecostals had become so cozy."⁵⁰ Vinson Synan narrates the tension of Du Plessis' ecumenical ministry:

Pentecostal leaders had not approved of Du Plessis' close ties with mainline Protestants, but they allowed him to proceed. But when he went to Rome, as far as they were concerned, he had gone too far. The Assemblies of God revoked Du Plessis' ministerial credentials, which meant Du Plessis had no official link to any Pentecostal group.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Du Plessis, who was popularly known as Mr. Pentecost, "never compromised" his "Pentecostal witness" in his "ecumenical work."⁵² When the Charismatic movement was later established, it became obvious that the Assemblies of God had made a mistake. Du Plessis' credentials as an Assemblies of God minister were restored.

It appears, then, that Menzies' distinction between salvation in Christ and baptism in the Spirit is important for us here in the Philippines. We should seriously consider questions raised by, on the one hand, Spirit-baptized Catholics, who receive from the Spirit due to their openness; and, on the other, Evangelicals, who do not share in this experience because of their theological assumptions.⁵⁴ While Pentecostals and Evangelicals agree on salvation in Christ, the Pentecostal perspective on baptism in the Spirit seems to find more acceptance from the Catholics than the Evangelicals.⁵⁵ In fact in the 70s and 80s Narciso Dionson of Cebu⁵⁶ and Virginia Cruz (now Roberts) of Manila,⁵⁷ both ordained ministers of the Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (PGCAG), rubbed their elbows with the Catholics. They proclaimed the Pentecostal message in Catholic pulpits and saw these "unsaved Catholics" being baptized in the Spirit and speaking in tongues. Just like Du Plessis, Dionson and Cruz were able to see the Pentecostal message penetrate the Roman Catholic Church. They too were loved by the Catholics, yet they never compromised and they stayed with the PGCAG.

What then is it that really matters? I believe that unity of experience binds Pentecostals together with Charismatic Catholics and, this in turn, affords Pentecostals a unique opportunity to reach out to the Catholics. Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue concerning the experience of the Spirit might be a good starting point.⁵⁸ Kitano's conclusions should be taken seriously by the Pentecostals in the Philippines:

Undeniable evidence of genuine experiences with the Spirit among the Charismatics has created trans-denominational atmosphere in the

meetings, and have produced a spontaneous ecumenicity among the Catholics and Protestants. However, some Protestant churches have begun to question the authenticity of such ecumenicity because it is scripturally unexplainable, while the Catholic hierarchy has become concerned with losing its "sheep."

If the situation is a matter of misconception of the charismatic movement, a dialogue may be necessary. A research such as this may provide valuable material for such a dialogue between Catholic and Protestant leaders in order to minimize even on a small scale "the scandal of disunity of the churches."[59](#)

A vital question should be raised: Is the Evangelical way of understanding salvation in Christ the best way, if not the only way? Can Pentecostals, assuming that the gift of the Spirit is genuinely received by Catholics, be open to those from a non-Evangelical tradition? Since Catholics have experienced the Spirit just as we Pentecostals have, must we not also conclude, with Peter in Acts 11, that salvation has come to this group of people. I am not saying that there is something wrong with the Evangelical soteriology. It is the foundation of Pentecostal soteriology. However, the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism in the Spirit as an experience "distinct from and subsequent to" conversion seems to match the expectation and experience of Catholics more closely than that of the Evangelicals. Should we not also re-assess the Evangelical theology of salvation in Christ in light of that espoused by Roman Catholic? I believe that if there is any body that can minister to and bridge the gap between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, it is the Pentecostal church. In this Filipino context marked by the differences and similarities between Catholics and Pentecostals, Emerito P. Nacpil challenges us to engage in theological reflection that is relevant:

A responsible theology is attained mainly when the Christian faith is interpreted in conscious relationship to the fundamental problems of human life as they appear in specific forms and in particular environments, and when it is in dialogue with other faiths-religious or otherwise-which have their own ways of structuring the questions of human life and formulating their own answers to them.[60](#)

5. MEANINGFUL MISSIOLOGICAL MOTIVATION

Menzies does a good job of evaluating previous Pentecostal approaches, which have centered on establishing two-stage patterns in Luke-Acts. His suggestion that we must allow Luke to speak for himself and dialogue with Paul enables him to put forth a persuasive argument for the doctrine of subsequence. His treatment of tongues-speech in relation to baptism in the Spirit is also a better attempt than the traditional way of historical precedent. However, his synthesis might be questioned at this point due to the subjective and selective way in which he handles the data. Tongues-speech is given prominence as an evidence of baptism in the Spirit, while prophecy is largely set aside. Nevertheless, Menzies seeks, in a fresh way, to establish the doctrine of evidential

tongues - a doctrine that has played a significant role in the worldwide growth of the Pentecostal movement.⁶¹ This kind of attempt is valuable as we seek to understand more fully the significance of the Pentecostal distinctive. It is appropriate at this point to quote Vinson Synan concerning the impact that this doctrine has had on Pentecostal missions:

A final look at the results of the initial evidence teaching may provide some clues to the future. The Pentecostal churches that have held strongly to this teaching have surpassed all others in church growth and missionary success in the period since World War II. A striking case is that of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), which separated from the Church of Christ (Holiness) in 1908 over the question of tongues. Beginning as groups roughly equal in size, the growth of the two churches is instructive. By 1990 the church that rejected tongues as initial evidence number only 15,000 members in the USA while the COGIC had grown to number 3.7 million members. Likewise the CMA, which is much older than the Assemblies of God, can serve as a model for those who wish to soften the position on tongues as evidence. As we have seen, the adoption of the "seek not, forbid not" policy effectively ended the Pentecostal renewal in the CMA church. By 1992 the CMA had grown to 265,863 members in the USA and an estimated 1.9 million members around the world. On the other hand, the Assemblies of God, which has strongly maintained the teaching from its founding, had grown by 1992 to 2,170,890 members in the USA with an estimated worldwide constituency of 25 million members.

Even more striking is a comparison between the worldwide constituencies of the Holiness churches that led the opposition to the initial evidence position early in the century as opposed to the classical Pentecostal churches. According to David Barrett, by 1992 the anti-Pentecostal Holiness churches numbered 5.4 million in the world in contrast to 205 million denominational Pentecostals. And that is not to mention the independent and charismatic Pentecostals in the mainline churches. Altogether these groups numbered some 420 million in 1992, or 24.5 percent of all the world's Christians. Indeed, by the 1990's the Pentecostals had become the second largest family of Christians in the world, exceeded only by the Roman Catholic Church.⁶²

Significant as it is, I think that the issue of evidential tongues cannot be solved by biblical and systematic theology alone. Menzies recognizes the limitations of both in another work.⁶³ As a New Testament exegete he limits himself to the systematization of biblical data. He is not expected to go into the realm of the entire epistemology of the Pentecostal experience. Menzies should be respected for his acknowledgment of his limitations.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Menzies' theological distinction between salvation in Christ and Spirit-baptism raises important questions for us as we re-examine the Evangelical understanding of salvation in light of the Catholic experience of baptism in the Spirit. As we have noted, Catholics have also experienced the Spirit in Pentecostal power, largely

due to their openness and sense of expectation. Menzies notes that the biblical call to anticipate the "gift" of Spirit is maintained in the Pentecostal distinctive on tongues.⁶⁵ The factor of expectation that he links with "evidential tongues" is noteworthy. Does this mean that Catholics who speak in tongues have also experienced prophetic power to bear witness of Christ? Do they not also live with this same sense of expectation that the Spirit will be there in time of need? Can they not also win their neighbors to Christ, just as the Evangelicals and Pentecostals do?

Perhaps the work of William W. Menzies, which goes beyond the exegetical and synthetic levels of scriptural interpretation, can help explain the similar experiential patterns of the Pentecostals and Catholics. W. Menzies seeks to locate the key questions of exegesis, theology and experience in the Pentecostal interpretation of Acts.⁶⁶ Accordingly, he speaks of three levels of interpretation. He presents the "inductive level" as involving the exegetical-biblical study of Acts; the "deductive level" pertains to the realm of systematic theology; and the "verificational level" deals with personal experience.⁶⁷ Here W. Menzies calls for a synthesis of the exegetical, doctrinal and applicational layers of analysis.⁶⁸ Since Kitano notes that here in the Philippines the "spontaneous ecumenicity" of the Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals in Charismatic services is rooted in experience and not necessarily theology,⁶⁹ should not Pentecostals be willing to approach the Catholics at the "verificational" level? The experience-verified theology of the Pentecostals seems to be an effective way to reach out to the Catholics. Like Du Plessis, Dionson, and Cruz, we can fellowship with the Catholics and yet not compromise, though we should change and grow with the Catholics since the Spirit of God is also at work in them.

The important missiological truth emerges that the gift of the Spirit is potentially available to everyone. God's promise to pour out the Spirit in the last days is not restricted by class, race, or gender. Thus anybody who would believe in Christ, regardless of whether he is a Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, or Pentecostal can be baptized in the Spirit. Consequently, we need to ask ourselves whether the distinction between salvation in Christ and baptism in the Spirit is theological, experiential or both. I believe the answer is both. We try to understand our experience in accordance with Evangelical hermeneutical tools, but we find ourselves experientially closer to the supernatural expectation and dynamic experience characteristic of many Catholics. This issue, which is not directly addressed in R. Menzies' article, should be addressed by Pentecostal thinkers in the Philippines. It might be a fruitful area to consider in the Filipino Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue.

CONCLUSION

R. Menzies' contributions to Pentecostal theology are invaluable. His approach, while perhaps still in need of refinement,⁷⁰ provides a strong basis for establishing the distinctive nature of Luke's pneumatology and the Pentecostal gift. His synthesis of the Lukan and Pauline perspectives on tongues enables him to maintain the biblical sense of expectancy for receiving the Spirit. Menzies, being a biblical exegete, limits himself to the New Testament data. Thus he is unable to address many issues pertaining to

glossolalia. His work, however, is an excellent way of looking at the question of evidential tongues in the New Testament. I suggest that he should dare to go to the experiential level of Pentecostal empowering, analyze Pentecostal experience, and integrate his findings here with his exegetical and theological conclusions.[71](#)

His work also represents a positive challenge to Asian Pentecostal scholars. His claim that the narrative of Luke-Acts possesses a distinctive theological viewpoint and a didactic intent is particularly instructive. Asians in general will readily accept his methodology and his conclusions with reference to Luke's story. Filipino Pentecostals will also benefit from his work.[72](#)

Menzies is probably unaware of how his work has influenced me in my own search for my identity as a Pentecostal working alongside my Evangelical brothers and sisters. He helped me shape my own Asian Pentecostal perspective as I reflected on my experience of conversion and Spirit-baptism. I believe that Menzies has a lot more to contribute to us here in Asia Pacific. I remember he used to say to us: "It has been said that the first truly indigenous Pentecostal theology will come from Latin America, and it will not have any footnotes. But I say to you the first truly indigenous Pentecostal theology will come from Asia, and it will have many footnotes!" Perhaps this kind of dialogue is just the beginning of the fulfillment of his prophecy.

Footnotes

1. As a personal colleague and friend of Bob Menzies, I would also like to reflect on his contributions to the shaping of my own thought as an Asian Pentecostal Christian.
2. Here, I am following the terminology of Menzies. On the one hand, the Pentecostals are those who believe that "baptism in the Spirit" is an experience "subsequent to" (if not chronologically, at least logically) salvation (conversion) in Christ and marked by "speaking in tongues", which serves as the "initial physical evidence" of this experience. On the other hand, the Evangelicals are those who believe that baptism in the Spirit is an initiatory experience, not separate from conversion, and not necessarily marked by glossolalia.
3. For a better understanding of Menzies' foundational views, see Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup. 54 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); cf. Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSup. 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).
4. I agree with R. P. Menzies, p. 120 of the current *AJPS* article, when he states:
...[D]rawing from the full scope of Luke's two-volume work, it focuses on the nature of Luke's pneumatology and, from this framework, seeks to understand the character of the Pentecostal gift. The judgment that the gift is distinct from conversion is rooted in the gift's function: it provides power for witness, not justification or cleansing. The universal character of the gift, established in Luke's narrative rather than historical precedent, is the basis for its normative character. I would suggest this sort of approach, which actually follows Dunn's methodology (and that of modern Evangelicalism) in a consistent manner, enables us to articulate in a convincing manner a fully Pentecostal theology.
5. For a fuller treatment of the relationship of the Evangelical hermeneutic with the Pentecostal interpretation of Luke-Acts, see Robert P. Menzies, "Coming to Terms With an Evangelical Heritage," in *Contemporary Issues in Pentecostal Theology*, APTS First Annual Pentecostal Lectureship Series (Baguio, Philippines: APTS Press, 1993).
6. See Robert P. Menzies, "The Distinctive Character of Luke's Pneumatology," *Paraclete* 25 (1991), pp. 17-30, for a discussion of the thesis that Luke and Paul have different theological perspectives.
7. See also Robert P. Menzies, "Luke and the Spirit: A Reply to James Dunn," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4 (1994), pp. 115-38; cf. James D. G. Dunn, "Baptism in the Spirit: A Response to Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993), pp. 3-27.
8. This concern is felt deeply by Menzies. Since the emergence of the Third Wave, a "sub-group within Evangelicalism," the differences between Evangelicals and Pentecostals have narrowed. Robert P. Menzies, "A Pentecostal Perspective on Signs and Wonders," *Pneuma* 17 (1995), pp. 265-78, interacts with Third Wave perspectives. He describes how Third Wavers maintain their Evangelical perspective on baptism in the Spirit as an element of regeneration. Hence, Menzies seeks to show how Pentecostal theology might assist these Evangelicals, who have experienced the Spirit's enabling, as they seek to ground their experience in the scriptures.

9. See also Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 104, for the concern that Pentecostal exegetes operate in a manner which Evangelicals will "find...at least viable, if not always compelling."
10. Menzies, pp. 177f., under, "The 'Intention to Teach' Fallacy," notes that both Pentecostals and Evangelicals fail to recognize that the issue of evidential tongues must be treated as a question of systematic theology.
11. For further treatment of the issue of tongues in Paul and Luke see Robert P. Menzies, "Coming to Terms with an Evangelical Heritage-Part 2: Pentecostals and Evidential Tongues," *Paraclete* 28 (1994), pp. 1-10. See also the expansion of the preceding article in chs. 13 and 14 of R. Menzies, *Empowered*, pp. 244-57.
12. In another article, "Coming to Terms with an Evangelical Heritage-Part 1: Pentecostals and the Issue of Subsequence," *Paraclete* 28 (1994), p. 24, Menzies argues, with reference to the works of H. Gunkel, E. Schweizer, D. Hill, G. Haya-Pratts and M. Turner, that Luke's pneumatology is different from that of Paul's. Thus, Menzies sets the agenda for Pentecostals and Evangelicals alike: "The real issue centers not on hermeneutics and historical precedent, but rather on exegesis and the nature of Luke's pneumatology."
13. Cf. Robert P. Menzies, "Spirit-Baptism and Spiritual Gifts," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. W. Ma and R. Menzies, JPTSup. 11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 48-59.
14. Simon Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia, or Making Sense of the Initial 'Evidence'," in *Pentecostalism in Context*, pp. 82-83 n. 12, also raises this issue:
Given the preponderance of prophetic utterances in Luke-Acts, it would seem equally, if not more, plausible to infer prophecy as initial evidence. Menzies' preference for tongues because of its 'unusual' character (*Empowered*), p. 251) seems to be going beyond legitimate inference.
15. Chan, p. 83, points out that the question of tongues in relation to the Pentecostal claim should be addressed in terms that go "beyond biblical and systematic theology to larger philosophical considerations which integrate Pentecostal doctrine with Pentecostal religious experience."
16. This point of view is the basic assumption of Menzies' entire work on Lukan Pneumatology. His doctoral dissertation, which was written at Aberdeen University and under I. H. Marshall, has documented and established that Luke's understanding of the Spirit is basically that of Judaism. The Spirit in Luke-Acts is the Spirit of prophecy. Menzies also highlights in the same seminal work published as a monograph that, in Luke's perspective, the Pentecostal gift is universally available to the disciples of Jesus and has eschatological significance. See Part 1 and 2 of R. Menzies, *Development*, for a thorough presentation using primary sources.
17. See Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio, Philippines: APTS Press, 1995), pp. 79-98, for his discussion of the New Testament personalities who encountered the Spirit. Luke describes them as being filled with the Spirit. Stronstad, p. 98, concludes that the filling of the Spirit refers to the characterization of a prophetic role or an expression of "prophetic speech."
18. See R. Menzies, *Empowered*, pp. 250-51.
19. R. Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 251, contends that "tongues-speech uniquely 'fits the bill' because of its intrinsically demonstrative character." He notes that in Acts 2:4-5, 17-20; 10:46, 45-48 the manifestation of tongues is compatible with Luke's pneumatological outlook in general. He also asserts that the "emphasis on the sign value of tongues-speech is rooted in Luke's prophetic pneumatology." Does this not, however, open up the possibility that both tongues and prophecy - both are forms of Spirit-inspired speech - might serve as the accompanying sign of Spirit-baptism? In Menzies' perspective, the pneumatology of Luke-Acts suggests that every inspired speech is prophetic, whether tongues or intelligible prophesies. Tongues, as a kind of prophetic manifestation, fits into the larger category of Spirit-inspired speech. Cf. Part II of R. Menzies, *Empowered*.
20. A Pentecostal apology is well represented in the classic work of Carl Brumback, "*What Meaneth This?": A Pentecostal Answer to a Pentecostal Question* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947).
21. A good book representing the Pentecostal defense of tongues is Robert Chandler Dalton, *Tongues Like As of Fire: A Critical Study of Modern Tongue Movements in the Light of Apostolic and Patristic Times* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1945).
22. Note the classic work of James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), and the issues raised by Gordon D. Fee, "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent-A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. R. P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), pp. 118-32.
23. A good example of this debate is the discussion of Menzies with M. Turner concerning the nature of the Spirit's work in Luke-Acts. Here Menzies continues to maintain that the Spirit in Luke-Acts is basically a prophetic Spirit and that "miraculous activity" is more loosely connected to the Spirit than "inspired speech." Menzies insists that the Spirit is the sole origin of prophetic activity, while *dunamis* is used as an important qualifying term with reference to miracles. See Robert P. Menzies, "Spirit and Power in Luke-Acts: A Response to Max Turner," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 49 (1993), pp. 11-20.
24. See also Fee, *Gospel*, pp. 96-98, 110.
25. Hence, Fee's critique of our Pentecostal method of interpretation is significant. His analysis of our position as an insider helps us to listen, change, and grow; but not compromise our distinctive.
26. Fee, *Gospel*, p. ix, negatively remarks:
...I am convinced the present generation of Pentecostals has almost altogether abandoned its historic roots.... When the Pentecostals joined the National Association of Evangelicals, an erosion took place in the area of church and ministry that is bidding fair to destroy the very thing that God the Holy Spirit created in the first place.
27. Daniel L. Espiritu, "A Case For Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutical Description" (MA Thesis, Baguio, Philippines: Saint Louis University, 1997), p. x, finds that:
Underlying Filipino conservative Evangelical hermeneutics are some philosophical presuppositions inherited from Western Evangelicals. In addition to presuppositions, religious aims direct Evangelical hermeneutics. Furthermore, the investigation revealed that Evangelicals study the Bible with their concerns in view; they always attempt to mediate the texts with the present questions and problems.

28. Cf. Emerito P. Nacpil, "The Critical Asian Principle," in *What Asian Christians Are Thinking*, ed. Douglas J. Elwood (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1976), pp. 3-6.
29. "The Task of Theology in the Asian Churches," in *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), p. vii.
30. It is sad to observe that the classic work of W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1972), pp. 66-67, has "very little" to say about the Pentecostals in Asia.
31. Wonsuk Ma, "Toward an Asian Pentecostal Theology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1 (1998), p. 28.
32. John C. England, "Doing Christian Theology in Asian Ways," in *Doing Christian Theology in Asian Ways*, eds. Alan J. Torrance and Salvador T. Martinez, ATESEA Occasional Papers 12 (Singapore: ATESEA, 1993), pp. 66-67.
33. See Yusak Tridarmanto, "Using Folklore as a Way of Doing Theology," in *Doing Christian Theology in Asian Ways*, pp. 12-23. See also Ian S. Williams, "Doing Theology With Asian Folk Resources," in *Doing Theology with Cultures of Asia*, ed. Yeow Choo Lak, ATESEA Occasional Papers 6 (Singapore: ATESEA, 1988), pp. 110-15.
34. Cf. Archie C. C. Lee, "Prophetic and Sapiential Hermeneutics in Asian Ways of Doing Theology," in *Doing Christian Theology in Asian Ways*, pp. 1-3, as he deals with the issue of "text, context and hermeneutics" in an Asian setting.
35. Cf. See how Fee, *Gospel*, pp. 100-104, critically assesses his dialogue with William Menzies and Roger Stronstad concerning the issue of Lukan narrative as "didactic." This shows how western Pentecostals are engrossed with the issue of "Lukan intentionality" in relation to the Pentecostal claim. This concern has been inherited by Asian Pentecostal thought. R. Menzies has entered in and contributed to this same dialogue. Asian Pentecostals should observe and learn from this kind of dialogue. Nevertheless, Asian Pentecostals might constructively choose to pursue another direction as they seek to articulate a Pentecostal theology.
36. Fee, *Gospel*, pp. xi-xii.
37. The theological perspective of the Third Wave Movement is clearly represented in Gary S. Greig and Kevin N. Springer, eds., *The Kingdom and the Power: Are Healing and the Spiritual Gifts Used by Jesus and the Early Church Meant for the Church Today?* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993).
38. See for example Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Manila: OMF Literature, 1986).
39. Cf. Ma, pp. 26ff.
40. In Yeow Choo Lak's "Preface" to John C. England and Alan J. Torrance, eds., *Doing Theology with the Spirit's Movement in Asia*, ATESEA Occasional Papers 11 (Singapore: ATESEA, 1991), p. vi. See also the fine articles in this particular volume.
41. Nacpil, "The Critical Asian Principle," p. 5; cf. Gerald H. Anderson, "Introduction," in *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*, pp. 3-9, for his discussion of the trend in Asian theology to be relevant to the pertinent issues of the region.
42. Cf. Koichi Kitano, "Spontaneous Ecumenicity Between Catholics and Protestants in the Charismatic Movement: A Case Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, Manila: Centro Escolar University, 1981), p. 30.
43. The anti-Pentecostal/Charismatic attitude of the NACE is illustrated by the January-February 1995 issue of the *Evangelical Life International Magazine*. It is ironic, however, that the front-page feature story entitled, "Heaven's Gardener," treats the popular Pentecostal radio evangelist, Rev. Proceso S. Marcelo. Whether the editorial staff of the magazine were making a mockery, or whether they simply did not know that Rev. Marcelo of the *Hardin ng Panalangin* radio program was a *bona fide* Assemblies of God minister is hard to judge. The three primary works written against tongues which appear in this issue are that of Gadiel T. Isidro, "Tongues Have Ceased," pp. 9-11; Merle R. Ruth, "The Gift of Tongues and Its Supposed Reappearance," pp. 12-15; and Fred G. Saure, "Speaking in Tongues: Three Positions," pp. 16-19. These disappointing articles miss the pertinent issues raised by the current Pentecostal/ Charismatic revival in the Philippines.
44. Kitano, p. 29, notes that "[t]he term, Evangelicals, refers to those Protestants who: repudiate Roman Catholic polity, liturgies, piety, and doctrine, and at least used to regard the Roman Catholic Church as the Anti-Christ...."
45. Kitano, p. 29. Note Kitano's thorough sociological research concerning Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants and Classical Pentecostals in the Charismatic movement in the Philippines in the 1970s.
46. See chapter 5 of Kitano, pp. 202-20.
47. Kitano, pp. 202-20.
48. Kitano, p. 231.
49. See Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation: 1920-1965," in *Pentecostalism in Context*, pp. 144ff, for his assessment of the Assemblies of God's attempt to be fully accepted by the Evangelicals and their repudiation of the effective ministry of Du Plessis in bringing the Pentecostal message to non-Evangelicals.
50. See Russell P. Spittler, "Du Plessis, David Johannes (1905-87)," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. S. M. Burgess, G. B. McGee and P. H. Alexander (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 252-53.
51. William W. Menzies, "Reflections of a Pentecostal at the End of the Millennium: An Editorial Essay," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1 (1998), p. 11.
52. Vinson Synan, "A Tribute to Mr. Pentecost," *Charisma* 12 (April 1987), p. 22.
53. David J. Du Plessis as told to Bob Slosser, *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1977), p. 245. Killian McDonnell, a Roman Catholic priest and theologian, quoted by Synan, p. 23, states: "(Du Plessis') life is a witness that ecumenism means change, but it does not mean compromise. He prayed, he learned, he grew, he changed, but he did not compromise. We praise the Lord for the life and witness of this small giant."
54. See Spittler, p. 252; also Synan, p. 23.
55. See Kitano, pp. 193-201.
56. See Kitano, pp. 232-34.

57. I have spoken with Rev. Dionson concerning his ministry in Cebu and his work among the Catholics on several occasions.
58. See Kitano, p. 40. I have heard reports concerning Rev. Cruz' ministry among the Catholics.
59. Cf. Jerry L. Sandidge, "Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue: A Contribution to Christian Unity," *Pneuma* 7 (1985), pp. 41-60.
60. Kitano, pp. 238-39.
61. Emerito P. Nacpil, "Philippines: A Gospel for the New Filipino," in *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*, p. 117.
62. See Vinson Synan, "The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence," *World Pentecost* 52 (Spring 1997), pp. 9-10, 15-17.
63. Synan, "The Role of Tongues," pp. 16-17.
64. R. Menzies, *Empowered*, pp. 244-55.
65. R. Menzies, *Empowered*, pp. 244-55.
66. See R. Menzies, pp. 120-21 for his discussion of "The Synthetic Task." He points out that the doctrine of "evidential tongues" does "retain a biblical sense of expectancy." See also pp. 122-23 for his "Conclusion: A Strategy for the Future."
67. William W. Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology: An Essay on Hermeneutics," in *Essays on Apostolic Themes: Studies in Honor of Howard M. Ervin*, ed. Paul Elbert (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), pp. 1-14.
68. W. Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," pp. 4-14.
69. W. Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," pp. 4-14.
70. See Kitano, pp. 1-5, 13-14, 28, 80-86, 235-239, etc.
71. A thorough critique of R. Menzies' thesis, which views Luke's pneumatology in terms of prophetic empowering, has been presented by Max Turner, "The Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Support or a Challenge to Classical Pentecostal Paradigms?" *Vox Evangelica* 27 (1997), pp. 75-101. Against R. Menzies, Turner argues that the "soteriological" and "ethical" dimension of the Spirit is included in the "prophetic" character of Luke's pneumatology. Turner, following James Dunn, affirms that Luke links the Spirit to "a theologically unified conversion-initiation complex." Thus, he finds no support in Luke-Acts for the Pentecostal understanding of baptism in the Spirit as an experience subsequent to conversion.
72. See for example W. Menzies, "The Methodology," pp. 1-14, who highlights the "verificational" or experiential layer of interpretation. For Pentecostals, the issue of evidential tongues is not only a biblical doctrine, but also an experiential phenomenon.
73. Three recent theses produced by Filipino Pentecostals build upon the work of R. Menzies. See Joseph Rommel L. Suico, "A Strategy of Social Action: A Filipino Pentecostal Perspective" (Th.M. thesis, Baguio, Philippines: Asia Graduate School of Theology, 1993); Nelson P. Estrada, "A Redaction Critical Study on the Relationship of Spirit, Proclamation, and Miracle-Working Power in Luke-Acts" (Th.M. thesis, Manila: Asia Graduate School of Theology, 1994); Roli G. dela Cruz, "Anointed to Proclaim Christ: The Implications of Luke's Use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 for the Eschatological Mission of the Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God" (Th.M. thesis, Baguio Philippines: Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, 1995).
74. This sentiment is well reflected in my "Anointed to Proclaim Christ."

A RESPONSE TO FRANK MACCHIA'S "GROANS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF TONGUES AS INITIAL EVIDENCE"1

Tan May Ling

[[HTTP://www.pts.edu/98-2/98-2-tan.htm](http://www.pts.edu/98-2/98-2-tan.htm)]

[Frank Macchia's paper](#) represents one of the growing efforts to articulate and refine the Pentecostal distinctive - initial evidence. I applaud his effort to develop a theology of initial evidence that goes beyond mere defense. A purely defensive apologetic is positionally constrictive to say the least. I heartily agree with him that we need to engage in creative theologizing from within the Pentecostals' own contextual reality that is passionate in our commitment to scripture and at the same time sensitive to the larger Christian community with whom we dialogue. Such theological humility is important. This would help to prevent doctrinal and experiential differences to disrupt our basic unity as the body of Christ. Since "tongues" is integral to our denominational self-understanding and religious life, we need to develop a sustainable theology of glossolalia. Only in this way can we recognize in the difference, the wealth and depth of the whole of our Christian reality and experience.

I am in general agreement with Macchia's position. What I intend to do by way of response is to highlight several related issues from the perspective of one who stands actively in both worlds - the academia and the ecclesia. The issues that I will be addressing are: 1) Disjunction between the academia and the ecclesia; 2) Credal clarity; and 3) Some comments on Macchia's proposal.

ISSUE 1: DISJUNCTION BETWEEN THE ACADEMIA AND ECCLESIA

My dual role as a teacher in a theological school and as a pastoral staff member in an urban church often exposes me to the disjunction between the academia and the ecclesia. First, Macchia's experience with his students at Southeastern College is not unique to him, but common to those in Pentecostal schools as well as in the churches.2 As he has noted, although there is a growing number of theological works in this area, they have not significantly impacted the understanding of the vast majority of Pentecostals. The question remains, why after decades of polemics, are our students still "mystified" about the meaning of our fundamental doctrine? I think one of the reasons is the fact of the disjunction between the academia and the ecclesia. This disjunction is two-pronged - academic debate and the lack of simple but skillful articulation for the general

congregation. For a start, many of the fine debates on this issue are done in the context of the academia. The intricate and complex exegetical, socio-psychological as well as theological arguments are appreciated and understood by the academia. But what of the ecclesia? Besides, whatever understanding is reached academically is seldom communicated to the church at large. Quite often what is done at the academic level remains a mystery to the ecclesia. Perhaps, this is due to our lack of ability to articulate theological arguments simply for the church community. As our students come from our churches, it is no wonder that the lack of understanding persists.

Another factor is that we are so accustomed to validating spiritual realities by experience that we find theologizing unfruitful. This kind of complacency within our tradition which views experience as more superior or spiritual militates against disciplined theologizing. Preferring instead a kind of experiential pragmatism, we are satisfied with our inherited creed because we have tasted it and know that it is real. The reality of our experience prevents us from checking this kind of subjectivistic hermeneutic. Moreover, theological arguments are often convoluted and dry, whereas the experience of glossolalia is so immediate, overpowering, unique and undeniably real that our pragmatism pushes us further away from theologizing. But experience without theology often ill-prepares us for a satisfying apologetic to those who do not adhere to this doctrine. As a consequence, our defense is built upon erroneous ideas and inadequate exegesis and theology. This makes our experience vulnerable to criticism. Having said this, it is important that we realize external criticisms should not set the agenda for our theologizing. If this experience is vital and integral to Spirit-baptism, then, we owe it to ourselves to reach for theological and verbal clarity. As Macchia comments, that doctrine provides the "grammar" for how we talk about our experience, which will also influence the experience and help preserve it as an enduring aspect of the community's religious life.³

There is a need not only for us to find conceptual tools to articulate more simply and clearly our theology of glossolalia, but also a need for the academia to work closely with the ecclesia. Since I am active at the pastoral level, I am frequently confronted by the request, "pray for me to speak in tongues" - such fixation on the consequence of Spirit-baptism reflects a truncated understanding of the Pentecostal faith prevalent in our churches. Unwittingly, tongues has become a status symbol of full spirituality for some. Even though we maintain that the Pentecostal faith is not a tongues movement, our pastoral encounters indicate that this fact has not gotten through.

My experience in both worlds help me to see the need for both the academia and the ecclesia to be involved in theologizing issues that are pertinent to our corporate identity as Pentecostals. Theologizing should not be the prerogative of the academia. It should be the privilege of the total community of God. There is a need for the Pentecostal community to integrate the conceptual and the experiential dimensions of our faith. It is crucial that we go beyond haphazard reflection to a conscious disciplined theologizing. This theologizing will help us in our quest for theological and verbal clarity.

If tongues is integral to our experience of Spirit-baptism, then we cannot allow it to be diluted into a mere experiential sentimentality. The fact that our confession is born of

deep experience does not preclude disciplined, self-critical thought. On the contrary, disciplined theologizing is critical to our religious life and denominational identity. A priori excision of disciplined theologizing brings with it a concomitant theological poverty. Experiential certitude undergirded by thought is the way to sustain a vibrant Pentecostal spirituality.

Dogmatism on the one extreme, abandonment of the practice of glossolalia on the other extreme, and the laissez-faire attitude in the middle, contribute further to this sad state of affairs. With each swing of the theological pendulum, our students and church members become casualties in the "pastoral and academic crossfires." Dealing with the living Spirit of God in experience is a difficult task because a metaxic tension always exists. When we have described all we know of this unique experience of glossolalia in the Spirit-baptism, there is always more than we can understand. None of our theological systems and fundamental truths can encompass the living variegated God. To try to maintain a creative tension between the reality and credibility of our experience and a humility and fairness to our non-Pentecostal faith community is no easy task. Such effort to hold the tension together is suspect. We need to rise above personalities and suspicion to pursue theological and verbal clarity that best express the reality of our experience. Simplistic thinking of the either-or type is inadequate for the task. Klyne Snodgrass powerfully cautions us to avoid the fanaticism of the extremes and the mediocrity of the middle of the road;⁴ for fanaticism tyrannizes and alienates, and mediocrity paralyzes creativity and clarity. These factors are fundamental and must be thoroughly dealt with as we develop a Pentecostal theology of glossolalia.

ISSUE 2: CREDAL CLARITY: THEOLOGICAL IMPASSE AND NON-CONSENSUS

Second, does our statement of faith clarify the complexity of Spirit-baptism and initial evidence satisfactorily?⁵ The fact that theological impasse exists with regard to this doctrine is indicative that we have not sufficiently clarified our creed. If this creed is really integral to our self-identity, then, credal clarity is absolutely critical. Do all of us within the larger Pentecostal community, and more specifically the Assemblies of God, understand our "creed" the same way? Evidently not.⁶ The challenge before us is to find verbal expression of this doctrine that will be both intelligible to the larger Christian community and faithful to the biblical revelation.

This lack of theological and verbal clarity prevents us from arriving at a consensus internally and presenting our Pentecostal distinctive intelligibly to the larger Christian community. Often what is presented is a caricature of our experienced reality that is "too deep for words." Misunderstandings and abuses follow. Gordon L. Anderson has identified some of the misunderstandings and abuses in his article.⁷ Thus, inevitably our creed comes under fire from those outside of the Pentecostal experience. The criticism that Pentecostals have turned "a spiritual phenomenon into a shibboleth of orthodoxy"⁸ is not without justification. A case in point is our statement of faith that baptism in the Holy Spirit is "witnessed by the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues."⁹ Macchia

evinces that the initial evidence doctrine was not voiced primarily in an effort to guarantee or prove the experience of Spirit-baptism, despite the usage of evidential language borrowed from empirical science.¹⁰ But do all of us understand the term "evidence" non-empirically? Or do some of us, in fact, put it forth as normative and definitive of Spirit-baptism? If we do, then, our position is assailable exegetically and empirically. The minute we try to objectify our claim in empirical categories, we are bound to meet with counter claims. Our exegetical support comes solely from the Acts narrative. Two out of five accounts of Spirit-baptism did not explicitly mention tongues. May we not infer from this ambiguity that there are other non-audio/visual "evidences" of Spirit-baptism? In this regard, Macchia has raised a series of pertinent questions that must not be ignored.¹¹ Apparently, we have not all understood the "creed" the same way. The disparity between our doctrine and praxis is vividly pointed out by W. G. MacDonald:

In the scant theological literature produced by classical Pentecostalism one can find a declaration such as this: "All believers have the Holy Spirit." This statement is all the more remarkable because in practice it is so little recognized and integrated with a total theological view. All too often the oral tradition seems to forget this basic doctrine and implies that one has not "received" the Spirit unless he has received the filling with the Spirit evidenced by glossolalia.¹²

The writings of Riggs, Synan and Hughes should serve as a caution for us.¹³ We need to ask ourselves whether we have clarified our fundamental truth adequately and clearly. If not, then, we need to work at reformulation. Reformulation does not necessitate that we abandon traditional formulation all together. Precisely because this experience is credible we need to reformulate to make it intelligible.

Pentecostals are particularly resistant to the call for reinterpretation and reformulation especially with regard to the normal/normative issue. This fear, I suggest, is unwarranted. The insistence of the Pentecostal on the normativity rather than the normalcy of tongues may be due to a logical confusion. Perhaps, we fear that by substituting the term "normal" for "normative," we will make this experience unnecessary or that we will cease to seek Spirit-baptism altogether. I think the term normal is an important concept. The normalcy of an event does not make the event itself unnecessary or unimportant. There is no causal connection between normalcy and the unnecessary. Normal does not make something unnecessary or less important. It is normal to go to bed at night and get up in the morning. Just because it is normal for us to wake up in the morning does not mean that it is now unnecessary for us to wake up. Our lived-reality in the everyday world contradicts this logic. Neither does normalcy eliminate expectancy. On the contrary, because it is normal, we expect it. Gordon Fee comments that "The Pentecostal sees speaking in tongues as a repeated pattern and has argued that it is the normal pattern."¹⁴ Fee has also ably argued that, "If Pentecostal may not say one must speak in tongues, he may surely say, why not speak in tongues? It does have repeated biblical precedent, it did have evidential value at Cornelius' household (Acts 10:45-46)...."¹⁵ This should be our theological posture.

Normalcy clarifies our position and experience better. To insist that glossolalia is normative to Spirit-baptism hinders receptivity. It produces an unnecessary psychological uptightness in the seekers. It also shifts the focus to the physical manifestation of tongues so much so that they forget the more important issue of Spirit-baptism. The normalcy term gives us leeway for embracing the ambiguity of the Acts narrative. Krister Stendahl has this to say:

But there is something in the gambling with the Spirit which lives on the principle, "Why not?" Instead of "Why?" That is the liberation that lies in the Spirit: to change the uptight why into a generous why not. That's the stance of the Spirit.[16](#)

I think this helps us to maintain more adequately a creative tension regarding the initial physical evidence phenomenon. And this tension is,

not like a tightrope where we must fear falling off either side...A more appropriate image is that of a stringed instrument. Properly attached at the two right places, the instrument can be played. If a string is left loose, music cannot be produced. If it is stretched too tightly, the string will break.[17](#)

In reformulation we are trying to encapsulate our unique experience of glossolalia - to make sense of that experience. Since all theology is provisional in nature we need to resist the temptation of making explicit what is implicit. A certain theological tentativeness is essential. I think the term "normal" provides for this tentativeness without eliminating the reality and repeatability of glossolalia in Spirit-baptism.

ISSUE 3: MACCHIA'S PROPOSAL

Finally, Macchia's proposal is a step forward. His proposal places glossolalia squarely within the larger terrain of Christian spirituality. In his proposal the term "sign" is preferred rather than "evidence," because it places us firmly in the scriptures and in dialogue with centuries of theological discussions of gifts and sacraments.[18](#) He sees the tongues of Pentecost as an awesome theophany of God's eschatological purpose. He proposes that the theological significance of tongues as initial evidence is found within the framework of ecumenical witness, "they function as the most striking and outstanding involvement of God in this corporate witness empowered in Spirit baptism."[19](#) Tongues also serve as an in-depth identification with suffering by pushing us beyond our own comfort zone into the vistas of realities greater than ourselves.[20](#) This understanding of tongues is full of significant implications. It goes beyond our narrow Pentecostal and often ego-centered emphasis on the purpose of tongues. Identification, solidarity, protest praxis, global and missionary vision are exciting and powerful concepts. They offer potential for a richer development of Pentecostal theology. However, Macchia did not develop them systematically nor satisfactorily. What is discussed is more the historical understandings of the Pentecostal position. He needs to go beyond establishing theological significance to justification - to fully grapple with the peculiar Pentecostal

insistence of the distinctive role of tongues, the ecstatic dimension of Spirit-baptism. It is here that I think Simon Chan's comments offer possibilities and compliment Macchia's discussion.[21](#)

We need a larger theological framework to validate our doctrine of initial evidence. How then, do we locate this concept theologically? Simon Chan suggests that "theologically tongues are best understood as denoting a certain kind of personal relationship that believers have with God."[22](#) He further comments that to locate the theology of glossolalia in the context of intimacy would then establish the necessary link of glossolalia as the sign of Spirit-baptism.[23](#) In this intimacy where,

relationship involving the soul and its God, at the deepest level of personal engagement in which the soul surrenders totally to the one who is all in all, a highly personalized kind of idiolect becomes not just one of the possible forms of expressions but the only appropriate form there is.[23](#)

Therefore, to raise the question of whether one must speak in tongues in order to be filled with the Spirit is misdirected. Language is the concomitance of intimacy as well as of ecstasy. But, we must recognize that language consists of the verbal and the non-verbal dimensions. Most of the time, encounters of intimacy and ecstasy naturally bring about a verbal outflow of the soul; but at times, only wordlessness seems to be an appropriate response to the awesome encounter. This is truer to the Acts narrative on Spirit-baptism.

I remember vividly my first experience of snow in Vancouver. We were driving to church on that Sunday morning when it snowed (three months after we arrived in Vancouver). We stopped the car and ran out to feel the snow. For those of us who had lived in the tropics all of our lives, this was an experience of a lifetime. The visual and physical impact of snow on my consciousness and body was so overpowering that all I could do was to make monosyllabic responses: "wow, wow, wow, ooh, wow." For that moment I was lost in the delight and wonder of this new experience. There was a deep sense of receptivity in my entire being. With hands outstretched as if in "total surrender," I enjoyed the exquisite sensation of falling snow flakes, all the time uttering the monosyllabic "wows". On the other hand, my husband, who was just as awed by the experience, was running around catching the falling snowflakes completely wordless, not uttering even a monosyllabic response. The sheer joy on his face was the only "evidence" of his awe. Perhaps, this personal illustration can help to serve as a conceptual tool to clarify our position without dogmatism. If we Pentecostals do believe that this experience is for all within the faith, then, we need to work at removing obstacles rather than posing hindrances.

By way of concluding my response I would like to emphasize again that theology is provisional in nature. We must resist the temptation to make what is implicit explicit. What we need is to embrace a theological posture of "why not?," rather than a formalized proposition declaring "must." I would also like to echo an "amen" to Macchia's conclusion,

After all, all doctrine is fallible and seeks to be accountable to the experience of the Spirit and to the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the Holy Scriptures. May all that we do or say continue to reflect this accountability in order to bring God glory.[25](#)

Footnotes

1. This response is based on an earlier version of Macchia's paper, and with the substantially revised nature of Macchia's present paper, which was not available to me, it is possible that some discussions may have become less relevant.
2. Frank Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words: Towards A Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence," p. 149.
3. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 168. (Page numbers refer to printed journal.)
4. Klyne Snodgrass, *Between Two Truths* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), p. 40.
5. The questions raised by Macchia (p. 172) are important for a well-developed Pentecostal theology.
6. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," pp. 151-56.
7. Gordon L. Anderson, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Initial Evidence, and a New Model," *Paraclete* (Fall 1993), pp. 1-4.
8. Jean-Daniel Plüss' critique quoted by Macchia, p. 154.
9. The Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths, 8
10. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 155.
11. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 172.
12. William G. MacDonald quoting and commenting on Ralph M. Riggs, *The Spirit Himself* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1949), p. 44 in "Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint" in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), p. 69.
13. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 155.
14. Gordon Fee, "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent - a Major problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics" in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, pp. 118-32.
15. Fee, "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent," p. 132.
16. Krister Stendahl, "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Ecumenical Observer," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, p. 207.
17. Snodgrass, *Between Two Truths*, p. 32.
18. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 153.
19. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 160.
20. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 164.
21. See Simon Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia, or Making Sense of the 'Initial Evidence'," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. W. Ma and R. Menzies, JPTSUP. 11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 80-95.
22. Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia," p. 84.

23. Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia," p. 86
24. Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia," p. 89.
25. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," p. 173.

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