

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

Five-year Index (1998-2002)

Volume 6, Number 1 (January 2003)

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

ISSN 0118-8534

Vol. 6, No. 1 (January 2003)

Editors

William W. Menzies and Wonsuk Ma

Editorial Board: Simon Chan (Trinity Theological College, Singapore), Paul Elbert (Church of God Theological Seminary, USA), Gordon D. Fee (Regent College, Canada), Robert P. Menzies (Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Philippines), Russell P. Spittler (Fuller Theological Seminary, USA), Vinson Synan (Regent University, USA), Yeow Choo Lak (Association of Theological Education in South East Asia, Philippines)

Editorial Assistance (for this issue): Kathy Baxter (proofreading), Noriyuki Miyake (subscription)

ASIAN JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL STUDIES is published twice per year (January and July) by the Faculty of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 377, Baguio City 2600, Philippines. Part or whole of the current and previous issues may be available through Internet (<http://www.apt.edu/ajps>). Views expressed in the *Journal* reflect those of the authors and reviewers, and not the views of the editors, the publisher or the participating institutions.

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BOOKS FOR REVIEW: Send to the *Journal* office.

CORRESPONDENCE: Subscription correspondence and notification of change of address should be sent to the subscription office or email to: Noriyuki Miyake (noriyuki_2002_99@yahoo.co.jp).

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Annual subscription rates including surface mail are: P200 for the Philippines; US\$10.00 for Asian countries; and US\$15.00 for other countries, including Australia and New Zealand. The new rates from the 2003 issues will be: P300 for the Philippines; US\$15.00 for Asian countries; and US\$20.00 for other countries. For more details, see the Subscription/Order form.

THIS PERIODICAL IS INDEXED in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, the *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*, *Religion Indexes: Ten Year Subset on CD-ROM*, and the *ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr., Chicago, IL 60606, E-mail: atla@atla.com, WWW: <http://www.atla.com/>.

Printed in the Philippines

Cover calligraphy © Shigeo Nakahara, 1997

POSTMODERNISM AND ASIAN PENTECOSTALS

Three years ago (Oct 1999), about one hundred delegates of the Asia Pacific Theological Association gathered in Sydney, Australia for its general assembly. Being a network among Pentecostal Bible schools and seminaries in Asia, the delegates represented around seventy schools throughout Asia and Pacific islands. Standing at the twilight of the new millennium, the excitement for the future was well blended with a sort of anxiety that all the delegates were sensing. Its Theological Commission undertook a series of group brainstorming workshop sessions to identify the top ten challenges that were in the minds of the Asian Pentecostal theological educators. To our surprise, the top agenda was “postmodernism,” way ahead of items like “poverty,” “Spirit baptism,” “globalization” and others. It amazed those who organized the sessions, partly because many of them came from schools in rural areas, islands and provinces. Many of them did not have any internet access, simply because that’s not there. Their students regularly worked in pig pans to supplement meager food supply of the school kitchens. I imagine that many of them had almost no idea what this monster of “postmodernism” was. (Even today, one of average intellect could be so confused by it, that he or she would not be much better off than one of a simple “ignorant” mind when it comes to postmodernism.) Personally, I have been wondering if the warning signal in the minds of those pre-millennium delegates and educators would really turn out to be true.

The current issue of the journal seems to prove this point. Postmodernism was not a topic on our original agenda (as you may remember that we are supposed to publish a special issue on “Japanese Pentecostalism,” which regrettably becomes a delayed promise). But two contributions (both by Asians) directly deal with the subject matter, while a few others, in the course of their discussion on spirituality, reckon with the postmodern context of our time, present engaging discussions. By the way, the link between postmodernism and spirituality appears to be more than casual, and Asian Pentecostalism will have to wrestle with these themes in the near future. Asian socio-religious

context provides more challenges and promises when it comes to spirituality.

The fourth annual meeting of the Asian Pentecostal Society has become an important part of this issue, as three of their presentations in Bangalore, India in August 2002 are included here. Indian Pentecostal colleagues have much to offer to the future of Asian Pentecostal theology.

The publication of the long awaited revised and expanded version of the *Dictionary of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan, 1988) has been finally available. (See a book review for this publication.) The Asian representation, although less than satisfactory, is a leap from the original version, and for this, Asian Pentecostals are grateful to the editors. The collection of papers presented during the Birmingham Conference on Asian Pentecostalism (Sept 2002) is about to appear in a book form. This may become the very first resource book for Asian Pentecostal studies. The upcoming International Symposium on Pentecostal Mission (Baguio, Philippines, Feb 2003) may produce more engaging reflections of Pentecostalism in various socio-cultural settings, while the long-planned scholarly session during the Pentecostal World Conference (Johannesburg, South Africa in Sept 2004) prepares to have a two-day conference on "Pentecostal Contextualization." It is encouraging that Pentecostal mission scholars are finally organizing themselves.

With these exciting developments, the *Journal* continues to commit itself to play an encouraging role to the emerging Asian Pentecostal minds. The first five-year index reveals God's marvelous hand upon the publisher, editors, editorial board and faithful subscribers. Thus, the editors register their praises and thanksgiving to the good Lord, and appreciation to the valuable contributors and supporters of the journal.

WMa

FEMINIST HERMENEUTICS AND
PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY:
THE CREATION NARRATIVE OF GENESIS AS A PARADIGM¹

Joseph Abraham

1. Preliminary Remarks

It is a great privilege to have been asked to read a paper at this fourth annual meeting of the Asian Pentecostal Society. Gone are the days when women were confined to the kitchen and assigned to perform domestic chores. Also gone are the times when only men were trained for the ministry of the church. This changing scenario necessitates the reconsideration of the role of women in church and ministry. One of the biggest and most controversial questions in the interpretation of the Old Testament concerns the question of the position of women in the church and society. Therefore, women began to question their role and function in church and society assigned to them by men. The result has been a re-examination of many biblical passages and a dynamic process of interpreting the scriptures from a feminist perspective, which has questioned and challenged many of the traditional male interpretations of the text.

The present influx of feminist materials itself shows how this topic has become important in biblical scholarship. For instance, in 1992, *The Women's Bible Commentary* was published by 41 American feminist scholars, almost all of whom are on the faculties of prominent universities and hold doctoral degrees in biblical and related fields. However, the *magnum opus*, *The Feminist Companion to the Bible* (Sheffield Academic Press, UK, 1993-97), a ten-volume work provides a work of an international flavor. A second series to the *Feminist*

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Fourth Annual Meeting of Asian Pentecostal Society at the Ecumenical Resource Center, United Theological College, Bangalore, India, August 2002.

Companion to the Bible are already on print (1998-). J. W. Rogerson one of the prominent Old Testament scholars rightly points out that “the future existence of Old Testament study depends upon how it reacts to the questions that are being put to it by liberation hermeneutics and the enterprise culture.”² In the same vein David Clines also shows that feminist criticism holds “great promise (or challenge) for biblical interpretation, as well as also for the other theological disciplines.”³ Therefore, in this paper I examine how feminist hermeneutics pose a challenge to Pentecostal spirituality.

2. Feminist Hermeneutics of the Bible

The proliferation of methods in biblical interpretation has become a notable trend in contemporary biblical scholarship. These trends have produced a climate that has been favorable to modern feminist readings of the Bible. For many feminist interpreters, the Bible the cornerstone of Judeo-Christian faith was born and bred in an androcentric and patriarchal culture. As a result they believe that the Bible has been used in the past and the present to legitimate subordinate roles of women in church and society. The feminist readings challenge traditional readings, finding male bias in much previous scholarship. Feminist readers ask how far the patriarchal texts (Bible) can be authoritative and normative in articulating the theology and practices of the church. So feminists are involved in offering alternative readings, either a non-sexist, egalitarian reading with an aim to depatriarchalize the text, or a “resistance reading,” that is, one which reads “against the grain” of the text. Hence feminist readings challenge the authority, canonicity, veracity and the normativity of the biblical texts because of their perceived patriarchal- androcentric orientation. Although feminists have evolved polyvalent approaches to reading the Bible feministically, the feminist debate is mainly centered on the emotive issue whether the biblical text is irredeemably patriarchal or unequivocally egalitarian. These two contrary views dominate

² J. W. Rogerson, “What Does it Mean to be Human? The Central Question of Old Testament Theology?” in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, JSOTS 87, eds. David J. A. Clines *et.al* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 285-98 (298).

³ D. J. A. Clines, “Possibilities and Priorities of Biblical Interpretation in an International Perspective,” *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993), pp. 67-87 (83).

contemporary feminist biblical scholarship. However, in the feminist interpretation of the text, the creation narrative in Genesis 1-3 has become the *locus classicus*.

3. Feminist Hermeneutical Methods

Although feminists utilize various hermeneutical methods, their individual hermeneutical strategies differ from one another. Their overall method is essentially that an individual's theological perspective on the biblical traditions determines his or her hermeneutical approach to the text. Some, for instance, presuppose that the Bible is permeated with patriarchy and therefore develop a rejectionist stance. On the other hand, some still believe that the Bible itself can offer a critique of patriarchal domination and hence develop a revisionary approach.

Since I think Carolyn Osiek's categorization of feminist hermeneutical alternatives is simplistic and inadequate to explain the complex nature of feminist hermeneutics,⁴ I will follow some of the present hermeneutical categories as used in the *Postmodern Bible* to bring all the feminist hermeneutical approaches together. Before turning to them, however, it is interesting to note that Jonathan Culler provides still another useful categorization of feminist criticism.⁵ He classifies the feminist reading process into three *levels* or *moments*. In the first level, the criticism is focused on the concern of the woman character and her experiences. The second level of feminist criticism aims "to make readers—men and women—question the liberating and political assumptions on which their reading has been based."⁶ In the third level women readers explore alternative readings. By and large these levels can align with our three categories.

⁴ She classifies feminist hermeneutical approaches under five categories as rejectionist, loyalist, revisionist, sublimationist and liberationist. See Carolyn Osiek, "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. A. Y. Collins (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 94-105 (97-105). For a recent different classification, see E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1992), pp. 20-50.

⁵ J. Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 43-64.

⁶ Culler, *On Deconstruction*, p. 51.

3.1 Hermeneutics of Recuperation

The Postmodern Bible says of this position: “[T]he hermeneutics of recuperation remains thoroughly invested in the economy of truth and offers no critique of the philosophical grounds of the Bible’s truth claims.”⁷ In this approach, feminist interpreters aim to recover the biblical texts from patriarchal mistranslations and misinterpretations. Through their rereading they attempt to “reclaim” the texts positive to women. Tribble, for instance, finds the “depatriarchalizing principle” at work in the scripture itself against the patriarchal culture. She writes: “I affirm that the intentionality of biblical faith, as distinguished from a general description of biblical religion, is neither to create nor to perpetuate patriarchy but rather to function as salvation for both women and men.”⁸ She has adapted the method of rereading to depatriarchalizing the text. So Tribble and others, such as Phyllis Bird, Joy Elasky Fleming, Mary Phil Korsak, Helen Schüngel–Straumann, Luise Schottroff, Mary Evans,⁹ Mary Hayter, and Grace Emmerson, have attempted to reread the famous texts used against women (Gen 1–3).

As part of the recuperative strategy, Tribble and some other feminists try to employ a hermeneutics of retrieval by which they want to bring into focus women role models from the Old Testament. J. Cheryl Exum was Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Boston College. At present she lectures in the Department of Biblical Studies at Sheffield University. She has adapted literary critical analysis in her feminist exegesis and has done a great deal of research on literary approaches to the Bible. Recognizing the prevailing patriarchal nature of the scripture, she brings out counter pictures through the process of close reading (e.g., the women of Exodus, Ruth, Esther and Judith). So, recognizing the prevailing patriarchal nature of the scripture, Exum provides “positive portrayals of women.”¹⁰ She writes: “Within the admittedly patriarchal

⁷ *Postmodern Bible*, p. 246.

⁸ Phyllis Tribble, “Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation,” *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 41 (1973), pp. 30-48 (31).

⁹ M. Evans, *Women in the Bible* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1983).

¹⁰ See J. Cheryl Exum, “You Shall Let Every Daughter Live: A Study of Exodus 1:8-2:10,” in *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics*, ed. M. A. Tolbert (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 63-82; Exum, “‘Mother in Israel’: A Familiar Figure Reconsidered,” in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. L. M. Russel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), pp. 73-85, cf. P. Tribble, “Bringing Miriam out of the Shadows,” *Bible Review* 5 (1989), pp. 14-25, 34.

context of the biblical literature, we find strong countercurrents of affirmation of women: stories that show women's courage, strength, faith, ingenuity, talents, dignity and worth."¹¹ Tribble aims to unearth the gynomorphic images to depict God in the Bible as a recuperative strategy. Phyllis A. Bird has also read many biblical texts from a feminist perspective. Though her perspective is feminist, her methodology is traditional historical criticism. In her works she attempts to recover the "hidden history of women." She has contributed many articles in the area of women's status in early Israel and their position in the Israelite cult.¹² Furthermore, Tribble has also attempted to "recover a neglected history" of abused women, recounting their "tales of terror *in memoriam*,"¹³ thereby offering a hermeneutics of remembrance.

3.2 Hermeneutics of Suspicion

If the hermeneutics of recuperation is text-affirming, the hermeneutics of suspicion "does not presuppose the feminist authority and truth of the Bible, but takes as its starting point the assumption that biblical texts and their interpretations are androcentric and serve patriarchal functions."¹⁴ However, Schüssler Fiorenza does not want to reject the Bible as a whole, since she thinks a "dualistic hermeneutical strategy" can be developed from the Bible. In other words, she locates two contradictory facts concerning women in the Bible. That is, on the

¹¹ J. C. Exum, "The Mothers of Israel: The Patriarchal Narratives from a Feminist Perspective," *Bible Review* 2 (1986), pp. 60-67 (60).

¹² See Phyllis A. Bird, "Images of Women in the Old Testament," in *The Bible and Liberation*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald (New York: Orbis, 1983), pp. 252-306; P. A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Gen. 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation," *Harvard Theological Review* 74 (1981), pp. 129-59; P. A. Bird, "'To Play the Harlot': An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), pp. 75-94; P. A. Bird, "The Place of Women in Israelite Cultus," in *Ancient Israelite Religion*, eds. Patrick D. Miller, Jr. et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 397-419.

¹³ P. Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary—Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (London: SCM, 1992, first published by Fortress in 1984); cf. J. C. Exum, "Murder They Wrote: Ideology and the Manipulation of Female Presence in Biblical Narrative," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 43 (1989), pp. 19-39.

¹⁴ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), p. 15; cf. Culler, *On Deconstruction*, p. 51.

one hand, the Bible has promoted patriarchal and androcentric values. On the other hand, “the Bible has also served to inspire and authorize women and other nonpersons in their struggles against patriarchal oppression.”¹⁵

Carol Meyers questions the Bible’s authority: “Like most scholars, I do not believe the texts are the direct word of God.... I believe it is a record of the religious beliefs developed by a society struggling to understand God and the world.”¹⁶ Yet she reads the text more positively.¹⁷ In a similar vein, Alice Laffey writes: “Since the biblical texts are historically conditioned and were produced by patriarchal society, they are patriarchal in character. They must, therefore, be approached with suspicion.”¹⁸ However, she finds that the Bible has liberation potential towards freedom and equality. Recognizing the texts’ patriarchal orientation, both Meyers and Laffey offer an egalitarian reading of the creation accounts using their social–scientific and literary methods respectively. Meyers looks behind the text and unearths the social world to locate the biblical woman. Laffey, however, finds a

¹⁵ E. Schüssler Fiorenza, “Transforming the Legacy of The Woman’s Bible,” in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, vol. 1, ed. Schüssler Fiorenza (London: SCM, 1994), pp. 1-24 (5).

¹⁶ William Sasser, “All about Eve,” *Duke Magazine*, Sept-Oct 1994, pp. 2-7 (3).

¹⁷ See Meyers, “‘To Her Mother’s House’: Considering a Counterpart to the Israelite *Bêt ‘ab*,” in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis* (Norman K. Gottwald Festschrift), eds. D. Jobling et al. (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 1991), pp. 39-51; “Of Drums and Damsels: Women’s Performance in Ancient Israel,” *Biblical Archaeology* 54 (1991), pp. 16-27; “Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs,” *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986), pp. 209-23; “Returning Home: Ruth 1:8 and the Gendering of the Book of Ruth,” in *A Feminist Companion to Ruth*, pp. 85-114; “The Hannah Narrative in Feminist Perspective,” in *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*, pp. 93-104; “Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible,” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, eds. C. A. Newsome et al. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox; London: SPCK, 1992), pp. 244-51; “The Creation of Patriarchy in the West: A Consideration of Judeo-Christian Tradition,” in *Foundations of Gender Inequality*, ed. A. Zagarell (Kalamazoo: New Issues Press, 1994), pp. 1-36; “Women and the Domestic Economy of Early Israel,” in *Women’s Earliest Records: From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia*, ed. B. S. Lesko, *Brown Judaic Studies* 166 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 265-81.

¹⁸ Alice Laffey, *Wives, Harlots and Concubines: The Old Testament in Feminist Perspective* (London: SPCK, 1990), p. 2. Originally, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

liberation perspective against patriarchy operating within the scripture itself.¹⁹

3.3 Hermeneutics of Resistance

The third approach is an ideological reading, “a deliberate effort to read against the grain—of texts, of disciplinary norms, of traditions, of cultures.”²⁰ In other words, “[r]esistance readings demonstrate the fundamental openness of texts and how meaning cannot be determined absolutely (that is, meaning cannot be decontextualized) but is itself resistant to ultimate or final interpretation.”²¹ In the context of feminist criticism Judith Fetterly writes: “The first act of a feminist critic is to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and, by this refusal to assent, to begin the process of exorcising the male mind that has been implanted in us.”²² Many, perhaps most postmodern feminist readings may be categorized as a hermeneutics of resistance. In this reading strategy, feminists apply various hermeneutical methods such as structuralism, literary criticism, semiotics, narratology, intertextuality, psycho-analytic criticism, reader-response criticism, deconstruction and even in some cases certain eclectic methods combining two or more methods together.

The feminist readings of Mieke Bal, Ilana Pardes, Ilona Rashkow, Danna Nolan Fewell, Pamela J. Milne, Athalya Brenner all project to some degree or other a kind of resistant reading. All these feminists analyze the Hebrew Bible as a thoroughly patriarchal construct, and developing a strategy of response and resistance, and in some cases counter-reading. J. C. Exum argues: “a feminist critique must, of necessity, read against the grain.”²³ Like Bal, she approaches the text as a “cultural artifact,” not as a religious object. Therefore, her “intention in this book is neither to recover affirmations of women in the Bible nor to

¹⁹ Laffey, *Wives, Harlots and Concubines*.

²⁰ *Postmodern Bible*, p. 275.

²¹ *Postmodern Bible*, p. 302.

²² J. Fetterly, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. xxii, as cited by Culler, *On Deconstruction*, p. 53.

²³ J. C. Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*, JSOTS 163 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), p. 11.

attack the Bible as a sexist document.”²⁴ Instead, she attempts to “construct feminist (sub)versions of biblical narratives.” Moreover, most of the feminists for instance consider “interpretation to be a *reader’s response*, necessarily based on the *reader’s* personal input, assumptions, and biases.”²⁵

Danna Nolan Fewell, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Perkins School of Theology, Texas, has a keen interest in reading Old Testament narrative texts in literary perspective. Throughout her work one can observe the ideological dimension of narratological interpretation. She has written most of her writings with David M. Gunn in the feminist area.²⁶

Athalya Brenner writes at length as a Jewish woman both in Hebrew and in English. She examines the social roles of Israelite women by a literary narrative approach. Her study reveals the various roles taken by women in the Old Testament period. She concludes that women always had a secondary status in Israelite society.²⁷

²⁴ Exum, *Framged Women*, p. 9.

²⁵ I. Rashkow, *The Phallacy of Genesis: A Feminist–Psychoanalytic Approach* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), p. 110; emphasis original.

²⁶ Danna Nolan Fewell, “Feminist Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Affirmation, Resistance, and Transformation,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 39 (1987), pp. 39-65; D. N. Fewell and David M. Gunn, “Controlling Perspectives: Women, Men, and the Authority of Violence in Judges 4 and 5,” *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 56 (1990), pp. 389-411; D. N. Fewell and D. M. Gunn, “Tipping the Balance: Sternberg’s Reader and the Rape of Dinah,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991), pp. 193-211; D. N. Fewell and D.M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible’s First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993); D. N. Fewell, “Reading the Bible Ideologically: Feminist Criticism,” in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Interpretations and Their Applications*, eds. S. L. Mckenzie et al. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), pp. 237-251; D. N. Fewell and D. M. Gunn, “Genesis 2-3: Women, Men and God,” in *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 194-205.

²⁷ See Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985). See also A. Brenner, “Who’s Afraid of Feminist Criticism? Who’s Afraid of Biblical Humour? The Case of the Obtuse Foreign Ruler in the Hebrew Bible,” *JSOT* 63 (1994), pp. 38-55.

4. Feminist Hermeneutics and Pentecostal Spirituality

One may recall Tertullian's famous question "what does Athens do with Jerusalem?", when we discuss 'Pentecostal Spirituality'. How does feminist hermeneutics affect Pentecostal spirituality? Before we proceed, we need to have some understanding about the concept 'spirituality', especially the Pentecostal spirituality.

The term "spirituality" has a wide range of meanings in all religions. However, the term "spirituality" does not occur generally in biblical or theological dictionaries. Broadly speaking, one's spirituality has something to do with God. M. D. Macchia defines spirituality as "our way of relating to both God and the world".²⁸ He has a healthy approach to spirituality as he brings together both vertical and horizontal shades of spirituality. What is Pentecostal spirituality? Is that different from Christian spirituality? I would say, Pentecostal spirituality shares many traits of Christian spirituality as Pentecostalism is thoroughly rooted in the historic faith. However, Pentecostal spirituality is distinct as it is the spirituality of the Spirit of God. In other words, the Spirit of God is believed to be operational in every sphere of their spirituality. According to one recent definition, Pentecostal spirituality is "a particular configuration of beliefs, practices and sensibilities that put the believer in an *on-going relationship to the spirit of God*."²⁹ According to R. P. Spittler, a renowned Pentecostal Theologian, Pentecostal spirituality consists of five "implicit values." They are: individual experience, orality, spontaneity, otherworldliness and commitment to biblical authority.³⁰ I will not attempt to deal with every area of Pentecostal

²⁸ See F. D. Macchia, *Spirituality and Social Liberation: The Message of the Blumhardts in the Light of Wuerttemberg Pietism with Implications for Pentecostal Theology* (Dublin, IN: Print Press, 1990), p. 4. R. P. Spittler, "Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. S. Burgess et al (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), pp. 804-805 defines spirituality as "a cluster of acts and sentiments that are informed by the beliefs and values that characterize a specific religious community."

²⁹ Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, JPTS 17 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 218. Emphasis mine.

³⁰ Spittler, "Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic," p. 806: For Pentecostals "the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Pet 1:21)." In the same vein, D. E.

spirituality from feminist hermeneutics. However, the Bible as the word of God and its authority has been challenged again and again by feminist interpreters of the Bible. As a Pentecostal academic, I strongly believe that our whole-hearted commitment to the word of God and the present appropriation and actualization of its message through the illumination of the Holy Spirit makes us distinct from other segments of the Christian community³¹. Therefore, we should not seek after scholastic credibility or academic respectability at the expense of our commitment to the word of God and our understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. However, in modern feminist hermeneutics, the foundational value of Pentecostal spirituality (i.e., the Bible and its authority) is at stake.

I will start with a couple of caveats. Although I am sympathetic to many of the feminist concerns, as a Pentecostal academic, I am committed to defending the important aspects of our spirituality noted above. Hence, I will respond to the feminist challenges critically as a Pentecostal scholar. Contrary to many feminist readings, I would argue that the text does not address the question of egalitarianism or androcentrism, even though the context in which the text emerged is patriarchal. A better question is whether the creation text is positive to women in general or not. Therefore, the problem does not lie with the text *per se*. In my view, the biblical texts can be made positive to women if we recognize the effect on interpretation of cultural studies that lean towards male domination, in the same way that we recognize and critique other cultural tendencies towards oppression, such as slavery and racism.

5. Genesis Creation Narrative in Feminist Hermeneutics

The creation narrative of Genesis 2-3 is the important foundational text within the Old Testament which deals with the creation of humanity. The apostles, church fathers, reformers, theologians and other Bible

Albrecht also locates six characteristic qualities of Pentecostal spirituality such as “spontaneous leadership, human experiencing of God in worship, the present reality of the Word of God, exercising the gifts of the spirit, ministry and mission. See Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, p. 220.

³¹ For the role of the Holy Spirit in hermeneutical process, see Clark. H. Pinnock, “The Work of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), pp. 3-23. He writes: “The Spirit is active in the life of the whole Church to interpret the biblical message in languages today. He actualizes the word of God by helping us to restate the message in contemporary terminology and apply it to fresh situations” (p. 16).

interpreters have used these texts to elucidate the man-woman relationship and their separate roles and place in the church and society. Yet the same text has been used by different interpreters to advocate the inferior, the superior and the egalitarian status of woman. This text has been one of the most interpreted, reinterpreted and misinterpreted texts within the Old Testament. Even after centuries of interpretation, analyses and readings of it are numerous. So there is no wonder that the creation narrative of Genesis 2-3 has now become one of the most frequent areas of feminist investigation.

I will deal with only one feminist reading as a paradigm. Let us see how Carol Meyers treats the creation narrative in particular. I do not intend to offer all aspects of her interpretation; rather how she interprets the account of human rebellion and sin and the woman's part in the fall in Gen 3. In line with her hermeneutical stance, she wants to negate the notion of sin in the narrative. To her, the concept of sin and suffering is a later creation. She lists the following reasons for this:

- 1) There is no explicit reference to sin in the narrative.
- 2) The aetiological nature of the narrative reduces the human theme of disobedience.
- 3) There is no vocabulary of sin.
- 4) The *genre* of the narrative deals with daily living.³²

According to Meyers the biblical narrative in Genesis 2-3 is myths of origins, and “[t]he characters [man and woman] in the creation story present the *essential* (archetypal) features of human life, not the *first* (prototypical) humans in a historical sense.”³³

We must now ask, however, whether this view can be substantiated. Can the text be read convincingly without recourse to the ideas of sin and rebellion? We begin by examining Gen 2:16–17.

And the Lord commanded the man, “you may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (NRSV).

It seems to me that the introduction of the intensive verb *zwh* (“to command”) is very significant here. In God's dialogue with man and

³² C. Meyers, “Gender Roles and Genesis 3:16 Revisited,” in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, pp. 118-141 (126-28).

³³ Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, pp. 80-81.

woman in chapter 3 the commonly used verb *'amr* (“to say”) is used. The verb *zwh* is used to give a command or a charge in most of the occasions in the Old Testament. So from the very use of the verb it is quite clear that it was an injunction, charge, order or a commandment given to the man concerning the way of life in the garden. After disobedience, the Lord God interrogates the couple repeating the same verb asking, “Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?” In the expulsion scene the verb is repeated again in verse 17.

By eating the fruit both the man and the woman had disobeyed God. It was not at all an ordinary life statement concerning “eating” in a highland setting. Here Meyers’ explanation of the term “eating” is only a sociological nuance of the term without considering its meaning in a wider context of the text. The use of the verb *t'akl* with the permanent prohibition *al* (“Thou shall not eat,” KJV) shows the same seriousness as in the case of the Decalogue. It is also important to note that the verbs in both verses are given in infinitive absolute forms emphasizing the action.

In the serpent’s dialogue with the woman, both the serpent and the woman use the non-intensive and ordinary verb *'amr* instead of *zwh*. The verbal emphasis, (i.e., infinitive absolute) and the preposition *mkl* used in 3:1, are also omitted by the woman in 3:2. The *Yhwh 'elohim* (“the Lord God”) becomes merely *'elohim* (“God”). Wenham points out that the Yahwistic author deliberately used *Yhwh 'elohim* to declare his conviction that Yahweh is both the humans’ covenant partner and also the God of all creation; yet both the woman and the serpent omitted this expression in their dialogue.³⁴

The meaning of *'aph ki* in Gen.3:1 is not clear, though English translations take it as an interrogative form. The BHS proposal to read an interrogative pronoun *h* has no textual support. V. P. Hamilton considers it as a feigned expression of surprise and translates it as “Indeed! To think that God said you are not to eat of any tree of the garden!”³⁵ Hence

³⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary 1 (Milton Keynes: Word, 1991), p. 57. For a discussion of the various details of the conversation between the woman and the serpent, see R. W. L. Moberly, “Did the Serpent Get It Right?” *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988), pp. 1-27.

³⁵ See V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 186, and also J. Skinner, *Genesis*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), p. 73 n. 1 takes it as “a half-interrogative, half-reflexive exclamation.” Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, pp. 47, 73 treats *'af ki* as an interrogative expression. F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), p. 65 translates the whole expression, “Has God really said?”

he argues that the first words of the serpent are not a question “but as an expression of shock and surprise. He grossly exaggerates God’s prohibition, claiming that God did not allow them access to any of the orchard trees.”³⁶ In this context it is also interesting to note that the woman too exaggerates and adds to the original injunction and also omits “every.” Wenham suggests that through these slight alterations to God’s remarks, “the woman has already moved slightly away from God toward the serpent’s attitude.”³⁷ It is important to note here that “[t]he serpent began with a feigned expression of surprise” and later he directed “a frontal attack on God’s earlier threat (2:17).”³⁸

Richard S. Hess has recently noted the specific aspects of rebellion in Genesis 3.³⁹ In this context the rebellion involves pride, ignoring or distorting God’s word and listening to the serpent. In his view, “Misusing and perhaps misunderstanding God’s word lies at the heart of the first rebellion against God.”⁴⁰ He continues to note the whole motivation of eating the forbidden fruit. It was “to know as God knows, to possess divine wisdom and to seize God’s gifts and use them in whatever way the man and the woman wanted.”⁴¹

In light of the above discussion, Wenham argues that Genesis 2–3 is “a paradigm of sin, a model of what happens whenever man disobeys God. It is paradigmatic in that it explains through a story what constitutes sin and what sin’s consequences are.”⁴² Moreover he also thinks that this

Other occurrences of this phrase are preceded by an interrogative *h* if it introduces a question. See Gen 18:13, 23; Amos 2:11. See also E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 21 translates it as “Even though God told you not to eat of any tree in the Garden....” He also thinks that it is not a question; rather the serpent is distorting a fact (p. 23); Also see Jerome T. Walsh, “Genesis 2:4b–3:24: A Synchronic Approach,” *JBL* 92 (1977), pp. 161–177 (164).

³⁶ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, pp. 188-89

³⁷ Wenham, *Genesis*, p. 73.

³⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, p. 189.

³⁹ Richard S. Hess, “The Roles of the Woman and the Man in Genesis 3,” *Themelios* 18 (1993), pp. 15-19.

⁴⁰ Hess, “The Roles of the Woman and the Man,” p. 16.

⁴¹ Hess, “The Roles of the Woman and the Man,” p. 17. Hamilton, *Genesis*, p. 191 thinks that woman’s sin is a sin of initiative and man’s is a sin of acquiescence.

⁴² Wenham, *Genesis*, p. 90.

tradition is found in the covenant theology where disobedience to God's commandments leads to a curse and ultimately death (Deut 30:15-19). According to Wenham this story is also protohistorical, offering an explanation regarding origin of humans and their sin.⁴³ We also read from the text that "the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living" (Gen 3:20). So the creation narrative has, after all, a prototypical value, not an archetypal value as proposed by Meyers. In other words it is the first account of how sin and rebellion entered this world. As such, it is a fitting beginning to the Old Testament story, in which we see the subsequent effects of sin and how God deals with it. As a matter of fact Meyers contradicts herself in this point. She assumes that Gen 3 reflects a highland situation, as it was "God's words to the *first man*, every man, with respect to the laborious character of his daily life, so also is it the case for the *first woman*, every woman."⁴⁴ But when she dealt with the question of sin, she found it to have only archetypal value, being an etiological tale. If so, how can it be the story of every woman?

This view is also supported by prominent Old Testament scholars. In his study Rolf Rendtorff shows how the creation in Genesis and the covenant in Exodus 19-34 are endangered by human sin in both cases. He also points out that sin reaches its culmination in chapter 6 where God determined to destroy his own creation.⁴⁵ Richard H. Moyer thinks, "the story of the Pentateuch as a whole is pre-eminently the story of the fall,"⁴⁶ and human desire for a reunion with God.

Both traditional historical critics and modern literary critics read the narrative as a story of sin. I do not think this can fairly be regarded as a result of their male bias. In their readings they bring out various aspects of this theme. In his comprehensive analysis of the book of Genesis, for instance, Gerhard von Rad shows how sin reaches its culmination from the sins of Adam and Eve to the Tower of Babel. He sees the spread and progression of sin from Adam and Eve to Cain, Lamech, the angel

⁴³ Wenham, *Genesis*, pp. 90-91.

⁴⁴ Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, pp. 93-94. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁵ See Rolf Rendtorff, "'Covenant' as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 385-89 (386).

⁴⁶ Richard H. Moyer, "In the Beginning: Myth and History in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 577-598 (598).

marriages, and the tower of Babel.⁴⁷ He also notes the result of sin in every situation. Hence commenting on this situation he writes:

This succession of narratives, therefore, points out a continually widening chasm between man and God. But God reacts to these outbreaks of human sin with severe judgments. The punishment of Adam and Eve was severe; severer still was Cain's. Then followed the Flood, and the final judgement was the Dispersion, the dissolution of mankind's unity.⁴⁸

In his treatment of the theme of the Pentateuch, Clines also observes the concept of sin in other various details. His analysis of the theme of Gen 1-11 considers "sin" to be the main theme in the primeval history.⁴⁹ According to him the theme of primeval history seems to be:

[Either] mankind tends to destroy what God has made good. Even when God forgives human sin and mitigates the punishment, sin continues to spread, to the point where the world suffers uncreation.... Or no matter how drastic man's sin becomes, destroying what God has made good and bringing the world to the brink of uncreation, God's grace never fails to deliver man from the consequences of his sin.⁵⁰

He also links the primeval history with the rest of the Pentateuch through the theme of God's promise.

Alan J. Hauser in his rhetorical reading of the creation narrative finds intimacy and alienation as one of the main themes of Gen 2-3. He points out that harmony and intimacy existed between the man, the woman and God before the human rebellion. This situation was changed as a result of their rebellion by eating the fruit which God had told them not to. He also notes the motif of alienation and strife at various levels between man and woman, man and the ground, humans and the animal

⁴⁷ See G. von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (London: SCM, 1961), p. 149. See also von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (London: SCM, 1975), pp. 154-56.

⁴⁸ Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 148.

⁴⁹ David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, JSOTS 10 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 61-79.

⁵⁰ Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, p. 76. Cf. Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (London: Tyndale, 1967), p. 13 makes a contrast between "God's orderly creation and the disintegrating work of sin."

world, and humanity and God.⁵¹ Contrary to Meyers' claim, Hauser notes that 'akl is the main verb which describes human rebellion against God (Gen 3:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13). He also observes that the same verb is used in relation to the consequences that follow their rebellion (Gen 3:17-19).⁵² Similarly P. D. Miller also relates the term 'akl with sin: "The word is a command that has to do altogether with eating 'akl four times, i.e., what may be eaten and what may not be eaten. The whole issue of responsibility and obedience is tied up with 'eating.'"⁵³

When we examine the Old Testament in a wider perspective, there is no difficulty in understanding the concept of sin which emerged in the story of creation in the context of human rebellion. Contrary to Meyers' assumptions that the concept of sin comes from later orphic thought, there are clear parallels in the Old Testament traditions concerning Eden and human rebellion (Ezek 28:13; 31:9, 16, 18; 36:35; Isa 51:3; Joel 2:3). In Ezekiel 28:12-19 we can find a similar narrative structure and many similar motifs. The context here is the *hubris* of the king of Tyre. In Ezekiel we see the creation themes like Eden, the garden of God, Cherub, iniquity, sin and expulsion. The main difference in Ezekiel is that he places the garden on the mountain of God. My intention here is to point out that within Israel there was a strong tradition concerning the rebellion and fall of humanity. Von Rad notes the apparent relation of this material in Ezekiel with Genesis 3.⁵⁴ He finds its origin in common oriental Mesopotamian sources.⁵⁵ Westermann also finds very clear parallels between Ezekiel and Genesis 2-3 and points to the Babylonian background of the latter.⁵⁶ Wenham underscores the fact that "whether this is an independent account of the fall or a free poetic application to the Tyrian king is uncertain, but it certainly underlines the compatibility of its theology with prophetic principle."⁵⁷

⁵¹ Alan Jon Hauser, "Genesis 2-3: The Theme of Intimacy and Alienation," in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature*, pp. 20-36.

⁵² Hauser, "Genesis 2-3," p. 32.

⁵³ P. D. Miller, *Genesis 1-11: Studies in Structure and Theme*, JSOTS 8 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978), p. 28.

⁵⁴ Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 95.

⁵⁵ Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 95.

⁵⁶ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, trans. J. J. Scullion (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), p. 246.

⁵⁷ Wenham, *Genesis*, p. 90.

We turn now to another of Meyers' themes, namely "eating." Meyers argued that eating was the main theme of the narrative, basing her argument mainly on the frequent occurrence of the term *'kl*. She also treated Gen 2:15 as the material basis for human life, where man is given the oracle to work and keep the garden. The frequent occurrence of a term is not the only criterion, however, to decide the main theme of any narrative. We need to look at how this term functions in the narrative as a whole. For instance, James Barr has convincingly shown that words have meaning only in their context. Hence he writes: "the distinctiveness of biblical thought and language has to be settled at the sentence level, that is, by the things the writers say, and not by the words they say them with."⁵⁸ We also need to be aware that *'akl* is one of the most frequently occurring verbs in the whole Old Testament. Does this mean that "eating" is the main theme of the Old Testament?⁵⁹

We must also distinguish the oracle in Gen 2:15 with Gen 3:17. Even though the man is assigned to work in both texts, in the first, man is assigned to work inside the garden. There the work seems to be more pleasant due to the favorable situation, whereas in Gen. 3 man is driven outside the garden where his work is pleasant no more and the working condition is hostile due to the cursing of the ground. Tribble notes that the verb *'bd* ("to serve") implies respect, reverence and worship.⁶⁰ Meyers failed to distinguish between the condition of work inside the garden and outside. In this connection Meyers also fails to explain the reasons for the changed or "condemned" state of the earth though she recognizes that the ground is accursed.

6. Some Further Challenges of Feminist Hermeneutics on Pentecostal Spirituality

Feminist readers have constantly and vigorously challenged the authority of the Bible as God's word and its relevance to Christian faith and practice. Some of them even assert that the "scripture is a human

⁵⁸ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 270. See also J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1983), pp. 170-71.

⁵⁹ It is estimated that the word *'akl* occurs 809 times in the Hebrew Bible, see *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, ed. David J. A. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), vol. I, p. 240.

⁶⁰ P. Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (London: SCM, 1992), p. 85.

product and instrument, and therefore, culturally conditioned and limited.”⁶¹ In her view, the authority of Scripture does not lie with the infallible words of the text or model behavior, “but in the truth of its witness to a creating and redeeming power, which can and must be known as a present reality.”⁶² Carol Meyers says: “Like most scholars, I do not believe the texts are the direct word of God...I believe it is a record of the religious beliefs developed by a society struggling to understand God and the world”⁶³ She is mainly interested in “social reality rather than textual representation.”⁶⁴ Again, for many feminists biblical authority does not reside with the text; rather in the “present reality,” that is feminist experience. For instance, to them whatever promotes the full humanity of women is held to be holy, as the authentic message of redemption. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza argues that a “feminist hermeneutics cannot trust or accept the Bible and tradition simply as divine revelation.” She thinks that authority lies not in the “special canon of the texts” but in “the experience of women.” Again, Fiorenza advocates that since the biblical texts are patriarchal products “[a] feminist hermeneutics cannot trust or accept the Bible and tradition simply as divine revelation”.⁶⁵ If experience takes the place of the revealed canon as Fiorenza suggested, then feminist authority will have to stand on the subjective feelings of women. The canonicity of the Bible is at stake. This would create either a “canon within the canon” or a “canon outside the canon.” Moreover, many feminists uproot the biblical text from its original historical-religious setting, and find in it their own interests and concerns.

Generally feminists consider the Bible in the same way as they would any other piece of literature. But this is arguably inappropriate. We ought to remember that the Bible has served as the scripture for the community of faith for centuries. Therefore, the Bible needs to be treated as a special case as it is not a text like all other texts. It could still speak

⁶¹ Phyllis Bird, “The Authority of the Bible,” in *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), pp. 34-64 (62).

⁶² Bird, “The Authority of the Bible,” p. 63.

⁶³ As cited by William Sasser, “All About Eve,” *Duke Magazine*, September-October, 1994, pp. 2-7 (3).

⁶⁴ Personal interview with C. Meyers at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA, in November, 1994.

⁶⁵ E. Schussler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), p. x.

and function in the lives of the present community of readers who actualize and acknowledge this dimension of the text and its potentiality. Since the religious community considers the text as authoritative, they want to hear “what the text means.” They consider the biblical text as the revelation of God and it functions as the scripture not only in their belief and practice but also it is the basis for the formulation of doctrine and belief.

7. Conclusion

Feminist readings cannot claim universal significance as the outlook and value of each culture is different from others. For instance, from a Jewish perspective, alleging the biblical texts as patriarchal is tantamount to anti-Semitism. As a whole the Indian cultural and social situation provides only a subordinate role to women. Girls are considered to be a burden and boys an asset to the parents in the dominant Hindu Indian culture. Female feticide, dowry death, bride burning, child marriage, even Sati and similar atrocities against females are still common in modern India. In that cultural context, the value and the honor which the Bible attributes to women is arguably far greater than any other religion could offer to Indian women. Contrary to western feminist thinking, the Bible, even in the context of traditional interpretations of it, is not enslaving for Indian women; rather it is a source of liberation for them. Therefore, some aspects of feminist hermeneutics (especially their understanding of the nature of the word of God) need to be viewed with hermeneutics of suspicion and to be resisted.

THE NATURE OF THE PENTECOSTAL GIFT
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NUMBERS 11 AND ACTS 2

Gregory J. Leeper

1. Introduction

1.1 Context: Then and Now

The Holy Spirit has been at work in the community of God since the beginning of time. Though Israel had no concept of the Trinity—God in three distinct persons—they were familiar with the Spirit of God in their midst. At this early point in the development of biblical pneumatology, they viewed the Spirit of God as “God in action.” The *ruach* of Yahweh was God working, moving in the midst of his people. Through reflection on the Old Testament S/spirit tradition and through further revelation from God, the writers of the New Testament further developed a theology of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, now seen as distinct from the Father and the Son, was the agent of conversion, ongoing cleansing and enablement for evangelism. When one reads the Gospel of John, Luke-Acts, and the Pauline Epistles, it is impossible to miss the pervasive presence of the Spirit of God working in and through both the individual believer and the community of Christ. But somewhere in the history of Christendom, the role of the Holy Spirit became muddled, neglected and often, even forgotten. Certainly, pockets of believers throughout the church history have given focus to the Holy Spirit and have experienced the fullness of His work and blessing. And certainly, the main sector of the church has remained generally orthodox in its doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Though this may be the case, the Holy Spirit has long remained the bizarre third person of the Trinity; He has remained part of the creed, but excluded from the daily Christian experience, as many wonder what to do with him.

Fast forward to the early twentieth century. In the midst of the modernist’s skepticism of the supernatural, the modern Pentecostal

movement was born. Treated as an aberration, Pentecostalism was received as an untimely child by the rest of the orthodox Christian world. Apologists of the day were endeavoring to make the gospel reasonable and palatable to the modern mind, and present-day supernaturalism was not on their list of evidences to present. Nonetheless, the Pentecostal movement grew with its strong emphases of mission, miracles and experience of the Spirit. Indeed, the founders of the movement considered these to be inseparable. The Holy Spirit was depended upon for empowering in preaching the good news of Christ, and that good news would be substantiated by signs and wonders. Additionally, emphasis was placed on the imminent return of Christ. Since Christ could come at any moment for his church, believers had a great duty and passion to reach the lost around them. Pentecostal organizations were formed primarily for the purpose of providing a missions network and a vehicle for the ordination of ministers. In light of their urgency to evangelize the world, most ministerial training was intensely practical. On the other hand, theological instruction was neglected. Their unique understanding of the nature of the gift of the Spirit was the major doctrinal distinction between Pentecostals and the broader Christian context. However, because of their belief that Christ really could return for His church at any moment, their attention was given primarily to evangelism and foreign missions, not to the development of a sophisticated theology of the Spirit. Their pneumatology was satisfactory in answering the questions of their community at the time. As Pentecostals have become embraced by the broader Evangelical world in the past fifty years, the door for theological dialogue has opened. Certainly the influence has been reciprocal, but that of Pentecostalism has been stunted by its underdeveloped, often simplistic, pneumatology. The questions Pentecostals were asking decades ago are not the same questions being asked by Evangelicals (many within Pentecostalism) today. Much has happened between now and then in terms of progress in approaches to biblical interpretation, and in order to speak persuasively to the Evangelical community, Pentecostals must endeavor to shore up their theological underpinnings. Only then can they gain a hearing in order to present their distinctives in fresh, relevant ways.

In 1984, Clark Pinnock wrote these words in the forward to Roger Stronstad's first major work, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*: "Until now people have had to recognize Pentecostalism as a powerful force in the areas of spirituality, church growth, and world mission, but they have not felt it had much to offer for biblical, theological, and

intellectual foundations.”¹ He went on laud Stronstad’s cutting-edge work and say it may turn out to be the first wave in the coming swell of engaging Pentecostal scholarship. Indeed, his prediction has proven right. Stronstad has continued to add weight to Pentecostal theology, in addition to Robert Menzies, French Arrington, Wonsuk Ma and others. These and others have stepped up to the challenge of significantly communicating a biblical and relevant Pentecostal pneumatology. It is in the context of this stimulating, progressive atmosphere that this brief paper is written.

1.2 Thesis

It is the goal of this paper to adequately communicate a solidly biblical Pentecostal understanding of the nature of the gift of the Spirit. In the first part, I will examine Numbers 11 and Acts 2. These two texts will serve as a foundation for an adequate understanding of the nature of the gift of the Spirit. Then I will discuss the implications of Numbers 11 and Acts 2 for a Pentecostal pneumatology.

2. Two Key Texts: Foundations for Pentecostal Theology

2.1 Numbers 11

In traditional presentations of Pentecostal theology, the Old Testament has been given little attention. One needs only to look at the sections devoted to Spirit baptism in the two standard theology textbooks used in many Assemblies of God Bible colleges for proof.² In fact, the Old Testament is never referenced therein in regard to the gift of the Spirit. This lack of attention has been noted by Pentecostal scholar Wonsuk Ma in a recent article: “[The] Old Testament has been systematically ignored by Pentecostal scholarship when it comes to any Pentecostal doctrine, and...the OT provides a surprisingly rich pattern for

¹ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody: MA: Hendrickson, 1984), pp. vii-viii.

² William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1993), pp. 121-32. John W. Wyckoff, “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” in *Systematic Theology*, revised edition, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield, MO: Logion, 1995), pp. 423-56.

the current subject.”³ Exceptions to this are made when one recognizes that the Old Testament has been examined thematically in order to provide a foundation for a fuller New Testament Pentecostal theology. One example is Roger Stronstad who presents a convincing case for Luke’s pneumatology building upon themes of the S/spirit tradition in the Old Testament.⁴ (His findings will be discussed further below.) This said, it seems that the Old Testament deserves a more in-depth look when examining the whole of Scripture for Pentecostal foundations. The text that serves as the major case in point here is Numbers 11, which will now be examined.

The importance of Numbers 11 to Pentecostal theology cannot be overstated. Numbers 11 is to the Old Testament what Acts 2 is to the New. If Acts 2 serves as the key text in understanding Pentecostal pneumatology in the New Testament, Numbers 11 serves as the key text in the Old Testament. Or, as Roger Cotton puts it, “Numbers 11 should be considered as the foundational Charismatic/Pentecostal passage in the Old Testament.”⁵ It is the goal of this section to show Numbers 11 as a foundation for Pentecostal theology. Indeed, as will be shown, Acts 2 is informed by and is a fulfillment of Numbers 11. The parallels between the two texts are apparent and point to the foundational value of Numbers 11.

Numbers 11 begins with an oft-repeated scene in the 40-year journey of the Israelites to the Promised Land. Once again the people are described as grumbling against God. Though the nature of their complaint is not intimated, the severity of it is made obvious as Yahweh responds by destroying some of those on the fringes of the camp. It very well may have been those on the outskirts of the camp who had initiated the potential mutiny. Moses quickly intercedes for the people, and Yahweh relents. Almost inconceivable to the reader, the Israelites soon commence their grumbling, inspired by the “rabble” with them. This time the nature of their complaint is given: the manna God had been miraculously providing had ceased to satisfy their tastes. They wish instead to return to Egypt where they were provided with meat and

³ Wonsuk Ma, “‘If It Is a Sign’: An Old Testament Reflection on the Initial Evidence Discussion,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2:2 (1999), pp. 163-75 (164).

⁴ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), pp. 13-26.

⁵ Roger D. Cotton, “The Pentecostal Significance of Numbers 11,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10:1 (October 2001), pp. 3-10 (3).

vegetables. Yes, there they had been in slavery to evil taskmasters, but at least they had good food to eat! Though at first glance their complaint may seem of little significance to the modern reader, God himself perceives the foundational issue: “[Y]ou have rejected the LORD, who is among you” (Num 11:20b). The very people Yahweh had heard crying out in desperation in their captivity, the very people he had graciously and miraculously delivered from captivity, the very people in whose midst he was dwelling constantly prefer to return to slavery in Egypt. The renewed complaining causes Moses to be “troubled” and Yahweh to be “exceedingly angry” (v. 10). In his utter despair, Moses cries out to God and attempts to disassociate himself from the people. Moses further attempts to resign from his leadership post, even preferring that God would kill him than make him go on with them.

God shows mercy to Moses by giving him solutions to both the smaller, immediate food issue and the more significant, ongoing leadership issue. Though it will serve ultimately as a judgment to the people, God gives them quail to satisfy their requests for meat (vv. 18-23). More importantly, he promises to provide leadership assistance to Moses (vv. 16-17).

Moses carries out God’s instructions, bringing together seventy elders in the Tent of Meeting. God descends in the cloud of his presence, and after speaking with Moses, takes “the Spirit that was on [Moses] and put[s] the Spirit on the seventy elders” (v. 25). It is important to note that the Spirit given to the elders is the Spirit of God, not of Moses. The Spirit is here linked directly to Moses most likely in order to maintain his primacy of authority as leader over Israel in the eyes of the community. Though the others too receive the Spirit, Moses is still in charge. The Spirit is “taken” from Moses and distributed to the others. However, the Spirit cannot be reduced to mere quantitative terms. The Spirit upon Moses is not lessened because of the “sharing” with the seventy; rather, as Milgrom puts it, “the divine spirit, like wisdom or candlelight, can be given to others without any diminution of its source.”⁶

A glance back at verse 17 informs the reader of the purpose of this giving of the Spirit to the elders: “They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.” Yahweh gives his Spirit to the elders in order to empower them for their newly ordained vocation. By the power of the Spirit, they will carry out their mission of assisting Moses in the leadership of Israel. Stronstad traces a “vocational

⁶ Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), p. 89.

motif” of the Spirit in the Old Testament. The Spirit gives craftsmanship skills, military prowess and an ability to lead people.⁷ Though Stronstad does not explicitly include the elders of Numbers 11 in his description of the motif, they certainly fit well as they are enabled to lead the people by the Spirit. Hildebrandt agrees: “[T]he *ruach* served to enable them with the necessary resources for their task.”⁸

It is important to note that the seventy are probably not being commissioned into the specific office of prophet such as Isaiah or Jeremiah later were. The idea of the prophet is in its beginning stages of development at this time. Also, it is Moses who would fulfill the role of prophet for the journeying Israel. The prophesying attributed to the elders is no doubt given as a sign for themselves, Moses and the entire community. The sign serves to substantiate outwardly what the Spirit accomplished inwardly by way of gifting them for their task. Most commentators would agree on this purpose of the sign.⁹ Roland Allen is representative: “It seems that the temporary gift of prophecy to these elders was primarily to establish their credentials as Spirit-empowered leaders rather than to make of them ongoing agents of the prophecy of the Spirit.”¹⁰ As it pertains to the speech itself, it seems clear that the “prophesying” was not the typical prophetic forthtelling or foretelling; rather, it seems to be of the same ecstatic character of the prophesying of Saul in 1 Samuel 10:9-11. Among others, respected Old Testament scholar Gordon Wenham suggests that it was “probably an unintelligible ecstatic utterance, what the New Testament terms speaking in tongues, not the inspired, intelligible speech of the great Old Testament prophets and the unnamed prophets of the early church.”¹¹

Whatever one’s view on the nature of the speech, there is no doubt as to its function. The intent of the speech is to verify God’s appointing and enabling for a task. The Spirit was demonstrably given to empower

⁷ Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, p. 23.

⁸ Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), p. 111.

⁹ Milgrom, *Numbers*, p. 89. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, pp. 110-111. Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, p. 22.

¹⁰ Roland B. Allen, “Numbers,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reference Software, 1989-1998), 11:25.

¹¹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), p. 109. Cf. Milgrom, *Numbers*, p. 89.

the elders to assist Moses in the immense task of leading the people of Israel through the wilderness. Though the connection here will be developed later, Allen's comment is helpful here: "The Christian cannot but think of Pentecost in Acts 2. In a sense what occurred here in the desert is a presentment ahead of time of the bestowal of the Spirit on the believers in the Upper Room."¹²

An unexpected turn of events is recorded in verses 26-29. While the seventy elders are prophesying inside the Tent of Meeting, the Spirit comes upon two others, Eldad and Medad. They are said to be registered with Moses as leaders, but for some reason they do not come to the Tent. Nonetheless, God has put the Spirit upon them as well. Joshua, fearing the usurpation of Moses' authority—as these two are not connected directly with Moses in their reception of the Spirit—pleads with Moses to rebuke them. Moses gives his famous inspired wish (v. 29): "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" In reference to the experience of Eldad and Medad, Hildebrandt coins the phrase "democratization of the Spirit."¹³ Olson sees Eldad and Medad being in addition to the seventy elders, and not a part of that group of "institutional leadership." He holds that their prophesying, Moses' support of this, and Moses' subsequent wish point to the importance of prophetic roles of those outside the formal leadership.¹⁴ Coupled with Moses' prophetic wish that all would prophesy, this certainly points ahead to Joel 2:28-29, and further ahead to the fulfillment in Acts 2:1-41 as all believers are invited to receive prophetic empowering for mission.

2.2 Acts 2

As aforementioned, early Pentecostals were concerned more with evangelism and missions than with the refinement of their theology. Though they caught "instinctively" the importance of Acts 2 for their theology, they were not always adept at sound hermeneutics, using biblical analogy (among other methods) to support their distinctive doctrine. Until recently, Pentecostals have been content with their original theological foundations on issues of the Spirit.

¹² Allen, "Numbers," 11:25.

¹³ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, p. 190.

¹⁴ Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1996), pp. 68-69.

Another consideration is the opportunity provided for Pentecostals by the changing face of Evangelical hermeneutics. Until recently, Luke's narrative material had been interpreted exclusively in the light of Pauline didactic material. Bernard Ramm, John Stott and Gordon Fee, in reaction to the abuses of German redaction criticism, represented the Evangelical community by responding negatively to the view that narrative could serve in a normative way theologically.¹⁵ Luke was not a theologian, but a careful historian: his intention was to recount, not to teach. However, the scene in hermeneutics began to shift with the appearance of *Luke: Historian and Theologian* by I. Howard Marshall.¹⁶ Many other Evangelical scholars have followed in his footsteps, including Joel Green, Grant Osborne and Craig Blomberg. The thought that historical narrative has no theological value is a view that is largely rejected today. This has leveled the playing ground for Pentecostals as Luke-Acts has always been of great significance for Pentecostal theology. Encouraged by this shift, Pentecostal theologians such as Roger Stronstad and Robert P. Menzies have studied Luke-Acts and have come to the conclusion that Luke presents a pneumatology distinct to that of Paul, though complimentary. Through extensive research in the Old Testament and other ancient sources, both assert that Luke continues in the line of the Hebrew conception of the Spirit as charismatically enabling individuals.¹⁷ Elsewhere, Menzies, referencing his critic James Dunn, summarizes his findings on Lukan pneumatology: "The crucial point of disagreement with Dunn was my insistence that Luke never attributes soteriological functions to the Spirit and that his narrative presupposes a pneumatology excluding this dimension. Or, to put it positively, Luke describes the gift of the Spirit exclusively in charismatic terms as the source of power for effective witness."¹⁸

¹⁵ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Boston, MA: Wilde, 1956); John R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1976); Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *Reading the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981).

¹⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971).

¹⁷ Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, pp. 13-26. Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPT Supplement Series 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), p. 227.

¹⁸ William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations for Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), p. 70. It is not

To provide context for the Pentecost account of Acts 2, one must consider Luke 24:36-49. The disciples have just received news that Jesus had just appeared to two disciples as they walked along the road. In the midst of their astonishment, Jesus appears in the place in which they are meeting. After assuring them that it was he, Jesus reminds them that only that which was already prophesied about the Messiah had happened. “He opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures” (v. 45). Luke records a synopsis of what had been fulfilled in Jesus, then includes Jesus’ last instructions to his disciples: “You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high (vv. 48-49). In Acts 1:8, Luke records something similar, likely said by Jesus during the same meeting: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The second chapter of Acts begins with the disciples obeying Jesus’ instruction to wait in the city. They are waiting (probably in prayer) together in an upper room when the sound of a wind was heard and tongues of fire were seen, and “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4). Possibly spilling out into public view, the disciples are noticed by onlookers in town for Pentecost. In response to their questions, Peter stands up to preach. Beginning in Acts 2:16, Peter proclaims to the crowd that what they are observing among the gathered 120 is the fulfillment of what the prophet Joel had foretold in 2.28-32. Peter goes on to quote Joel 2.28-32 basically in its entirety as seen in Acts 2:17-21. At the outset of the prophecy, Peter changes “and afterward” to “in the last days.”¹⁹ Of all the editing Peter does to Joel’s text, only this instance seems to amplify what was originally spoken. Joel’s “and afterward” is ambiguous. By adapting Joel’s saying, Peter asserts that the outpouring of the Spirit that is taking place in his midst is to be interpreted as the genesis of the “last days,” or end times. Menzies agrees: “Luke’s application of the Joel text to Pentecost—and particularly his alteration of 2:17—highlights the eschatological significance of the Pentecostal gift.”²⁰ Peter does edit Joel in a few other

the purpose of this paper to go into depth on this issue. Rather, this information was given to provide context for the examination of Luke 2.

¹⁹ It is recognized that Luke, serving as redactor, shapes his material to some degree. However, for simplicity, “Peter” will be used here rather than “Luke.”

²⁰ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, p. 189.

instances, though they seem to be nothing more than slight clarifications. In one case, he switches the order of two parallel lines (2:17b); in a couple other instances, he adds words (v. 19a) and a phrase (v. 18b); and, in verse 20, Peter substitutes “glorious” for “dreadful,” the terms seeming to be synonymous. It should be noted that Peter also ends his quotation without including Joel 2:32b: “for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls.”

Peter’s quotation of Joel in Acts 2:19-20 requires some explanation. The observable cosmic phenomena Joel anticipates are not described as having happened in Acts 2 or anywhere in the New Testament. Some, including F. F. Bruce, contend that these happenings were fulfilled in the sky during the crucifixion of Jesus.²¹ This interpretation seems foisted upon the text. The better explanation is that these events will be fulfilled on judgment day, at the coming of the Lord at the end of time. Thus, Joel’s prophecy can be seen as two bookends sandwiching the church age, with the first part being fulfilled at Messiah’s first coming, and the second part being fulfilled at his second coming. Joel, as other Old Testament prophets, probably did not envision Messiah’s coming in two parts, but one, and thus presented it as one prophecy.

Quoting Joel, Peter emphasizes that the gift of the Spirit is for all, not just a select few leaders as in the Old Testament. Rather, it is for all regardless of age, gender, or social status (Acts 2:17-18). Additionally the gift is for Jews, Gentiles and all subsequent generations (v. 39). Horton expounds on this: “The way Peter looked at Joel’s prophecy shows he expected a continuing fulfillment of the prophecy to the end of the ‘last days.’ This means also that Joel’s outpouring is available to the end of this age. As long as God keeps calling people to salvation, He wants to pour out His Spirit upon them.”²²

Most Evangelicals interpret Acts 2:38-39 as a homogenous whole, finding that it simply teaches what is necessary for inclusion in the community of believers. “The promise” is interpreted as simply the conversion-initiation of the believer. Bruce’s statement on the text is representative of the typical Evangelical. He contends that this special work of the Spirit “took place once for all...constituting them the people

²¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 62.

²² Stanley Horton, *What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1976), p. 147.

of God in the new age.”²³ Evangelicals hold then, that this text teaches a single-stage reception of the Spirit. In recent years, there has been some debate about this contention among scholars in the field of Luke-Acts studies. In his compelling argument, Menzies gives evidence for a two-stage reception of the Spirit. His most persuasive plank refers to the “promise” terminology used by Luke in verse 39 and elsewhere (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39). “Reception of ‘the promise’ will result in the disciples being ‘clothed with power from on high,’ enabling them to be effective witness.”²⁴ Stronstad arrives at the same conclusion due to the progression of experience described. Though not a Pentecostal, Michaels states, “It is difficult to deny that Acts 2 is dealing *both* with empowerment for service *and* with salvation.”²⁵

The effects of Peter’s message and the Holy Spirit’s work are listed in Acts 2:41-47. Three thousand become believers and are baptized. Adopted into the new community, they continue to meet with other disciples of Jesus daily for encouragement, teaching, and worship. This is the description of the results of such Spirit-empowered preaching of the good news of Jesus.

3. Implications for the Pentecostal View of the Gift of the Spirit

3.1 The Gift for Vocational Empowerment

It is evident that Luke’s pneumatology is informed by Numbers 11. First, it is clear that the purpose of the Spirit’s descent on the seventy elders was for vocational empowerment. God had a task for them to complete in helping Moses effectively lead the people of Israel (Num 11:16-17). Hildebrandt agrees: “the *ruach* served to enable them with the necessary resources for their task.”²⁶ It is apparent that Luke envisioned the same purpose of the Holy Spirit, as he connected task (Great Commission, Luke 24:49) with enabling in Acts 1:8: “But you will

²³ Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, p. 70. cf. I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC, (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1980.), pp. 80-82.

²⁴ Menzies & Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, p. 77.

²⁵ Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, pp. 69-70. J. Ramsey Michaels, “Luke-Acts,” *The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 544-61 (554).

²⁶ Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, p. 111.

receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Just as the elders fulfilled their God-given mission, New Testament believers would carry out their God-given mission in the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Another probable key connection to New Testament pneumatology is explained by Luke-Acts scholar Robert Menzies. Menzies sees a further interesting connection between the phenomenon of Eldad and Medad and Lukan pneumatology. In Luke 10, Jesus sends out disciples to spread the good news of the kingdom come. Menzies contends that Luke, crafting his narrative, is harkening back to Numbers 11 when the seventy elders are authorized to carry out God’s work. In Luke 10:1 and 17, we find a textual variant as to the number Jesus sent. Some ancient manuscripts read “seventy,” while others read “seventy-two.” (Modern English Bible translations are divided on how to render it.) Since there is debate as to whether Eldad and Medad were part of the seventy or were in addition to the gathered elders (thus, seventy-two in total), Menzies sees a strong connection between the Numbers 11 narrative and Luke 10.²⁷ Determining the correct number of disciples or elders is inconsequential; the fact that early copyists were divided on the number is the key to the connection. As very early interpreters of Luke, they understood his intention to link his narrative to Numbers 11, and thus were divided between “seventy” and “seventy-two.” The importance of this insight is that it shows that historian-theologian Luke’s pneumatology is informed by that of Numbers 11. This is another connection that expresses Luke’s view of the purpose of the gift of the Spirit: for vocational empowering (as opposed to a salvific purpose).

3.2 The Gift Separate from Conversion-Initiation

In Numbers 11, the gift of the Spirit was given to those only within the community of God. The same can be said for other Old Testament references of the same kind (cf. Saul in 1 Samuel 10). Based on Acts 2:38-39, arguments for a two-stage reception of the Spirit are proved tenable by the work of Menzies, mentioned above.

He goes on to state the significance of this doctrine for the church: “The doctrine of subsequence articulates a conviction crucial for Pentecostal theology and practice: Spirit-baptism, in the Pentecostal

²⁷ This argument is developed from a personal conversation with Robert P. Menzies in Springfield, MO in April 2002.

sense, is distinct from (at least logically, if not chronologically) conversion.”²⁸

3.3 The Gift Accompanied by an Observable Sign

The most debated issue in the Pentecostal understanding of the gift of the Spirit is the issue of evidential tongues. Even many young Pentecostal Bible college students, while mostly convinced as to the issues of subsequence and purpose, stumble here. Is this aspect of the gift of the Spirit actually taught in the scripture? Is the traditional approach from historical precedent really that compelling? Why is “initial physical evidence” even needed to teach an empowering of the Spirit? Understanding the widespread debate on this issue within the denomination, Assemblies of God leadership has tried to tighten the doctrinal reins. Unfortunately, open dialogue on this issue has been disallowed or discouraged. Though there is honest discussion welcomed in the seminary, the atmosphere at the Bible college I attended was one of silent disdain for those who had questions. Unfortunately, through a recent conversation with a current upperclassman at this school, I realize the situation has remained unchanged. Fearing the consequences of losing this Pentecostal doctrine, denominational leadership has responded in alarm, putting up a wall against sincere questions. The “tightening of the ship” has not been met with the desired results in my own experience on the college campus. Instead, the reaction I have noticed firsthand has been one of confusion, frustration and rebellion on the part of future ministers and missionaries. I suggest this is no way to proceed on this issue. In order to prevent either an exodus of future leaders to other organizations or widespread underground disagreement though “disguised” through signatures on a yearly doctrinal contract, I encourage a new direction to be chosen. Certainly, one must be careful in the discussion of controversial doctrinal issues at the level of the local assembly. Undue disruption may be caused among everyday parishioners. However, in appropriate settings, a forum needs to be provided for those with honest questions so that they can be given honest answers, and so hope to arrive at thoughtful, biblical conclusions. Pentecostal colleges – in their Pentecostal doctrines classes, especially – would do well to leave behind some of the thin and unconvincing arguments of the past and instead present some of the strong material

²⁸ Menzies & Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, p. 112.

being produced today by such Pentecostal scholars as have been referenced in this paper.²⁹

That said, I will endeavor to draw some implications from the texts examined above that will provide support for the traditional understanding of tongues speech as the “initial physical evidence.”³⁰ First, the term “observable sign” is to be preferred for this brief discussion, though it will be used interchangeably with the more traditional language.

Numbers 11 points to prophetic—or inspired—speech as a sign of vocational empowerment. In the Numbers 11 account, the ecstatic speech of the seventy elders served as a sign to them, to Moses and to the entire community that Yahweh had empowered them for the task to which he had called them. As aforementioned, this is a view that is largely unquestioned among Old Testament scholars. Even so, few have emphasized a connection between the inspired speech of the elders and the speaking in tongues that is found in the New Testament (Wenham, for example, is an exception). Fewer have gone so far as to see this sign of God’s enabling as foundational for a New Testament theology of tongues speech as “initial physical evidence”³¹ of a subsequent empowering work of the Spirit that Pentecostals term “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” This, however, is a connection that can rightly be made. Just as a sign accompanied God’s empowering of individuals in Numbers 11, so too a sign accompanied the Spirit’s empowering in Acts 2, as well as in other instances later in Acts.

Some may still ask why a sign for Spirit empowering is needed since there is no external sign necessarily accompanying salvation itself. Ma comments well here: “For the recipients, an internal and subjective sign would be sufficient to affirm God’s election. However, for the public affirmation, a more objective, external and demonstrable sign was required.”³²

²⁹ If I were teaching a college course on Pentecostal theology, I would require *Spirit and Power* by William and Robert Menzies (cited in full above) as the main text, as it points the way forward on the issue of tongues and a number of other relevant issues in Pentecostal theology, offering depth as well as breadth.

³⁰ It must be noted that the case for “initial physical evidence” is more an issue of systematic theology than biblical theology. This said, we will examine the texts at hand to see if they can be instructive in any way.

³¹ Ma, “If It Is a Sign,” p. 164 prefers “sign” and that term will be used here interchangeably.

³² Ma, “If It Is a Sign,” p. 173.

Second, the very nature of the gift suggests the connection. The purpose of the gift has been firmly established as empowering the believer for witness. It is reasonable to link this purpose of empowerment with the prophetic sign of tongues speech. The two go hand-in-hand. The purpose of the gift is to speak for God, the simplest biblical conception of a prophet. Is it unreasonable then to suppose that prophetic speech should serve as evidence for the prophethood of the individual?

3.4 The Gift Available to All (Universal)

In Numbers 11:29, Moses utters his prophetic wish that “all the Lord’s people were prophets!” Even if the reader takes this as simply an offhanded wish by Moses to vindicate Eldad and Medad at the moment, Joel takes it up and affirms that certainly all within God’s community will receive this gift of the Spirit in a day to come. Acts 2 then quotes Joel 2:28-32 with Peter expressing its current fulfillment. Peter reiterates the universality of the gift in Acts 2:39 as mentioned above. Most commentators would agree with the universality of the gift, but would disagree over what the gift actually is (part of the salvation package or a second empowering work of the Spirit).

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Missiological Implications

It is unquestioned that the great emphasis Pentecostalism has placed on missions and evangelism has been the result of the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the view of the Assemblies of God, the baptism in the Holy Spirit not only provides the mandate, but also the motivation and the resources to take Christ’s good news to the four corners of the earth. So great has the impact of Pentecostalism on world missions been that church historian David Barrett estimates there are over 200 million denominational Pentecostals worldwide. The figure jumps to 500 million when Charismatics are included. Pentecostals/Charismatics represent the second largest ecclesiastical body in the world, next only the Roman Catholicism. This is even more amazing when one remembers that the modern Pentecostal movement is only 100 years old. Largely because of its massive worldwide impact,

church historians (such as Harvey Cox) reference Pentecostalism as the most significant development in the twentieth century.³³

The importance of these Pentecostal distinctives is clearly seen when one considers the impetus they have provided for Pentecostalism. I will quote in its entirety, the practical concern of Robert Menzies:

Pentecostals, as we have noted, have long affirmed that the purpose of the Pentecostal gift is to empower believers to become effective witnesses. This missiological understanding of Spirit-baptism, rooted in the Pentecost account of Acts 1-2, give important definition to the experience. In contrast to introverted (e.g., “purifying”) or vague (“powerful” or “charismatic”) descriptions of Spirit-baptism (in the Lukan sense), Pentecostals have articulated a clear purpose: power for mission. However, when the distinctive character of Luke’s pneumatology is blurred and the Pentecostal gift is identified with conversion, this missiological (and I would add, Lukan) focus is lost.... This conviction, I would add, is integral to Pentecostalism’s continued sense of expectation and effectiveness in mission.³⁴

4.2 Pentecostal Theology: This Way Forward

From my research on the nature of the gift of the Spirit, I conclude there are three steps Pentecostals need to take as we head strongly on into the twenty-first century. First, we must hold true to the sense of missiological calling to which God has called us. I believe we Pentecostals have rightly stressed mission and experience of the Spirit in private and corporate settings. May we continue as a powerful force in the field of missions on into the future, as we partner with our brothers and sisters in Christ in endeavoring to fulfill the Great Commission. And may we do it with Pentecostal fervor and enabling. Second, we must allow open discussion among our future clergy as we attempt to answer their honest doctrinal questions with vigorous Pentecostal scholarship. Third, we must continue to seek theological dialogue with our Evangelical brothers and sisters. We must endeavor to present a Pentecostal theology that is as thoroughly intellectual and biblical as it is fervent and effective.

³³ Menzies & Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, p. 15. Robert P. Menzies, “The Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church” (Class notes, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO, January 8, 2002).

³⁴ Menzies & Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, pp. 83, 112.

PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY IN A POSTMODERN WORLD

Rebecca Jaichandran and B. D. Madhav

1. Introduction

“Our Time” is the epithet David Harvey attaches to modernity and its postmodern successor.¹ Princeton philosopher Diogenes Allen declared, “A massive intellectual revolution is taking place that is perhaps as great as that which marked off the modern world from the Middle Ages.”² It is a shift that shapes every intellectual discipline as well as the practice of law, medicine, politics and religion in our culture. We can readily identify with Charles Dickens when he depicted the French Revolution in *The Tale of Two Cities*, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”³

All that one sees and hears about is the decline of any absolute truths, the creation of relativity, the lack of purpose and direction in historical change, the disintegration and division of all academic subjects into a variety of perspectives—with no “answers,” no agreement and the fragmentation of cultural forms into a “playful celebration” of chaos. Strong is the belief that there are no certain, single truths about the world. Instead, every question has an infinite number of answers, each being equally as valid as each other. This is the postmodern world—the world of rock groups like U2, Oasis, Blur and Prodigy. This is the world of celebrities like Madonna whom Jock McGregor calls the “icon of

¹ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 39.

² Diogenes Allen, *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989).

³ Quoted by Rick Shrader, *The Church in Postmodern Times* (http://www.bethelbaptch.com/church_in_postmodern_times.htm), p. 1, checked: Aug 6, 2002.

postmodernity.”⁴ It is the world in which children enjoy watching Star Trek, Star Wars, Johnny Quest, Harry Potter and Pokemon. Darren Mitchell begins his article “Embracing Uncertainty” with thought-provoking quotes that best summarize the invading influence of postmodern thought and culture.⁵

I thought Star Trek was pretty harmless, but when I sat down to watch the new series with my children, I couldn't believe my eyes. It was the same sort of plots worked over, souped up technology, a bit more splashy. But the epistemology had fundamentally changed. Program after program pushed or assumed postmodernism. My kids couldn't see any problem, but my jaw was dropping.

Postmodernism, in its arrogance, far from safeguarding our liberties, is becoming one of the most tyrannical controllers of thoughts and culture and speech and discourse that has walked this planet since the dawning of the Reformation.

These are times that James R. White describes as a tidal wave sweeping across western thought undermining the very idea of absolute truth.⁶ From the classroom to the television and even to the churches, institutions are asking the audience what they think truth should be and what it should look like, and then marketing their products to the whims of the world. This is the first time that people are asking “not to know” and are being obliged by their society. The symbol of this age could easily be the bungee cord. It is a free-fall into nothingness just for the sake of doing it.

Whether we accept it or not, whether we want to believe it or not, we live in a postmodern world. Indian-born Ravi Zacharias has observed: “What's happening in the West with the emergence of postmodernism is only what has been in much of Asia for centuries but under different

⁴ Jock McGregor, *Madonna Icon of Postmodernity* (www.facingthechallenge.org), p. 1, checked: Aug 6, 2002.

⁵ A paper presented at the Society for the Integration of Faith and Thought, May 1997 by Darren Mitchell, “Embracing Uncertainty: Some Perspectives on Evangelical Thought in Postmodern Times” (www.siftorg.au/97_may_dm.htm), checked: Aug 6, 2002.

⁶ James R. White, *The Roman Catholic Controversy* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1996), p. 9.

banners.”⁷ Thus the mammoth task before us as Pentecostal theologians is to address the whole issue of Pentecostal spirituality in this present context of a postmodern world.

“Spirituality” is relatively a new term to many Pentecostal believers who have all the while been more preoccupied with the whole concept of “being spiritual.”⁸ Christian spirituality has its center of gravity in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. has written, “True spirituality involved the giving of our very selves to the One we worship and adore (Romans 12:1:2).”⁹ Therefore spirituality is the giving of ourselves to God through both our beliefs and emotional attitudes, which ultimately influences our actions and values.

Richard Lovelace aptly divides Christian spirituality into two major trajectories that he calls “ascetic spirituality” and “Pentecostal spirituality.”¹⁰ According to him the ascetic spirituality focuses on spiritual disciplines that is the progressive, training mode of spirituality.¹¹ He finds biblical support in passages like 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. This kind of spirituality will cause spiritual growth but in a gradual process.

The second trajectory that he calls “Pentecostal spirituality” emphasizes the spirituality that grows by means of the work of the Holy

⁷ Interview with Ravi Zacharias, “Reaching the Happy Thinking Pagan: How Can We Present the Christian Message to Postmodern People?” *Leadership Magazine* XVI (Spring, 1995), pp. 18-27 (23).

⁸ Being spiritual involves actions like fasting, praying, speaking in tongues, operating the gifts of the spirit, raising hands while singing or praying and emotional attitudes like joy, sorrow, confidence, being comforted etc.

⁹ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. “The Nature of Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Pneuma* 14:2 (Fall 1992), pp. 103-106 (103).

¹⁰ Richard Lovelace, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Evangelical Tradition,” *Pneuma* 7:2 (Fall 1985), pp. 101-23 describes this ascetic spirituality from a historical perspective. Other interesting works that deal exhaustively with ascetic spirituality are Martin Thornton, *Spiritual Direction* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1984) and also his *English Spirituality* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1986).

¹¹ The famous book of Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), best illustrates this in three spiritual disciplines: 1) the inward disciplines including meditation, prayer, fasting and study (pp. 13-66); 2) the outward disciplines including simplicity, solitude, submission and service (pp. 69-122); and 3) the corporate disciplines include confession, worship, guidance and celebration (pp. 125-171). Other significant recent works include Charles W. Colson, *Loving God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983) and Jerry Bridges, *Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav, 1982).

Spirit. He uses Galatians 3:2-3 and 5 to define this group that is epitomized by the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” which is not a progressive stage but a leap as it were to a new dimension. It is spiritual growth by means of coming into contact with God that is experiencing God.

Pentecostal spirituality has for all these years upheld the basic orthodox doctrines and tenets of the faith. The major point of distinction is that the Pentecostal believes that God continues to work in the church through supernatural means. However there are specific values that shape Pentecostal spirituality. Russell Spittler in his article “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic” isolates five implicit values that govern Pentecostal spirituality. They are: 1) The utmost importance of individual experience; 2) The importance of the spoken (orality); 3) The high esteem places on spontaneity; 4) An other-worldly tendency in which the eternal, the “up there” in heaven is more real than the present; and 5) The authority of the Bible as the basis of what we should experience.¹²

This paper seeks to understand postmodern thought and expressions. An attempt will be made to determine whether postmodernism has influenced Pentecostal spirituality like it has done to fashion, literature, art, architecture, television and culture. It then examines the extent of this influence in order to see how Pentecostal theologians should look at this influence—as a threat or an opportunity.

2. Features of the Postmodern Worldview

2.1 What Is Postmodernism?

Rick Shrader presents postmodernism as the third of three time frames: the pre-modern era, the modern era and the postmodern era.¹³

¹² Russell Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds., Burgess and McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), p. 804 defines spirituality as “a cluster of acts and sentiments that are informed by the beliefs and values that characterize a specific religious community.” Note also Daniel E. Albrecht’s excellent article “Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking through the Lens of Ritual,” *Pneuma* 14:2 (Fall 1992), pp. 107-125 (108-109) where he uses a working definition: “the lived experience which actualizes a fundamental dimension of the human being, the spiritual dimension, that is the whole of one’s spiritual or religious experience, one’s beliefs, convictions, and patterns of thought, one’s emotions and behavior in respect to what is ultimate, or God.”

¹³ Shrader, *Postmodern Times*, pp. 1-2.

According to him, “If modernism began in the sixteenth century with the Enlightenment, brought on by the French Revolution, pre-modernism is that long period of history that led through the Dark Ages, the Reformation and up to the 1700s.”¹⁴ During this period there was a definite belief in a God (or gods) that meant, even to the pagans, that there is a certain moral accountability to a Being beyond oneself. Hence people believed in good and evil as present realities that affect their lives. Humankind was made by a Creator (even if a mythological god) and was free to obey or disobey their Creator’s wishes.

The modern era he classifies, along with Oden, as the period of time from 1789 to 1989 encompassing the ideology and malaise attendant from the Bastille to the Berlin Wall.¹⁵ This era saw the rise and influence of the Enlightenment, English deism, French skepticism, German rationalism, and American pragmatism leading to exaltation of the rights of humans and the supremacy of reason. The coming of this modern era, however, effectively reversed most basic scientific and religious assumptions of the previous era. As a result Christianity was dismissed as a relic of the past. The world was now a closed system that could be satisfactorily explained by cause and effect, morality was utilitarian, nature is self-contained and human is the highest product of the survival system, and only the senses contain reality. “Logical positivism” had become the law of scientific investigation: If we cannot see God, he does not exist.

Then comes the postmodern era that Carl Henry wrote about: “The intensity of ‘anti-modern sentiment’ is seen in the widening use of the term ‘postmodern’ to signal a sweeping move beyond all the intellectual past—ancient, medieval, or modern—into a supposedly new era.”¹⁶ This era that has set in after 1989, does not point to an ideological program, but rather to a simple succession—what comes next after modernity. The Industrial Revolution of modernity is giving way to the information age of postmodernity.

Walter Truett Anderson tells the story of the three umpires representing the three ages of human history. The first, representing the pre-modern age, says, “Three strikes and you’re out and I call ’em the way they are.” The second umpire, representing the modern age, says, “Three strikes and you’re out and I call ’em the way I see ’em.” The third

¹⁴ Shrader, *Postmodern Times*, p. 1.

¹⁵ Thomas Oden, *The Death of Modernity: The Challenge of Postmodernism* (Wheaton: BridgePoint Books, 1995), p. 20.

¹⁶ Quoted by Shrader, *Postmodern Times*, p. 2.

umpire, representing the postmodern age, says, “Three strikes and you’re out, and they ain’t nothin’ til I call ’em.”¹⁷ For those of us who are now in this era, it simply is the elimination of truth. Truth does not exist except as the individual wants it to exist. In fact, he can create his own truth.

In an interview, Dennis McCallum responded, “A simple definition of postmodernism is the belief that truth is not discovered, but created.”¹⁸ A typical postmodernist jargon could be read as follows, “There is now a consensus that consensus is impossible that we are having authoritative announcements of the disappearance of authority, that scholars are writing comprehensive narratives on how comprehensive narratives are unthinkable.”¹⁹ Postmodernism is not a theory or set of ideas as much as it is a form of questioning, an attitude or perspective.

In this section, we will look at some of the features of the emerging postmodern worldview (postmodernism) and the kind of culture it is creating (postmodernity). Peter Stephenson feels that very few people appreciate the philosophical basis of the postmodern worldview simply because it is the whole set of “givens” that explains what it means to be human, “givens” that need no explanation or justification because that is just the way things are.²⁰ The following suggestions are an attempt to stimulate thought and make no pretence of being definitive. It is, after all, a culture in a state of “becoming,” of flux, unconformity, ambiguity and contradiction.

If we are to understand what postmodernism means, we must first define modernity to which it claims to be the successor. Modernity is characterized by the triumph of Enlightenment, exaltation of rights of humans and the supremacy of reason. Modernism assumed that human reason was the only reliable way of making sense of the universe. Anything that could not be understood in scientific terms was either not true or not worth knowing. Human beings, by means of scientific reason, could make sense of the world and even manipulate it for their own

¹⁷ Walter Truett Anderson, *Reality Isn't What It Used to be: Theatrical Politics, Ready to Wear Religion, Global Myths, Primitive Chic and Other Wonders of the Postmodern World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), p. 19.

¹⁸ Quoted by Rick Shrader, *Postmodern Times*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Peter Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World* (<http://www.postmission.com>), checked: Dec 1, 2001. Also see Andrew Fellows, “Postmodern Epistemology” (a lecture given at L’Abri Fellowship, April 2000, London).

²⁰ Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World*.

benefit with or without reference to God (who or whatever he/she/it might be). Stephenson acknowledges that this ability to understand and manipulate the natural world that is the only part of the world knowing about held out the promise of unlimited progress.²¹ The world was recognized as being infested with problems of ill-health, poverty, suffering and war, but science would find the solutions sooner or later.

As the twentieth century progressed, some of the first cracks began to appear in the modernist worldview and the myth of progress. Two world wars showed that the same scientific technological progress that promised great hope to humankind could also be used to inflict untold suffering on men, women and children and could even destroy the entire world. The same progress that promised to save now threatened to destroy us. Hope was shattered. Now like Frankenstein's monster it threatens to turn on its creator and wreak global devastation through ecological disaster or nuclear/biological/chemical holocaust in the hands of some mad person and God forbid even through technical failure of control systems. Thus, modernism and the myth of scientific progress is dead or at least in its final stages, but there is nothing to take its place. We do not know what is coming, only that it will be the worldview that replaces modernism. Until we know exactly what form it will take, we might as well call it postmodernism for the time being.

As the name implies, postmodernism is something that comes after modernism. Thomas Oden puts it, "If modernity is a period characterized by a worldview which is now concluding, then whatever it is that comes next in time can plausibly be called post modernity."²² It is the recognition that modernism has run its course and that a change is taking place in the thinking and beliefs of our present generation. The entire postmodern worldview is based on the failure of modernism. Intellect is replaced by will, reason replaced by emotion, morality replaced by relativism, reality replaced by social construct.

2.2 Characteristics of Postmodernism

Some of the basic tenets of post modernism are as follows:

2.2.1 *The Anti-foundationalism of Postmodernism*

To a postmodern, knowledge is uncertain. Therefore it totally abandons foundationalism that is the idea that knowledge can be erected

²¹ Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World*, pp. 1, 2.

²² Oden, *The Death of Modernity*, p. 25.

on some sort of bedrock of indubitable first principles. No wonder it denies the framework of reason in modernity. The goal of post-modernism is to do without frameworks. Anti-foundationalism also cries out that history is dissolved. There is no distinction between truth and fiction. Since there is no objective truth, history maybe re-written to the needs of a particular group (e.g., in favor of women, homosexuals, blacks and other victims of oppression).

There is no transcendent mental or spiritual approach to Pure Reason or Ultimate Reality, nor is there an unchanging internal essence within the individual exempt from physical law. This is what one would call the basic naturalistic presumption of anti-foundationalism.

2.2.2 *Deconstruction of Language*

According to Stephenson modernism as an explanation of what it means to be human (worldview, “big story” or metanarrative) has been shown to be inherently violent, as all other metanarratives.²³ This is the essence of deconstructionism—the knocking down of would-be big stories (worldviews with universalistic pretensions) often through listening to the local understandings of truth of minority communities.

The only hope then is to deconstruct and reject all would-be big stories since they are all oppressive. It is oppressive because culture defines language and cultures are oppressive, therefore language is oppressive. In Nietzsche’s language, culture is defined as “will to power.” In Marx’s language, culture is a mere “class-conflict.” In Freud’s language, culture is “sexual repression.” In feminist language, culture is reduced to gender conflict. In short, for a postmodernist language does not reveal meaning, it only constructs the meaning. To put it in the words of David F. Wells, “Words mean only whatever we wish them to mean.”²⁴ Therefore, the aim of postmodernists is to deconstruct language and ultimately the truth. The deconstruction is done, firstly, by analyzing the metaphors inherent in scientific language and secondly, interrogating the text to uncover its hidden political or sexual agenda.

2.2.3 *The Denial of Truth*

Stephenson while discussing this topic in his paper says that absolute truth does not exist “out there” in the world waiting to be discovered. “Truth” as perceived by every human community is that community’s

²³ Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World*, p. 4.

²⁴ David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), p. 65.

interpretation of the world.²⁵ If “truth” does not exist outside human consciousness than it would be best to insist that no version of truth is inherently better than any other way. No one belief system has superiority. Postmodernism is thus inherently pluralistic.

We are beginning to see this in the people around us. For example, a politician breaks his promise without any shame, a judge constructs brand new legal principles that reflect current fashions, and a journalist writes biased stories—stories that people want to hear about rather than recording the truth and a teacher offers processes and experiences instead of knowledge. Some people object to abortion and still claim to be “pro-choice,” some people claim to be “Christian” in their thinking and also accept the idea of reincarnation, etc. This is the effect of postmodernism. Without any order or absolute truth, people are free to believe what they want whether it fits with other beliefs or not.

2.2.4 *Virtual Reality*

Postmodernists reject the connection between thought and truth. In a postmodern world, people want to think least and feel more. The life of mind has new models. The new model is the virtual reality helmet. Technological wonders such as television, movie theaters, videos and computers have become realities and no state of existence typifies postmodernism better than “virtual reality.” It is a state of being informed but disconnected; of power without the difficulties of confronting others face to face. Leonard Payton writes of technological wonders that they are “made by people who tend not to know one another for people they do not know at all and will probably never meet.”²⁶ Indeed, to a postmodernist, “all reality is virtual reality.”²⁷ Since our existence has no meaning and we are not connected to history or its values by any binding truths, no one can be quite certain where reality and non-reality start and stop. Francis Schaeffer wrote, “If one has no basis on which to judge, then reality falls apart, fantasy is indistinguishable from reality; there is no value for the human individual, and right and wrong have no meaning.”²⁸ Technology can be a blessing or a curse. In this regard it is becoming a curse.

²⁵ Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World*, p. 4.

²⁶ Quoted by Shrader, *The Church in Postmodern Times*, p. 4.

²⁷ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), p. 61.

²⁸ Francis Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), p. 50.

Neil Postman has called this technological control, “Technopoly—the submission of all forms of cultural life to the sovereignty of technique and technology.”²⁹ Grootuis, in the same vein as Postman, laments the takeover of our society by such a valueless medium: “When information is conveyed through cyberspace, the medium shapes the message, the messenger and the receiver. It shapes the entire culture.”³⁰ A key ingredient is not only the blurring of the fact with the fiction, but the participation by the user in this virtual world. Through a computer, one can actually participate (of course, only virtually) in sporting events, world-wide field trips and even in virtual eroticism. Technology fits well in the postmodern world of surface realities. Today, people experience the feelings simulated by computers, televisions and video games. It has ushered us into a new age where reality is seen as virtual reality or hyper reality. The virtual reality has influenced us to an extent that we do not know which is real and which is fictional. Thus things that were authentic and absolutes that were never questioned before have been targeted because the real is now questioned and seen as virtual.

2.2.5 Disoriented Self

Post modernism also suggests that we can make ourselves whatever we want to be. We are shaped by endless cultural and social factors that make it impossible to know who the real “me” is. Therefore it totally abandons the search of the inner self simply because there is no inner self to find, no essence from which to be alienated. Richard Middleton says that “the fully saturated self becomes no self at all. To be more precise, we are left with an infinitely malleable self, capable of taking on an indefinite array of imprinted identities.”³¹

In view of the fact that who we are is created by life experience, it would make perfect sense for me to now take control of my identity and make “me” whatever I want to be. According to Philip Sampson, the exemplary case of a self presenting a range of identities or performances is provided by Madonna who draws a multiplicity of representation, from

²⁹ Neil Postman, *Technopoly* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), p. 52.

³⁰ Douglas Grootuis, *The Soul in Cyberspace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), p. 53.

³¹ J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Post Modern Age* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995), p. 52.

material girl, through creator of her own sexuality, to the vulnerability of Monroe.³²

With the emphasis on society, postmodernism also denies that humans are the most important thing in the world. Secular humanism's exaltation of people has no place in postmodern thinking. Before we applaud the death of secular humanism at the hands of postmodernism, we should realize that the postmodernists deny that a human being has any special significance at all. People are no better or no more important than anything else in the world. This is where the modern animal rights and ecological movements have gained their strength. Humans are just another living thing on the planet, no nobler and with no more "rights" than spotted owls or pine trees. Thus, humans are insignificant. Perhaps one can see where this is going. If human life is no more valuable than any other life, then there can be nothing wrong with infanticide, abortion or any other means of population control. Even the so-called ethnic cleansing of Hitler and, more recently, in Bosnia would not be wrong to the postmodernist.

3. Postmodern Spirituality

In the context of postmodern moral weightlessness we see a contemporary interest in forms of spirituality. James M. Houston further explains by saying that "there is a thoroughly postmodern distinction now being made between those who say that they are not religious (because of the inconsistencies and offences they see in organized religion), and yet who say they are on a spiritual quest."³³ Graham Cray quotes Chris Carter the creator of the popular TV serial *X Files* as saying, "I'm a non-religious person looking for a religious experience."³⁴ It seems that something of the "beyond" suits the postmodern discontentedness well. Spirituality is identified with the individual quest as well as with the questioning of institutionalism. As a result, contemporary breakdown of traditional values and communal life is compensated for by a renewal of spirituality.

³² Philip Sampson, "The Rise of Postmodernity," in *Faith and Modernity*, eds. Philip Sampson, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (New Delhi: Regnum Books, 1994), pp. 29-57 (45).

³³ James M. Houston, "Modernity and Spirituality," in *Faith and Modernity*, pp. 182-207 (186).

³⁴ Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World*, p. 11.

The Enlightenment era promised so much to mankind. With the triumph of human reason, it sought to eliminate superstition and unexamined authority in religion. Religious traditions are called in to question and challenged. Spirituality is lifted out of the realm of faith-exercise and posted as rational-exercise. The enlightenment sought to test spirituality with the measurement of science and rationality. With this triumph of human reason, modernity, the brainchild of Enlightenment, replaced the experience of the reality of God with the rationality of the human existence. There is a new crisis of belief. It is well expressed by T. S. Eliot: "Men have left GOD not for other gods, they say, but for no god; this has never happened before."³⁵ This crisis has several deadly marks on world history.

Firstly, Atheistic existentialism became the natural product of the deadly marriage between humanism and rationalism. This modern period has seen the attempt of Man replacing God.³⁶ It is characterized by the genocide of over 167 million human beings by tyranny that has been ideologically and politically motivated. Modernity tried to eradicate the religious, only to find that demonic social ideologies dominated its historical scene.

Secondly, Secularism became the buzz word in world civilization. "Privatization" of spirituality and the separation of religion from the public life has turned the world into a machine. Humanity is interpreted in terms of a great machine without any spirit or soul. The world became a closed system. Modernity left too many challenges for the humanity of "this age." In pursuit of autonomy, modernity found itself sliding into narcissistic subjectivity. In its attempt to rationalize social existence, it had created problems for strong individuals and community alike.

It is in this context of disillusionment with modernity that the postmodern spirituality started to rise. There is a new found openness to other religions, cults and occults. Humanity stopped looking for rational explanations for their religious experiences. Religious truth is being eliminated by a phenomenological pluralism. Salvation has found a new meaning—ranging from the "high" a particular drug gives to the mystical

³⁵ Quoted by Michael Harrington, *The Accidental Century* (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 173.

³⁶ Malcom Muggeridge, quoted in Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage* (Madras: RZIM Life Focus Society, 1986), p. 25 said: "If God is dead, somebody is going to have to take his place. It will be megalomania or erotomania, the drive for power or the drive for pleasure, the clenched fist or the phallus, Hitler or Hugh Hefner."

high through New Age religious practices.³⁷ In short, pluralism, complexity, relativism and ambiguity in human spirituality marked the postmodern spiritual climate.

3.1 Higher Experience: New Foundation or No Foundation?

With the rejection of rational foundations, the postmodern spiritual man or woman started to look for various experiences in his/her quest for a direct experience of the Ultimate. In this quest, the postmodern spirituality showed an indefinite openendedness and syncretized Gnosticism or paganism of the classical world, and the hermeticism or occultism of the renaissance age.³⁸ With the lack of objective social and personal values, psychedelic exploration, ecofeminist experimentation and the individualist experimentation of new cults became the trends in the human spiritual quest.³⁹ Scientists, artists, actors, novelists and celebrities sought to look for mystical experiences. The following words of artist Marc Chagall may well represent the mood of the age:

Mystic! How many times they have thrown this word at my face, just as formerly they scolded me for being 'literary'! But without mysticism would a single great painting, a single great poem, or even a single great social movement exist in the world? Does not every individual or social organism fade, does it not die, if deprived of the strength of mysticism?... It is precisely the lack of mysticism that almost destroyed France.⁴⁰

It is these mystical experiences the new age gurus promise which has made them popular in this postmodern world. It is the rejection of rationality and openness to experience that attracts many followers to the new age movement. At the entrance of Bhagwan Rajneesh's sacred

³⁷ Aldous Huxley believed that genuine mystical experiences could result from taking hallucinogenic drugs. His ideas led to the formation of religious movements that used drugs to bring about mystical states. For fuller discussion on this discussion, see Dewi Arwel Hughes, *Has God Many Names? An Introduction to Religious Studies* (Leicester, UK: Apollos, 1996), pp. 195-212.

³⁸ For a detailed study on the impact of mysticism on objectivity, see Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course on New Age Movement* (Eastbourne: Monarch Publications, 1989), pp. 35-51.

³⁹ Houston, "Modernity and Spirituality," p. 183.

⁴⁰ Houston, "Modernity and Spirituality," p. 191.

sanctuary hangs a notice that reads: "Please leave your shoes and your mind outside." His teachings reflect the postmodern spirituality and their rejection of objective truth in search of "higher" experience. He said:

If you want to know and realize that which is undivided, go beyond mind. Do not use your mind as the instrument.... There is no problem in the reality and there is no need for any answer. But when you think there are problems, when you do not think and realize, there are no problems. So, religion is a process to go beyond thinking, to achieve a point in your mind where there is no thinking at all.⁴¹

The "psychotechnologies" such as deep meditation, creative visualization, chanting and techniques for altering consciousness play a pivotal role ushering in mystical experiences.

3.2 Silence: Language of Ultimate Reality

For two hundred years the Enlightenment has assumed that western civilization was superior to others. But in the postmodern world view, that assumption is questioned. Various ideologies and civilizations of the world have created a multi-world with the juxtaposition of various religious faiths creating a global pluralism. The deconstruction of the metanarrative of the western tradition left the modern man with a couple of possibilities: 1) a mystical experience of silence, and 2) a plurality of narratives and values.

If reason, one of the metanarratives of the modern world, is deconstructed, then it leaves language ambiguous. For central to the critique of reason is language. All thinking begins and ends in language. In the postmodern spirituality, language is reduced to mere silence.⁴² The

⁴¹ Rajneesh, *Beyond and Beyond*, (Bombay: Jeevan Jagruti Kendra, 1970), pp. 14-15.

⁴² Ludwig Wittgenstein followed Kantian dichotomy and argued that language is meaningful only in the sphere of phenomena. Realizing that one cannot verbalize that which is unknown and unknowable, he then concluded that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." In this regard Wittgenstein paved way for postmodern thinking in the era of modernity. For a detailed study on this subject, see Gareth Moore and Brian Davies, "Wittgenstein and the Philosophy of Religion," in *Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Brian Davies (London: Cassell, 1998), pp. 27-34 (28).

Ultimate reality is Silence.⁴³ The epistemological methodology of the postmodern quest of knowing the ultimate reality is Silence. In a postmodern spirituality any sentence about God has no meaning. Os Guinness correctly observes: “This leaves the western discussion of God with only two possibilities...the sheer silence of the atheist or the mere symbolism of the mystic.”⁴⁴ Unfortunately, much of postmodern spirituality bent towards the latter, mystical experiences, and they are equated with divine revelation.

In the postmodern spirituality an individual can choose from a variety of truths and techniques, old and new, in order to have a heightened awareness of the present. In simple words, contemporary man/woman can now choose from the “hypermarket” of world religions and traditions. Even if there are apparent contradictions in his choices, in the contradictions meaning can be found. Observers of religion are aware of an intrinsic relativism in eastern mystical traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. As Monistic faiths, these religions teach that everything is part of one essence. All these traditions not only reject reason as tool for discovering truth, they even utilize contradiction on the rational level to drive learners to a deeper or higher plane of understanding. For instance, Buddhism describes the Tao as the sound of one hand clapping. The Hindu Brahman is “always and never.” Such paradoxical thinking, with its rejection of rationality, is naturally compatible with postmodernism.

3.3 “I, Me, Myself”: The Voice Within

In a society that is seen as a reflection of fragmented personalities, there is a quest for the true self. The only reality that exists is the reality that we create. The postmodern spirituality does not accept the reality of the world we observe in an objective sense. In Hinduism, the material world is *maya*, which means illusion. What seems real to us (the material world) is an illusion. The postmodern spirituality is an escape from the reality of the world. The distinction between reality and illusion is non-existent. Lao Tse summarizes the postmodern dilemma of knowing reality:

⁴³ Swami Sivananda, the founder of Divine Life Society writes: “God or Brahman is Supreme Silence, Soul is Silence, Peace is Silence, or simply is God.” Swami Sivananda, *Bliss Divine* (New Delhi: Divine Life Society, 1974), p. 555.

⁴⁴ Os Guinness, *Dust of Death* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), p. 202.

If, when I was asleep I was a man dreaming I was a butterfly, how do I know when I am awake I am not a butterfly dreaming I am a man?⁴⁵

Sathya Sai Baba, a popular guru from India, captures the problem in a poem:

Rebuked by his wife
For not shedding even a tear
Over the death of their only child,
The man explained
“I dreamt last night
That I was blessed with seven sons,
They all vanished when I woke up.
Who shall I weep for?
The seven that are vapor
Or the one that is dust?
The seven are a dream
And the one a day-dream.”⁴⁶

The rescue is to be sought within each person, in a space beyond conditioning. The postmodern spirituality or New Age cure for most of our modern problems can thus be summarized in the slogan: “The only way out is in.” This journey within can be described, writes Lars Johansson, as an ongoing process where one gets in touch with his or her inner feelings, “inner child,” inner wisdom or inner voice, in order to fully realize oneself.⁴⁷

4. Postmodern Influence on Pentecostal Spirituality

If Christian spirituality can be defined as the practice of the Christian life in the real world, then according to Houston a postmodern definition would be, “the ways individuals seek to renew spirit and soul in their

⁴⁵ Quoted in Vishal Mangalwadi, *Missionary Conspiracy: Letters to a Postmodern Hindu* (New Delhi: Good Books, 1996), p. 82.

⁴⁶ V. K. Gokak, *Bhagavan Sri Satya Sai Baba* [The Respected Lord Satya Sai Baba] (Mumbai: Abhinav Publications, 1975), p. 216.

⁴⁷ Lars Johansson, “New Age: A Synthesis of the Premodern, Modern and Postmodern,” in *Faith and Modernity*, pp. 208-251 (221).

lonely lives.”⁴⁸ It is this kind of new openness to various religious experiences that present an opportunity and challenge to Pentecostal spirituality. One can find the “techniques” of postmodern spirituality such as deep meditation, creative visualization, chanting and techniques that alter the consciousness in Pentecostal spiritual experiences. In some respects, Pentecostal spirituality lays a greater emphasis on subjective experience over objective truth.

The much-talked about Pentecostal revival at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (TACF), many believe, is just individuals being renewed by the Spirit of God. If so, the question that needs to be answered is whether what one sees happening in Pentecostal churches is the subtle influence of postmodern spirituality.

4.1 Postmodern and Pentecostal Emphasis on Experience

Often Christian faith is interpreted more in terms of feeling and experience than a reasonable belief. Pentecostal spiritual models, rituals, symbols, signs are all geared towards ministering to the feelings of the person. Pentecostal worship services revolved around and have evolved strange spiritual experiences—like being slain, barking or growling—all in the Spirit.

It cannot be denied that the most important value that governs Pentecostal spirituality is the locus of individual experience. Viewed positively, this means that the Pentecostal is not satisfied until he or she has had an experience with God. The Pentecostal’s use of the phrase, “I am praying through,” epitomizes this. A person is not satisfied by hearing about someone else’s experience with God; they must experience God themselves. This strong emphasis on individual experience should be seen as a necessary balance in our churches. However, viewed negatively, experience can become the tail that wags the dog. Beliefs/faith can become secondary to experience or else beliefs can be denied as “untrue” unless they are experienced. To make things worse, many times experiences can be manufactured.

Margaret M. Poloma talking about the Toronto revival quotes Leslie Scrivener, a reporter of the *Toronto Star*, Oct. 8, 1995:

The mighty winds of Hurricane Opal that swept through Toronto last week [were] mere tropical gusts compared with the power of God thousands believe struck them senseless at a conference at the controversial Airport Vineyard church. At least with Opal, they could

⁴⁸ Stephenson, *Christian Mission in a Postmodern World*, p. 186.

stay on their feet. Not so with many of the 5,300 souls meeting at the Regal Constellation Hotel. The ballroom carpets were littered with fallen bodies, bodies of seemingly straitlaced men and women who felt themselves moved by the phenomenon they say is the Holy Spirit. So moved, they howled with joy or the release of some buried pain. They collapsed, some rigid as corpses, some convulsed in hysterical laughter. From room to room came barnyard cries, calls heard only in the wild, grunts so deep women recalled the sounds of childbirth, while some men and women adopted the very position of childbirth. Men did chicken walks. Women jabbed their fingers as if afflicted with nervous disorders. And around these scenes of bedlam, were loving arms to catch the falling, smiling faces, whispered prayers of encouragement, instructions to release, to let go.⁴⁹

Of all the incredible manifestations of the Spirit at TACF—speaking in tongues, miraculous healings, tearful conversions—the cleanliness of its crib has been most disturbed by the controversial animal sounds made by some of its worshipers. The revival has also been characterized by wild bouts of “holy laughter,” “slayings in the Spirit,” shaking, quaking and prophetic words.

Margaret Poloma, a sociologist who has studied the Toronto Blessing, regards these unusual physical manifestations associated with the revival to be “‘normal’ responses to intense emotional reactions that may occur during spiritual, inner, and physical healing.”⁵⁰ Can one conclude that if, as a result of an intense inner encounter with God, a person experiences a physical inability to move (to the point that he/she appears almost dead), a bodily lightness (to the point of rising above the ground), a deep inner pain (perhaps with crying) or an intense sensation of God’s presence (to the point of a strong feeling of happiness), then the person is gripped by God or “totally with God.”⁵¹ Or is it a fascination with the phenomena that cause them to be created by human efforts. Paul

⁴⁹ Margaret M. Poloma, “The ‘Toronto Blessing’ in Postmodern Society: Manifestation, Metaphor and Myth” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, eds. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (New Delhi: Regnum Books, 1999), pp. 363-385 (364).

⁵⁰ Aaron McCarroll Gallegos, *Beyond Signs and Wonders* (<http://www.sojo.net>), p. 1, checked: Aug 6, 2002.

⁵¹ The Theological Commission of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church of Germany, “Concerning Extraordinary Bodily Phenomena in the Context of Spiritual Occurrences,” trans. Veronika Ruf and others, *Pneuma* 18 (Spring 1996), pp. 5-32 (13).

himself agrees that it is possible to do this.⁵² Veronika says, “When spiritual phenomena are sought for their own sake and accompanying phenomena are desired as an end in themselves, the proper order of things is reversed.”⁵³ The question we need to ask is whether we seek to experience God or seek to experience the phenomena?

Margaret Poloma in her article examines the Toronto Blessing and the unusual manifestations associated with the revival. She examines the behavioral manifestations—some rather unusual and unprecedented in revival history—from the postmodern emphasis on semiotics in order to interpret what signification the manifestations may represent in constructing and maintaining a Pentecostal worldview. She concludes that this emphasis on manifestations draws on the pre-modern consciousness marked by holism, and holds a balance between the straightjacket of Enlightenment-generated modernism and the chaos of a postmodern de-centered universe.⁵⁴ The influence of postmodernism is obvious to Poloma.

Even as there are some similarities Pentecostal spirituality shares with Postmodern spirituality, there are also some dissimilarities that are unique to Pentecostal spirituality. For example, while the emphasis of postmodern spirituality is on the deconstruction of language which results in the sheer silence of the mystic, Pentecostal spiritual experience centers around the language of God-experience. Since God is silent in postmodern spirituality all descriptions about God are impossible. However, Pentecostal worship and experience of God focuses on adoration of God and his nature. While postmodern spirituality emphasizes silence, Pentecostal spirituality emphasizes audible.

4.2 Virtual Reality of Postmodernism and Ecstatic Worship in Pentecostal Spirituality

Worship presents a set of meanings configured by Pentecostals. Our understanding and practice of worship lies at the heart of our liturgies and spirituality. No wonder we constantly hear phrases like, “I have come for worship,” “Vineyard has the best worship, or “Worship is the best part of our service.” Daniel Albrecht says that Pentecostals understand worship as having three main connotations: 1) Worship as a

⁵² Galatians 3:3

⁵³ The Theological Commission of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church of Germany, “Concerning Extraordinary Bodily Phenomena,” p. 16.

⁵⁴ Poloma, “The ‘Toronto Blessing’ in Postmodern Society,” pp. 361-85.

way of Christian life especially outside of the church services and activities. All of life is seen as worship, as an expression, a gift offered to God; 2) Worship as the entire liturgy, the whole of the Pentecostal service, and 3) Worship as a specific portion, aspect or rite within the overall liturgy.⁵⁵

All three contain the Pentecostal understanding of the symbol. To the postmodernist, worship is mere technological symbolism over substance, thus, symbols are the substance. Groothuis writes, "The image is everything because the essence has become unknown and unknowable."⁵⁶ Because he sees reality and truth as being constructed at the moment, worship need not go beyond the worship act. This amounts to, in the words of Albrecht, "worshipping worship."⁵⁷ The more "real" the worship service seems, the less a postmodern person needs or wants anything beyond that.

For some contemporary Pentecostals, worship refers to the encounter with the divine as mediated by a sense of the divine presence or power. Pentecostals believe strongly in the manifest presence of God. The heightened awareness of this presence often occurs within the dimension of worship. Pentecostals practice worship as both *experiencing* God and as *techniques* into the presence of God. Forms of musical expressions including suggestive, symbolic worship, choruses and verbal praise practices serve to trigger a close sense of God's presence.

Pentecostals believe that worship is an encounter with God. God will come and meet his people. They can only prepare and wait for God's actions among them and then respond to the flow of the Spirit. Pentecostals also see worship as a kind of performance that attends closely to God. God is the audience and the congregation is to perform the drama of praise. For as they say, God inhabits the praises of his people. This performance represents a way of ministry unto God.

However, David MacInnes in his article, "Problems of Praise," points out two dangers which are infectious and can take one away from the true sense of worship.⁵⁸ The first one is emotionalism and he is

⁵⁵ Daniel E. Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Ecumenical Potential and Challenge," *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* [www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyber2.html] 2 (1999), checked: Aug 6, 2002.

⁵⁶ Groothuis, *The Soul in Cyberspace*, p. 16.

⁵⁷ Albrecht, "Ecumenical Potential and Challenge."

⁵⁸ David MacInnes, "Problems of Praise," in *Living in the Light of the Pentecost*, ed. Edward England (East Sussex, UK: Highland Books, 1990), pp. 241-49.

careful not to confuse it with the expression of emotion. This can be seen in the preference of one form of emotional expression over another. For some, noise is more spiritual than silence; for others, it is the reverse. Perhaps, one of the most authentic marks of the work of the Spirit is that the whole of human emotions is released both toward God and toward others. But emotionalism can easily creep in. It is a selfish indulgence in the sheer pleasure of emotion. This can make singing, clapping and dancing simply as an indulgence in emotion instead of being an expression of worship.

The second danger he mentions is escapism. Postmodern spirituality is an escape from the reality of the world as the distinction between reality and illusion is non-existent in its world view. Herein lies a threat from postmodern spirituality to Pentecostal spirituality. Many subtle forms of Pentecostal tradition do not believe in the reality of sickness and provide an escapism by emphasizing the unreal characteristic of the sickness. For example, the Word of Faith movement of Kenneth Hagin emphasizes the unreal nature of the sickness and encourages the believers not to consider it as reality. Unlike classical Pentecostals, the Faith teachers in the Faith Movement believe that diseases are healed by Christ's spiritual atonement in hell, not his physical death on the cross. Ralph Waldo Trine explains it in following terms:

Everything exists in the unseen before it is manifested or realized in the seen, and in this sense it is true that the unseen things are the real, while the things that are seen are the unreal. The unseen things are the cause, the seen things are the effect.⁵⁹

Pentecostal worship offers such a way of escape to those who come to the church carrying heavy burdens, frustrations and depression. The only difference is that the escape the Pentecostals offer is not an escape from a real world into unreality but into the ultimate reality.

Do Pentecostals create a world in which they express and experience their forms of worship? Do they try to provide a pathway into the holy of holies? Albrecht in his article points out that Pentecostals make use of ritual sounds that surround the Pentecostal worshipper, ritual sights that stimulate the Pentecostal ritualist and kinesthetic dimensions.⁶⁰ Walking

⁵⁹ Quoted by D. R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), p. 149.

⁶⁰ Daniel Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking through the Lens of Ritual," *Pneuma* 14:2 (Fall 1992), pp. 107-25 (109-13).

into a Pentecostal service for the first time, one will be greeted by a cacophony of sounds. Sounds that surround, support and give a sense of security to Pentecostal worshippers. They symbolize an entrance into the very presence of God. Among the Pentecostal ritual sounds, the main one is music. The music of the Pentecostal song service usually called the worship service is often intended to help usher the congregation into the presence of God to help individuals taste a little bit of heaven or to bring down heaven to earth. One may ponder how many Pentecostals can truly worship their God without accompanying music.

Surrounding the different sounds of the Pentecostal service are also accompanying sights that stimulate worship. Probably the most significant and influential visual symbol in Pentecostal worship is the sight of fellow-worshippers. Pentecostals are encircled by fellow believers who stimulate each other actively to be immersed in worship. From the worship leader on the platform to the musicians and to the brother or sister across the aisle, Pentecostals influence each other's forms of worship, gestures and behaviors as they participate together in worship. Through their fellow worshippers, they look beyond, they see deeper, they see in one another their object of worship, their God.

In pursuit of higher experiences in Pentecostal worship services, there is an increasing tendency to add more simulating techniques, technologies, visuals and music, to take the worshipper from this world to another world. To some, the "experience of worship" is superior to the exposition of the scripture. Often than not, the exposition of the scripture is filled with experiences of either the preacher or of somebody else. All these and many more are aimed at bringing the childish delight that comes from being in the virtual reality. Do we see an influence of postmodern thought here? Are Pentecostals trying to create an atmosphere of worship, the feeling of other-worldliness, where the eternal becomes more real than the present?

5. Conclusion

This study has probably raised far more questions than it has offered answers. What does emerge from this study is the desperate need to seriously examine the importance we give to experience and worship in Pentecostal spirituality.

Do we then consider postmodernism as a threat to Pentecostal spirituality or do we see it as something that could be used to enhance and foster our experiences of spirituality? Would we rather take people

into a realm of virtual reality through worship and then let them plummet back into reality at the end of that “virtual worship”? Would we choose to let experiences and external manifestations take control rather than seek to live lives that blend with those experiences without being completely devoid of them?

We have to ask ourselves: Do we demonstrate an authentic spirituality, a spirituality that can put people in touch with the divine in a tangible, experiential way that makes sense of our experience of life? Does the spirituality we offer answer the deep longing for a spirituality that provides authentic answers to the real questions people have?

ENDUED WITH POWER:
THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC RENEWAL
AND THE ASIAN CHURCH IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY¹

Hwa Yung

It would not be too much to say that the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal has taken the global Christian movement by storm in the twentieth century. And increasingly, much of Christianity in Asia is impacted by it in one way or another. This essay seeks to understand and reinterpret this movement from the perspective of the growth of the Christian church in Asia, and to understand in a deeper measure its strengths and weaknesses. It will conclude with some tentative suggestions of what it would take for the movement to remain at the heart of God's purposes for the Asian church in the twenty-first century.

1. Introduction

David Barrett, an editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2001), is one of the most authoritative observers of worldwide Christian growth. In his recent article titled "The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal,"² he notes that Pentecostals, Charismatics and neo-Charismatics have hit the worldwide Christian church like three simultaneous tidal waves in the twentieth century. These groups form some "27.7% of organized global Christianity" today, found "across the entire spectrum of Christianity,"

¹ This is a reprint of the author's chapter with the same title in *Truth to Proclaim: The Gospel in Church and Society*, Trinity Theological Journal Supplement, ed. Simon Chan (Singapore: Trinity Theological College, 2002), pp. 57-76. The publisher's gracious permission for reprint is acknowledged here. Minor editorial changes were made according to the Journal editorial style.

² David B. Barrett, "The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal," in Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), pp. 381-414.

and are “gaining momentum and size all the time.” Their impact can be observed in various ways. A majority of the fifty or so mega-churches in the world, each with over fifty thousand members belong to the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. They have made serious penetration into the media world through radio, television, movies, literature, magazines, and the like. Financial giving in these churches is way above the global average (although giving to world missions is weak). And over one-third of the world’s “full-time” Christian workers are Pentecostals, Charismatics or neo-Charismatics. They are also in the forefront of the concern for world evangelization and together constitute the fastest growing segment of the church today.

What is true about the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement globally is no less true in Asia, which has the lowest percentage of Christians among the continents. Abundant evidence lends support to this. To begin with, this is clearly indicated by the following statistics on the Asian church for mid-AD 2000:³

Total population of the continent	3,697 Million
Number of Christians - Adherents	313 Million
Professing Christians	199 Million
Number of Charismatics-Pentecostals	135 Million ⁴

Classified under third wave neo-Charismatics are also included the following indigenous groups from different parts of Asia:

Filipino indigenous Pentecostals/Charismatics	6.8 Million
Han Chinese indigenous Pentecostals/Charismatics	49.7 Million
Indian indigenous Pentecostals/Charismatics	16.6 Million
Indonesia indigenous Pentecostals	6.8 Million
Korean indigenous Pentecostals/Charismatics	3.3 Million

The figures show that about two-thirds of all professing Christians in Asia are Pentecostals, Charismatics or neo-Charismatics. And a very high proportion of these are found within churches which arose out of indigenous Christian movements, rather than in traditional denominations brought from the west.

We see the same pattern in the growth of individual congregations. Hong Young-gi has pointed out that, of the fifteen mega-churches in

³ Barrett, “The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal,” pp. 388-91.

⁴ These consist of classical Pentecostals (5%), Charismatics (16%) and neo-Charismatics (79%).

Korea that have adult attendance of 12,000 and more, nine are Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Denomination-wise, there are two Presbyterian, two Methodist, three Assemblies of God, one Unification Holiness and one Southern Baptist. And the largest of these, and possibly the largest in the world, is Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul under the Pentecostal Cho Yonggi which has a regular adult attendance of 230,000.⁵ In Metro Manila, Philippines, a recent study shows that eight out of the ten fastest growing congregations are Pentecostal-Charismatic.⁶ Similar observations would also apply in Malaysia and Singapore. A large majority of the fastest growing churches and a high proportion of the largest local congregations are Pentecostal-Charismatic in character.

A third set of evidence pointing to the strength of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Asia is that whenever there has been revival in recent years, “signs and wonders” which are so central to the movement have invariably played a crucial role. This is true of the Indonesian revivals of the 1960s and early 1970s, and also the *Sidang Injil Borneo* or Borneo Evangelical Church (S.I.B.) revivals in the 1970s. Perhaps the most significant has been the widespread revival of the church in China which has often been spurred on by miraculous healings and deliverance ministries. And these have not been restricted to the house churches only. Indeed even some of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement churches and magazines are reporting similar occurrences.⁷

The above evidence demonstrates clearly the widespread impact today of Pentecostalism on the global church in general, and within Asia in particular. But how is this movement to be understood in the context of the advance of the Asian church? Before answering this question, we need first to define the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement and clarify its identity more clearly.

⁵ Hong Young-gi, “The Backgrounds and Characteristics of the Charismatic Mega-Churches in Korea,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:1 (2000), pp. 99-118.

⁶ Jung-ja Ma, “Pentecostal Challenges in East and South-East Asia,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, eds. Murray W. Dempster, et al. (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), pp. 183-202 (196).

⁷ Tony Lambert, *China's Christian Millions: The Costly Revival* (London: Monarch Books, 1999), pp. 109-120.

2. Defining the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement within the Asian Church

Much of the existing literature on the subject follows the prevailing interpretation. This speaks of three successive waves of Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal hitting the worldwide Christian movement in the twentieth century. How valid is this?

2.1 The Three-Wave Theory of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins

According to this approach, the first wave of classical Pentecostalism began on Jan 1, 1901 at Charles F. Parham's Bethel Bible School in the Topeka, Kansas. The subsequent revival of 1906-7 at Azusa Street, Los Angeles, under William J. Seymour, led to the spread of classical Pentecostalism to many countries through its missionaries. Out of this came the classical Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God, Church of God, Foursquare Church and the like. They may not have a common position on all doctrines. But almost all would subscribe to the belief that all Christians need a baptism of the Holy Spirit which is distinct from and usually subsequent to conversion, and that speaking in tongues is *the* distinguishing mark of such a baptism.

The second wave came in the form of the penetration of Pentecostalism into the historic Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. This is the Charismatic movement which is perceived to have also originated primarily in the United States around 1960. Historically the origin of this movement is often attributed to Dennis Bennett, the Episcopal rector in Van Nuys, California, and author of the best seller, *Nine O'Clock in the Morning*. From there it spread to other denominations, including the Catholics, and eventually to the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The third wave of renewal is often linked to John Wimber's ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary, beginning around 1981. This involves the neo-Charismatics, which includes vast numbers of independent and indigenous churches throughout the world. Most of these churches have no connections with classical Pentecostal or traditional mainline Protestant denominations. According to the figures quoted earlier from Barrett, neo-Charismatics form 79% of those in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Asia today.

Thus, according to the three-wave theory, the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal is perceived to have begun essentially in the United States with classical Pentecostalism. It then spread outwards into other parts of the world, first via first-wave Pentecostal missionaries, then via

the second-wave Charismatics and finally through third-wave neo-Charismatics. Although not everyone sees it this way, it has nonetheless been the predominant interpretation of the whole Pentecostal-Charismatic phenomenon accepted by most, not least its adherents in the non-western world. This interpretation, however, is now being challenged by different writers for various reasons.

2.2 The Weaknesses of the Three-Wave Theory

To begin with, this interpretation assumes that the primary identity of the global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is found in its historical linkage to classical Pentecostalism's self-definition, in terms of a post-conversion experience of Spirit baptism as evidenced by speaking in tongues. But this doctrine, which is so central to the classical Pentecostalism derived from the experiences of Charles Parham and William Seymour, is itself being questioned from within. Most significantly, Gordon Fee, a highly respected evangelical New Testament scholar and an ordained Assemblies of God minister, has raised serious questions about whether the doctrine of an essential post-conversion experience of Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking in tongues can be sustained on biblical grounds. What must be noted is that he is not attacking the speaking of tongues nor the fact that many Christians experience the work of the Holy Spirit as classical Pentecostalism has defined it. But rather he suggests that not all Christians after conversion must experience the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way.⁸

Fee's critique has been further strengthened by writings from outside the classical Pentecostal tradition. Some scholars have argued that the belief, that all who are baptized in the Spirit must necessarily speak in tongues, cannot be sustained on exegetical grounds. Indeed many within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement today do not place the same emphasis on tongues as classical Pentecostalism once did. If this is the case, then what is central to classical Pentecostalism's self-definition, namely, *the post-conversion experience of Spirit baptism leading to speaking in tongues*, cannot be taken as the defining characteristic of the whole Pentecostal-Charismatic movement today.

What then should be the defining characteristic of the whole Pentecostal-Charismatic movement today? I believe that what is increasingly being recognized as central today is the empowering work of the Holy Spirit leading to a recovery of apostolic signs and wonders in

⁸ Gordon Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 105-19.

the life and mission of the church. Understood this way, the three-wave theory, which sees everything flowing out of American classical Pentecostalism, will readily be seen as a schematized but highly inadequate interpretation. This is clearly demonstrated by the history of renewal both in the west and the rest of the world.

In the West, there were clear antecedents of the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal even before the twentieth century. One of the most notable was the Catholic Apostolic Church of Edward Irving, beginning in London in 1831. Again, Pentecostal-Charismatic experiences like being “slain in the Spirit,” “holy laughter,” “jerking” and the like were known occurrences in Holiness Camp meetings in the nineteenth century American frontier. Going back further, early Methodism under John Wesley also manifested the phenomena of being “slain in the Spirit” and cases of healing as well. Jack Deere also unearthed evidence of prophecy exercised by Scottish Presbyterians during the sixteenth century Reformation.⁹ Other examples are also known.¹⁰ To see the movement as beginning with Parham and Seymour at the turn of the twentieth century is surely an oversimplification.

Further, scholars have also pointed out that the Pentecostal-Charismatic phenomenon has a multiplicity of beginnings in different cultures, and not just in the west. As Everett A. Wilson has noted, Pentecostalism is not just another American phenomenon which then became globalized in the twentieth century. Rather, it “has broken out or has been rediscovered or been appropriated recurrently since the beginning of this century—if not before.”¹¹ He therefore argues that the study of Pentecostalism,

[N]eed not focus exclusively on U.S. precedents, since...non-Western groups have cultivated their own analogous, cognate forms (including their own founders, origins and subcultures), but in a variety of settings, in different ways and with their own spiritual achievements. If they exhibit similar if not identical Pentecostal features, it is notable that they have never had more than the most tenuous ties to the North

⁹ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1996), pp. 64-78.

¹⁰ For a brief list of “signs and wonders” in the western church history, see John Wimber, *Power Evangelism-Signs and Wonders Today* (London: Hodder, 1985), pp. 151-66.

¹¹ Everett A. Wilson, “They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn’t They? Critical History and Pentecostal Beginnings,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, pp. 85-115 (107-108).

American institutions.... Because of their chronological priority and large and rapidly growing memberships, should non-Western movements not be considered in assessing the formative years of the movement?¹²

If this is the case, then non-western beginnings of the Pentecostal-Charismatic phenomenon must therefore be taken seriously in their own right, and assessed accordingly.

There is an abundance of evidence in support of non-western origins and contributions to the global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. For example, many of the African Independent/Initiated Churches which came into being from the end of the nineteenth century onward definitely took signs and wonders seriously. These together with other African Christian movements certainly contributed much to the global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Within Asia, many Christian leaders in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century made similar contributions. Among these were names like John Christian Arroolappen in India and Pastor Hsi of China in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century we have the famous Brahmin woman convert, Pandita Ramabai, and Sadhu Sundar Singh in India, John Sung, the greatest evangelist and revivalist of China, and other lesser known figures.¹³ In the face of such evidence, no one-source theory of the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal can stand.

This reinterpretation of Pentecostalism is also supported by others. For example, although David Barrett uses the “three waves” language in his analysis, he nevertheless understands it in a substantially different manner from those who take an Americo-centric view of Pentecostal-Charismatic history. Rather than the three *successive* waves of the prevailing three-wave theory, Barrett speaks instead of the three *simultaneous* waves of renewal impacting global Christianity. Further, he refers to the majority, those in the “third wave”, as non-white indigenous neo-Charismatics. These are described as “apparent/seemingly/largely pentecostal or semipentecostal members of *this 250-year old movement*

¹² Wilson, “They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn’t They?” pp. 109-110.

¹³ See Gary B. McGee, “Pentecostalism,” *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, eds. Scott W. Sunquist, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 646-50 and also article by Hwa Yung, “Pentecostalism and the Asian Church,” in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Changing Face of Christianity in Asia* (forthcoming).

of churches indigenous to Christians in non-white races across the world, and begun without reference to Western Christianity.”¹⁴

2.3 An Alternative Interpretation of the Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement

It is evident from these considerations, that the traditional “three-waves-flowing-from-one-main-center” approach which still prevails in the minds of many people, is in need of serious modification. As a schematic way of seeing the work of the renewal by the Holy Spirit, the “three-wave” pattern applies reasonably well to the western churches. It also applies to churches in the non-western world which have been or are being strongly influenced by the changing patterns in churches in the west. Examples of these would be English-speaking urban churches in many parts of Asia, including Malaysia and Singapore. But when it comes to churches that do not have the same degree of contact with the west, it clearly becomes an arbitrary imposition which often hinders us from understanding the real dynamics at work in many non-western churches. The fact is that much of indigenous Christianity in Asia has often borne the marks of classical Pentecostalism, even though in many cases their origins were independent.

The real problem that we are wrestling with here is that of worldview. Western civilization in the past two to three centuries has increasingly accepted an anti-supernaturalistic worldview. Within such a worldview there is simply no place in which to fit the miraculous dimension, answers to prayer, the work of angels or demonic powers, and related ideas—the very realm where Pentecostalism makes its impact. Hence the modern western worldview became increasingly naturalistic in that the world can be understood without recourse to the spiritual realm. Many in the western church have accepted the western scientific worldview as a sufficient description of reality. These included both liberals and Evangelicals. Consequently they cannot cope with Pentecostalism and its acceptance of signs and wonders. It should also be noted that this worldview has infected many educated people in the non-western world, because they have received a thoroughly good western education—which has been described as the most powerful secularizing force in the modern world.

¹⁴ Barrett, “The Widespread Holy Spirit Renewal,” pp. 382, 390, 404. Italics mine.

This naturalistic worldview contrasts sharply with the supernaturalistic and more holistic worldviews that are found in most traditional non-western cultures. For example, many of us in Asia grew up accepting the supernatural, whether it is belief in spirits and charms, fortune-telling, *feng-shui*, spirit worship in temples, occultic practices of all kinds and so forth. There is no sharp dividing line between the natural and supernatural world. Indeed the two interpenetrate and are inseparable. For example, many non-Christian Chinese and Indians would go to both the doctors and the temple priests when they are sick! It is not one or the other, but both together will give maximum help and the quickest healing. Most non-westerners possess such a supernaturalistic worldview, which even a modern western scientific education could not fully eradicate easily. It is so much part and parcel of their cultural backgrounds. Consequently, a truly indigenous Christianity in Asia has to be supernaturalistic, and therefore Pentecostal-Charismatic!

We find in Asia and in other parts of the non-western world a most interesting mix as a net result. There is a very small minority of Christians who have been influenced by the modern western scientific worldview and liberal theology. They cannot cope with the renewal sweeping across much of Asia today. There is a second group that is far larger. They are theologically conservative or evangelical. But their western education and evangelical theology learnt from the west make it difficult for them to know what to do with signs and wonders. Their theology does not allow them to reject the supernatural because the bible takes the miraculous seriously. Yet many try to rationalize it away. But like the first group, they continue to reject the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal.

This brings us to the third group. Most come out of the same background as the second group, and in some cases as the first. Their numbers are greatly increasing at the expense of those in the second group, although it is sometimes difficult to demarcate the two. But they can be found in almost every denomination, from the Roman Catholic to the Brethren. They have never been entirely comfortable with the western conservative or liberal theologies they were brought up in, because these are rooted in a worldview which is alien to their own cultures and to biblical Christianity. In moving into some Pentecostal-Charismatic version of Christianity, they are unconsciously laying claim to a recovery of their own indigenous Asian worldviews which take the supernatural seriously. While many have left their original denominations to join the fourth group (see below), others have stayed with the specific desire to bring renewal to their churches.

The fourth group consists of those who became Christians in Pentecostal denominations brought from the west, including the Assemblies of God, Foursquare Church and the like, as well the newer Charismatic independent churches. Some of the largest congregations belong to this latter category, like Full Gospel Assembly in Kuala Lumpur and Faith Community Baptist Church and City Harvest in Singapore.

Finally there is a fifth group consisting of those who belong to the churches who did not originate through direct western influence but through indigenous leadership, and whose theology has usually been open to signs and wonders. In China these include groups like the True Jesus Church, the Jesus Family and the house church movement. In places like Indonesia, they would include some of the churches which emerged out the revivals of the 1960s and 70s. In Malaysia and Singapore, probably the most notable would be the New Testament Church started by the Hong Kong actress, Kong Duen Yee, popularly known as Mui Yee, in 1963. Her ministry, which stressed the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues, drew many followers, not least from Chinese Brethren churches. This movement resulted in the formation of a string of churches known by the names of their location: the Church of Penang, of Singapore, and so forth. It should be noted that, whereas most of these indigenous churches have remained in the mainstream of the Christian movement as shown by their adherence to the basic tenets of the faith found in the creeds, some are certainly in danger of extremism and heresy.

To sum up, what is seen as the resurgence of an evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal today in Malaysia and Singapore is largely a coming together of the third, fourth and fifth groups in the life of the Asian church. It is the result of the Holy Spirit's work which began at different times, cultures and places. They are united together by their commitment to the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible in life and belief, and their adherence to the foundational beliefs of the church as defined by the historic creeds. At the same time they are characterized by a common acceptance of the empowering of the Spirit, and his acts of signs and wonders in the life of the church. These streams of renewal are now coming together and coalescing in an amazing manner, both in Asia and many other parts of the world. It is *this complex, untidy and yet profound mix* that is being referred to when the term Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is used here.

3. The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement in Asia Today: Impact and Problems

The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Asia is therefore by no means a unified one. Some things and beliefs are commonly shared. Yet even within these commonalities can be found wide-ranging positions. To begin with, churches identified with this movement would generally be theologically conservative. But this conservatism can range from rigid fundamentalism to open Evangelicalism. Almost all the churches in the movement tend towards less structured and free worship, but some would take the best of other spiritual and liturgical traditions with much more seriousness than others. All would be open to the speaking of tongues. But some would follow the classical Pentecostal doctrine of insisting on a post-conversion Spirit baptism accompanied by tongues, whereas others would interpret the New Testament evidence quite differently. All would affirm to the exercise of the spiritual gifts like prophesy and healing. But the manner in which these are exercised would vary considerably within the movement. Again, whereas all would take the deliverance ministry seriously, yet the practice of “spiritual warfare” would range from the cautious to the bizarre.

Given this complex mix, how then are we to assess the movement today? We will begin by noting the impact of the movement on the church as a whole, before looking at some of the problems.

3.1 The Impact of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement in Asia

Earlier in this essay, we noted in different ways the impact of the movement upon revival and church growth throughout much of Asia at different times during the past century. We see further that the impact clearly continues today in, for example, the large growing congregations in cities like Seoul, Manila and Singapore, and the wild-fire growth of the house churches in China. Simply put, with some two-thirds of Asian Christians being caught up in the renewal, one cannot understand the church in Asia today without coming to terms with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.

The second significant impact of the movement on the Asian church is found in the recovery of New Testament teachings on the empowering of the Holy Spirit and the release of spiritual gifts in the churches today. As already noted, owing to the impact of modernity, western Christianity has tended to ignore the miraculous in the past. Thus many western missionaries to Asia in the last century had relatively little to say on the

prophetic and healing gifts, or deliverance from demonic bondage that came through idol worship, use of charms, witchcraft and other similar occultic practices. By drawing attention to these things and emphasizing their proper usage, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has helped Asian Christians to address certain “felt needs” in Asian cultures. For example, many non-Christians in Asia regularly go to fortune-tellers to seek guidance in life, and to temple mediums and priests for healing and deliverance from demonic powers. It is when the church demonstrates that in Christ we have far better and more lasting answers to these “felt needs” in our lives that the non-Christian will begin to pay serious attention to the gospel! Consequently, it is often through the ministry of prophecy, healing and deliverance that the church has made the most significant evangelistic inroads in Asia.

Related to this is the strong emphasis on worship and prayer found within the movement. It should be pointed out however that this is not a uniquely Pentecostal-Charismatic characteristic. The history of the Asian church shows that other groups at different times have also placed tremendous emphasis on these. For example, Korean churches, whether Pentecostal-Charismatic or not, have done so regularly throughout much of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it would seem correct to say that those within the movement today have tended to be more consistent and passionate in their practice of worship and prayer than those outside. This would certainly be true in the Malaysia-Singapore region.

Because many churches caught up in this movement tend to be independent and congregational, they are not bound by the denominational, and generally more rigid, structures of the traditional churches such as the Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Mar Thoma and the like. Further, the acceptance of the New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts and “body life” in the church has released countless ordinary church members for effective ministry, instead of always depending only on the “full-time” pastor. Churches in the movement are thus able to manifest much greater flexibility in structures, pragmatically adjusting them to the needs of ministry and mission. This flexibility is certainly one key reason for the faster growth of such churches, and thus constitutes a fundamental challenge to some of the outdated denominational structures of the traditional churches. Where traditional churches have been able to break out of their rigid denominational structures, especially through the use of small groups, they too have been able to grow much faster.

One other way in which the movement has had a major impact on Asian churches is that it has unintentionally brought about a lot of

cooperative efforts between churches at the grassroots level. These cooperative efforts affect not just independent churches but often all churches caught up in the renewal movement, whether denominational or independent. This is true whether it is about big city or area-wide rallies, or about cooperation between a few churches in a small locality. It also happens at meetings like the Full Gospel Businessmen lunches or regional conventions, which are not church-based. There may be differences in church polity and in doctrinal details, but the existence of a common evangelical theology, shared Pentecostal-Charismatic distinctives, a passion for the gospel and a Spirit-empowered life is often sufficient to bring about such popular or grassroots ecumenism. By effecting such cooperation between Christians, the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal has succeeded admirably where organized ecumenical efforts have often miserably failed. One important lesson for the church may well be that such a success at popular ecumenism is often the result of a common concern for the gospel and revived Christian lives, rather than of organized efforts at cooperation for its own sake.¹⁵

3.2 Problems within the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement

The fact that the renewal movement is strongly impacting the life of the Asian church in a positive way does not mean it is without problems. What are some of these?

One of the central defining characteristics of the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal is that it is the faith of apostolic signs and wonders, with a robust emphasis on the power and gifts of the Spirit. Yet, one recurring criticism of the movement is that its emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit is often not matched by a corresponding emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). To be fair, among the churches in Malaysia and Singapore, this weak emphasis on holy living and the fruit of the Spirit is not peculiar to churches in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition, but is fairly widespread across the board. But it remains true that within the renewal movement, concern for spiritual gifts and “anointing” often overshadows the concern for holiness and the pursuit of Christian character.

¹⁵ It is of interest to note that in the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival in England, such “popular ecumenism” at the grassroots was regularly observed among the Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists, all of which were impacted by the revival and growing steadily. See Alan D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (London & New York: Longmans, 1976), pp. 58-59.

Further, the apparent success of the movement in attracting large numbers has often blinded the eyes of its leaders to the centrality of the cross in New Testament teaching on Christian life. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23; cf. Matt 16:21; Mark 8:31; John 12:24). Despite the fact that this emphasis on costly discipleship is found throughout the New Testament, many preachers choose to preach a gospel of "health and wealth" instead. One preacher, who was strongly stressing the theme of blessing, was asked what he thought of Jesus' teachings on sacrifice and the cross. His reply was instructive: "It is for the special minority who has been specially called to suffer. The promise of blessing applies to the rest of us." How convenient! But the fact is that he would not be the only preacher who thinks in this manner. Otherwise, why would this theme be so rarely taught in our churches?

The sad result is that the financial excesses and moral problems sometimes associated with some of the TV evangelists are being actually replicated right before our eyes. And the power of God manifested through the movement, which ought to lead us to an increasing sense of awe and reverence of the living God, has often given rise to a success mentality and a sense of self-seeking pride in one's achievements (or the church's) instead. The success of one's personal organization or church and self-promotion sometimes seem to take precedence over the advancement of the wider work of the kingdom of God. Claims to importance and fame go from the sublime to the ridiculous. One pamphlet advertising a seminar in Kuala Lumpur some time back described the lady American speaker as one whose "accomplishments in world evangelism are unequalled among Christian women leaders"! Can you beat that?

A second problem often observed is that the strong emphasis on the work of the Spirit results in the renewal movement being so experience-centered that the word of God often ends up being neglected. It is not that those in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement do not take the Bible seriously. Rather, they often do not pay enough attention to the diligent study of the word to interpret it properly. Thus biblical truth is sometimes compromised within the movement by default. This weakness is manifested in various ways, not least in the insufficient emphasis on holiness, Christian character and the cross already noted above.

Another example is found in teachings on spiritual warfare. It is to the credit of the movement that it has rightly challenged the church to rethink the importance of this subject, in the face of the unbelief of much of the western church towards demonic powers. Yet, in the process of

doing so, some have definitely gone to wild extremes. Witness the tendency in some circles to see demons everywhere, or some of the bizarre ideas thrown around on spiritual mapping. One visiting Pentecostal pastor spoke with a sense of unbelief about an encounter with the wife of a cell-group leader in one of the large Charismatic churches in Kuala Lumpur. She had said to him that the devil bites her every night and she wanted to know what can be done! Some reflective Christian teachers have suggested that, in trying to get away from the rationalistic mindset of modernity that has so crippled western Christianity, some advocates of spiritual warfare are in danger of ending up with a Christian animism and superstition. Surely the one way to avoid this is to ensure that our theological thinking and pastoral practice are more firmly anchored to sound biblical teaching.

The same problem is sometimes seen in the exercise of the prophetic gift. There is no doubt that there have been times when individuals and churches have been wonderfully blessed by those with genuine and powerful prophetic gifting. But there are also those who claim to be prophets who are careless and presumptuous at best, or mere charlatans at worst. A good example is the highly irresponsible “prophecy” that was sent out on the internet recently, concerning a terrible earthquake which was to have befallen Singapore on October 21, 2001. This illustrates yet again what has been regularly been observed in church history: that experience-centered forms of Christianity inevitably tend towards extremism and heresy. Jack Deere who has written one of the most helpful books on the prophetic gift, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, notes sadly that “the church has encouraged a silent divorce between the Word and the Spirit.”¹⁶ The only way to overcome this divorce is to always hold prophecy and the careful exposition of the word together.

A third problem concerns church structures. Earlier it was pointed out that churches in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, with their emphasis on the spiritual gifting of the laity and greater organizational flexibility, are rightly posing a fundamental challenge to the moribund structures of more traditional churches. This is something for which we must be thankful. At the same time, the question that must be asked is, “What structures are we replacing the old ones with?” Put in another way, are the new wineskins that we using compatible with the new wine of the renewal? Or, are the new wineskins merely different versions of

¹⁶ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1996), p. 358.

the old ones? Space does not permit a full discussion to be entered into here. But I will simply raise a few questions here.

First, for many in the movement the modern mega-church is the model for the church. But is this model really suited for instilling discipleship and building community? Making disciples requires personal mentoring, as the examples of Jesus and Paul so clearly demonstrate. Building community requires the growth of deep and trusting personal relationships. Is the mega-church really suited for these processes? It should be noted that in South Korea while mega-churches abound, the church today is in decline, and nominalism is one of the key problems. It would appear that if the mega-church model is still a worthwhile one to pursue, then some serious rethinking on its internal structures is necessary.

Some would reply to the above questions by arguing that the answer to the concerns raised is the cell-church. I believe that this answer does have some validity—if we define our cell-church objectives clearly. But I am not convinced that this is so with many of the cell-churches today. If you ask what functions the cells or small groups are meant to play, the invariable answer is evangelism and discipleship. But if you analyze the programs of the cell groups properly, you will invariably find that the emphasis is tilted towards the former—because numbers is the bottom-line. Now every cell is meant to grow by splitting every six months to a year. If so, how do you build community when personal relationships are torn apart by the frequent splits even before they have had time to deepen? Further, discipleship results from close mentoring, openness, and honesty that again require trust and deep relationships. However, how can that happen when the very structures, which are meant to enhance discipling, militates against it?

A second major issue concerning structures is that increasingly among these churches, the pastor is defined as the CEO, a model borrowed from modern management theories. Now it goes without saying that in the modern world, good management is absolutely essential to the building of a church. But the question is, which is the primary model for the pastor? Is it the CEO, or is it the shepherd and teacher modeled by Jesus in the gospels? It is interesting to note how “senior pastors” in many of these churches become increasingly authoritarian as their churches grow. Thus what starts as a renewal movement, challenging moribund and stifling structures, can often end up producing little “popes” and “bishops” who rule as monarchs in their little kingdoms! Why? Because we forget Jesus’ rejection of leadership models borrowed from the world around us: “Not so with you. Instead

whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (Mark 10:43).

A fourth problem with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement today is that its success has sometimes led to its thinking that it possesses in itself all the necessary grace and gifts for the work of the kingdom of God. Consequently it often lacks appreciation for other Christian traditions and their strengths. Yet, Richard Foster in his latest book, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of the Christian Faith*,¹⁷ reminds us that the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition is only one of six broad traditions of spirituality which find their roots in the bible. The others are the contemplative, holiness, social justice, evangelical and incarnational traditions. At different times and in different ways in the history of the church, they have all impacted the church and the world in significant ways. It is when it learns to appreciate and appropriate the strengths of other traditions that the present renewal movement will fully come into its own.

4. The Pentecostal-Charismatic Renewal and Asian Christianity in the Twenty-first Century

We come finally to the question of whether the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement will continue to have a significant impact on the church in Asia in the coming years. The answer would appear to be that, if the movement is to come increasingly into the center of God’s will and deepen its impact on the church in Asia, certain remedial actions need to be taken. The Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition is only one among a number of different spiritual traditions that God has used in history. But that is something that many in the movement have not understood. If the present renewal can learn this important lesson, and allow the other traditions to effectively complement its own strengths and offset its weaknesses, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement will certainly impact the Asian church in an even deeper manner in the days ahead. What would this entail?

For a start, with a spirituality that is strongly activist, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement will need to learn a deeper and more reflective prayer life from the contemplative tradition. It will benefit immensely from the latter’s emphasis on waiting upon God, meditation,

¹⁷ Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Waters: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (London: Fount, 1998).

honest self-examination before God of one's innermost motives, and the purifying fire of God's love. This form of spirituality is notably exemplified by the Desert Fathers and the best of the monastic tradition. But we can also find it in the life of people like the great Indian Christian saint, Sadhu Sundar Singh, who also had very charismatic spirituality and whose ministry had such a significant impact on the Indian church.

It will also need to draw upon Pentecostalism's own historical roots in Methodism and the Holiness movement to find the necessary spiritual resources to form a holy people for God in Asia today. We need to remember that Jesus warns us in no uncertain terms that signs and wonders themselves are no guarantee of a genuine spirituality or, for that matter, our salvation (Matt 7:21-23). Earlier we raised some questions concerning the modern cell-church movement. It is important to note that the use of small groups in the modern period owes much of its inspiration to the class and band meetings of the eighteenth century Evangelical Revivals under John Wesley. Yet there is a vital difference between Wesley's use of his class meetings, and the way many cell-church gurus use cells today. For the latter, despite the explicitly stated purpose of cells, the bottom-line ultimately is numbers growth. However, for Wesley, the primary purpose of classes was always the pastoral nurture of his people in their growth in "scriptural holiness." Do we wonder why the Methodist revival went on for about a hundred years, as one of the longest sustained revivals in church history?

Further, it will also reach back to the Reformation roots of its Evangelicalism to recover afresh the centrality of the Bible in the life of the church, together with the ideal of godly scholarship. Experiences of God's power are wonderful. But when they become more important than the word of God, heresies start to creep in! The calling of the church back to the authority of the Bible was the single most important contribution of the sixteenth century Reformers like Luther and Calvin to the church universal. But they did more than just to emphasize the finality of the word. They pioneered careful methods of study and biblical interpretation, and taught systematically from the Bible. By their lives of godly scholarship and prayer, they set biblical truths free to bring revival to a spiritually, morally and doctrinally corrupt church.

But the teachings of the Reformers went further than that. Scholars have noted that it was their theology that laid the foundation for the beginning of modern science, and the development of the "Protestant work ethic." These helped generate wealth and brought economic prosperity to those countries that adopted it. Their teachings also contributed significantly to the development of modern-day democracy,

with its concern for human rights, the equality of all men and women before God, and the checks and balances in government to prevent corruption and the abuse of power. This is no small achievement when we note that these are all foundational ideas upon which the world of today has been built.¹⁸

If today's renewal movement is to impact the Asia of tomorrow similarly, it must shed its legacy of anti-intellectualism and get down to serious biblical and theological homework. Only then can it demonstrate to the world that the gospel has answers for the toughest intellectual questions of our time. Thankfully there are signs that this is happening among some Pentecostal scholars in Asia today, especially those from the Assemblies of God.

Again, it will draw on the social justice tradition in order to develop a more sensitive social conscience, identify with God's concern for the poor and oppressed, and help make Asian societies more just and godly. It will allow the incarnational tradition to teach us how to bring God's presence and the imitation of Christ into our homes, work and the world. And it will allow the various streams of spirituality, working together, to bring us to the point of authentic self-denial, total commitment and simplicity of life, which is what the path of radical discipleship requires. Without these things, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement will not be able to cope with the seduction of money and the over-abundance of material wealth that the twenty-first century will bring to many in the church in Asia.

One final thought. Up to this point, many in the renewal movement today are looking primarily to western models for inspiration in our lives and ministry. What many do not realize is that almost all that we can learn from the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in the west, can be learned from the lives and teachings of some great Asian heroes of faith. These include people like Sadhu Sundar Singh and Baht Singh of India, Pastor Hsi and John Sung of China, and Petrus Octavianus, one of the key leaders of the Indonesian Revival. In present-day charismatic language, these men were certainly as "anointed" as any of the visiting preachers from the west, if not much more. At the same time, they combined outstanding demonstrations of "signs and wonders" in their ministries with a strong biblical stress on holiness of character and sacrificial living. They serve as far better role models for us than many of the dispensers of the prosperity gospel today. Thus in the lives and

¹⁸ See, e.g., Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 218-35.

teachings of such men and women, there is a well-spring of largely untapped spiritual resources that can be drawn upon to help sustain the present renewal movement today, and move it forward to greater heights tomorrow.

As we peered into the twenty-first century, all the signs indicate that the church in Asia will play an increasingly prominent part in world Christianity and global mission. Numbers will continue to grow, and in some cases exponentially. Certainly our desire is that the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal will mature, and thereby impact the Asian church even more powerfully in the future. But one thing we must do is never to take God for granted. God may use us today and someone else tomorrow. No one is indispensable, and none may assume a monopoly on the Holy Spirit! The people of Israel in Samuel's time had to learn the lesson of "*Ichabod*.... 'The glory has departed from Israel'" (1 Sam 4:21). Whenever unfaithfulness prevails, God's glory leaves. The same lesson was impressed upon Israel in Ezekiel's time. As judgement came upon Jerusalem because of its persistent lack of repentance through the centuries, "the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple" (Ezek 10:18). God's glory comes, and God's glory goes! A lot depends on his people. Are we keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25)?

SPIRITUALITY AS A RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
REFLECTIONS FROM
THE CATHOLIC-PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE¹

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

1. Spiritual Transformation and the Transformation of the World

To speak of the “Kingdom of God” is to speak of the ultimate will of God for the whole of creation. The symbol of the Kingdom conveys not only what we hope for but also a sense of urgency about our present responsibilities to be about the work of justice and the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, social classes, and racial and ethnic groups. It also furnishes criteria for promoting social well-being on personal, communal, and structural levels.²

The kingdom of God as the ultimate criterion for spirituality and justice—the symbol of the inbreaking of God’s will over all of God’s creation—is the starting point for Roman Catholics and Pentecostals in their search for a common ecumenical foundation of mission and social concern. Ecumenically it is highly significant that with all of their differences in doctrine, ecclesiastical structures and spiritual traditions, the two largest Christian families currently were able to find enough held in common to work for and dream of a united witness in word and

¹ The earlier version of this paper was read in the Conference on “Spirituality and Social Justice” held at Messiah College/Sider Institute, Granham, PA, in May 2002.

² “Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness: The Report from the Fourth Phase of the International Dialogue 1990-1997 between the Roman Catholic Church and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2:1 (January 1999), pp. pp. 105-51 (# 54). Hereafter the Final Reports (FR) will be referred to as FR I = 1972-1976, FR II = 1978-1982, FR III = 1985-1989, FR IV = 1990-1997.

action. Building on two decades of theological talks at the international level beginning from 1972,³ Catholics and Pentecostals discussed extensively the relationship between spirituality and social justice during the 1990s dialogue named “Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness” (1990-1997).⁴

Catholics and Pentecostals agree on the power of spiritual transformation to shape the moral and social consciousness and make Christians instruments of social change. Spirituality, living the life of the Holy Spirit, energizes the church to do evangelization and social justice. They assent that transformed people cooperate with the Spirit, the Creator and Sanctifier, in transforming the world.⁵ Highlighting the significance of spiritual transformation, the common agreement further says: “Transformed people are compelled by the Spirit, the Creator and Sanctifier, to transform the world in the light of the in-breaking Kingdom of God.”⁶

For Catholic spirituality, the energy for spirituality and efforts for social justice is in the grace of God conveyed to the church in the sacraments, prayer and the word:

The transforming power of the Kingdom in individuals, communities and society is the power of God’s grace, especially mediated through the saving mysteries of the death and resurrection of Christ. God’s grace is a gift, freely given. Grace comes to us in many ways but especially within the life of the Church where we hear and respond to the Gospel, celebrating these mysteries of Christ in the sacraments.⁷

³ For the history, topics, and discussion of the dialogues during 1972-1989 (preceding the missiological phase), see V.-M. Kärkkäinen, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat: Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue 1972-1989*, Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft 42 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft, 1998).

⁴ For the emergence, development and themes, see V.-M. Kärkkäinen, *Ad ultimum terrae: Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue 1990-1997*, Studien der Interkulturelle Geschichte des Christentums 142 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999).

⁵ “Agreed Account,” 1993, A.3 (unpublished dialogue material; hereafter AGA).

⁶ FR IV, 59.

⁷ FR IV, 52. “Hard Questions—Catholic Answers,” 1993, #3 (unpublished dialogue material, hereafter HQ-CA).

While Pentecostals also celebrate sacraments, pray and preach the word, their revivalistic spirituality, an interesting mixture of Anabaptist, Wesleyan-Holiness and Catholic heritage, focuses on the inner transformation of the person as the key to social transformation. Pentecostalism has come to emphasize that “the rebirth of a person by the Spirit is the anticipation of the transformation of the cosmos” (cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Rom 8:21).

This is why conversion and incorporation into the community of faith cannot be seen apart from the transformation of society. The person filled by the Spirit of God is impelled by that same Spirit to cooperate with God in the work of evangelism and social action in the anticipation of the new creation.⁸

The purpose of this essay is to analyze various facets of these common agreements in light of Catholic and Pentecostal theologies and spiritualities and so advance the common ecumenical quest for a conciliar theology of mission and social justice. First, I will take a brief look at Pentecostal spirituality and its potential for social justice for the simple reason that this topic is much less known than Catholic spirituality; one hardly needs long argumentation for the connection of justice and spirituality in Catholic tradition. Second, I will look at the significance and implications of *koinonia* for our topic. Third, the importance of prayer and intercession as a source for social concern will be discussed. And fourth, as one may expect for a paper dealing with Pentecostalism, I will consider the role of charisms in the church’s response to social justice; by way of introduction to that topic, a brief look at the issue of Spirit-baptism is in order. I will close my essay with some ecumenical challenges.

2. Pentecostal Spirituality: Its Potential and Struggles

One of the most common criticisms against Pentecostal missions is its alleged lack of social concern.⁹ While there is no denying the fact

⁸ FR IV, 40.

⁹ See, e.g., Judith Chambliss Hoffnagel, “Pentecostalism: A Revolutionary or Conservative Movement?” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbeans and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), pp. 111-21; Francois G. Wessels,

that, especially in the early stages of the movement, the urgency to evangelize tended to blur the vision for social justice, right from the beginning Pentecostals have also excelled in various kinds of social programs. The question of the relationship between spirituality and social justice is far more complicated than is often acknowledged. The Pentecostal team in the Catholic dialogue spent considerable time explicating the background and themes of this question.

The origin of Pentecostalism, and consequently its missionary paradigm, and more precisely, that of social concern, derive from the two formative factors that are integrally related to each other: eschatological ethos and the crucial role of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe that they have been called by God in the “last days” (Acts 2:17) to be Christlike witnesses in the power of the Spirit.¹⁰ The hope in the imminent coming of the Lord has sustained Pentecostals during persecution, harassment, imprisonment and martyrdom during the last century. They have consistently taught that the church must be ready for the coming of the Lord by means of faithful witness and holy living. They have taught that everyone will have to give account to the righteous Judge for those things which have been done or left undone.¹¹ Pentecostals today continue to believe that intense hope has been and will continue to be necessary for endurance, healing and engagement of the forces—both social and spiritual—which oppress and violate people.¹²

The Spirit makes the church a missionary movement, which not only founds communities but also cultivates them. The Holy Spirit is looked upon as the One who empowers with the charisms for witness and social service.¹³

“Charismatic Christian Congregations and Social Justice—A South African Perspective,” *Missionalia* 25:3 (1997), pp. 360-74; Simon Chan, “Asian Pentecostalism, Social Concern and the Ethics of Conformism,” *Transformation* 11:1 (1994), pp. 29-32. For a comprehensive Pentecostal response, with an agenda for social concern, see Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996).

¹⁰ FR IV, 38.

¹¹ FR IV, 39.

¹² FR IV, 41.

¹³ FR IV, 38.

But how then are we to explain the apparent lack of social concern among Pentecostals? The Pentecostals responded that the individualism of Pentecostal theology and a lack of historical awareness until recently hindered attention to social sin and social injustice. The lower socio-economic status of early Pentecostals may also explain the lack of Pentecostal involvement in social justice issues. They did not think it was necessary to attempt to change society rather it was necessary to invite people to personal faith. The otherworldliness once encouraged in Pentecostal belief tended to distance them from the present world. This was partly the heritage of the holiness tradition, out of which Pentecostals came. The idea of the *church* as a pilgrim people traveling through a sinful world, as well as a sense of foreignness, and a premillennial vision of the future, served to discourage social and political involvement by Pentecostals. The evangelistic and revivalist heritage consolidated this kind of orientation. With priority on personal conversion, Pentecostals—with most Fundamentalists and many Evangelicals—were careful not to be associated with the stigmatizing “social gospel.” Consequently, the focus of Pentecostals has been on individual change, often with less attention to social change. This is not to deny the personal and social consequences of being “saved,” “sanctified” and “filled with the Holy Ghost,” but to note the obvious one-sidedness of their approach to larger-scale problems.¹⁴ At the same time, it has to be noted that, along with some social critics, Pentecostals have discovered that effective social change often takes place at the communal and micro-structural level, not the macro-structural level.¹⁵

It is in light of this background that perspectives uncovered in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue gain their full significance. The category of *koinonia* was one of the most crucial ones.

3. *Koinonia* and the Formation of Healing Communities

In the life of the community, Pentecostals have found a new sense of dignity and purpose in life. Their solidarity creates affective ties, giving them a sense of equality. These communities have functioned as social alternatives that protest against the oppressive structures of the society at large.¹⁶

¹⁴ FR IV, 39.

¹⁵ FR IV, 43.

¹⁶ FR IV, 43.

Pentecostals and Catholics mutually agreed that *koinonia* as lived by the early Christians (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37) had social implications. Their communities did not act from a concept of social justice. The concern they showed for the poor, widows and strangers, was not seen as an entirely separate activity, but rather an extension of their worship.¹⁷

The topic of *koinonia* has been one of the major topics in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue. The third quinquennium (1985-1989) was devoted to various ecclesiological topics related to communion.¹⁸ In dealing with social concern, some of the implications of the emerging *koinonia*-theology were brought to bear upon the discussion.¹⁹

The topic of *koinonia* is, of course, familiar to Catholics, but its significance and implications are just emerging among Pentecostals. In hindsight, one may say, as the Pentecostal dialogue team did, that without often acknowledging it, the Spirit-inspired *koinonia* at the local level has been a powerful agent of social transformation since the beginning of the movement. The strong sense of community, patterned after the model of the early church (cf. Acts 2 and 4) became the "Pentecostal paradigm." In living out their Spirit-inspired *koinonia* at the local level, the early Pentecostals challenged current norms of inequality concerning the treatment of minorities, women, and the poor. "Thus, mainline denominations petitioned their societies for social justice, while Pentecostals found justice in their daily relationships with the dispossessed of society."²⁰ Pentecostalism, with its appeal to marginal groups in society, shattered the norms of middle class society. During a time when racial and gender inequality was endemic, Pentecostals welcomed black and white, male and female, rich and poor. We see the

¹⁷ FR IV, 57.

¹⁸ See further, Kärkkäinen, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat*, chs. 4 and 5.

¹⁹ See the important article by the Catholic co-chair of the dialogue, Kilian McDonnell, OSB, "Vatican II (1962-1965), Puebla (1979), Synod (1985): *Koinonia/Communitio* as an Integrating Ecclesiology," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 25 (1988), pp. 399-427, in which he traces the development of *koinonia*-theology from Vatican II to the Synod of Bishops (1985). He has a section on the social implications of *koinonia*, based on the example of the early church (Acts 2) in sharing even material goods among Christians.

²⁰ Murl O. Dirksen and Karen Carroll Mundy, "Social Justice and Evangelism: A Pentecostal Perspective" (An unpublished Pentecostal Position paper for the 1993 session in Paris, France), pp. 1-2.

norm-shattering quality of Pentecostalism also in the early leadership of the movement. On the West Coast of the U.S.A., consider the impact of the black preacher William Seymour, who presided over the famous Azusa Street revival. Women were given prominent places in leadership, too.²¹

This phenomenon bears great similarity to what the Reformed systematician Michael Welker, in his celebrated pneumatology *God the Spirit*, spells out with regard to the role of the *ruach Yahwe* in the book of Judges:

The Spirit produces a new unanimity in the people of God, frees the people from the consequences of the powerlessness brought about by their own "sin," and raises up the life that has been beaten down by oppression.... In all the early attestations to the experience of God's Spirit, what is initially and immediately at issue is the restoration of an internal order, at least of new commitment, solidarity, and loyalty. The direct result of the descent of God's Spirit is the gathering, the joining together of people who find themselves in distress. The support of their fellow persons is acquired; a new community, a new commitment is produced after the descent of the Spirit.²²

Catholics and Pentecostals noted that early Christian communities, often persecuted and harassed, were praying communities to whom prayer and intercession became a tool of not only cultivating their relationship to God but also to others and the world.

4. Prayer, Contemplation and Power

Catholics and Pentecostals are unanimous about the role of prayer in cultivating spirituality that strives for the values and lifestyle of the kingdom to come. The prayer of Christians responds to Christ's call to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God (cf. Matt 6:10). The daily prayer of the people of God for the coming of the kingdom, the Catholic team emphasized, is one of the main ways Christians can cooperate with their Lord to better the world.²³ God's kingdom by its very nature is God's gift and work. Christians do not construct the kingdom, but rather

²¹ Dirksen and Mundy, "Social Justice and Evangelism," pp. 2-3.

²² Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 52, 57.

²³ FR IV, 52.

“ask for it, welcome it and make it grow within us.”²⁴ It comes by grace in the power of the Spirit.”²⁵ Catholics say that prayer empowers us; in fact, it demands that we strive for just and loving relationships among people, in family, in community, and in society. All these are included in Christ’s redemptive work.²⁶

It is noteworthy that Pentecostals, who otherwise emphasize the “prayer of faith” and spiritual gifts in their spirituality, needed guidance from their Catholic counterparts to spell out the implications of prayer for social action. Ironically, prayer does not seem to play a great role in social action among Pentecostals, or at least they do not emphasize it explicitly. The Catholic team emphasized that prayer not only empowers God’s people, in fact, it demands of them a correct relationship to each other in the community and the society, for all are redeemed by Christ.²⁷

Pentecostals also needed to be challenged regarding their understanding of (spiritual) “power” linked to prayer and intercession. The Catholic position paper by Karl Müller, S.V.D. proposed that the “missionary must be a saint...a contemplative-in-action,”²⁸ a model that seems quite foreign to an aggressive, visionary Pentecostal missionary and evangelist. Müller’s statement comes out of consideration of John Paul II’s encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*. The last chapter deals with missionary spirituality which demands first of all “complete docility to the Spirit,” “being molded from within by the Spirit, so that we may become ever more like Christ.” The Pope’s call for “contemplative action” arises out of his encounter with non-Christian spiritual traditions, particularly in Asia. He says: “Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way.”²⁹

In the same context however, the Pope calls for fortitude and discernment as well as boldness in preaching the gospel, which is often opposed by “unbelieving and hostile forces.” Therefore, at least in the

²⁴ *Redemptoris Missio* by John Paul II, 1991, # 20; quoted in HQ-CA 1993, #3.

²⁵ HQ-CA 1993, #3.

²⁶ FR IV, 52.

²⁷ HQ-CA 1993, #3.

²⁸ Karl D. Müller, SVD, “The Biblical and Systematic Foundation of Evangelization” (An unpublished Catholic Position paper for the 1991 session in Venice, Italy, 18).

²⁹ *Redemptoris Missio*, # 87, quoted in Müller, “The Biblical and Systematic Foundation of Evangelization,” p. 18.

Pope's mind, the two are not in opposition. Another essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is "an intimate union with Christ." Following Christ always means self-emptying, it is the way of the cross.³⁰

For Catholics, prayer and sacraments belong together. Intercessory prayer not only relates to the question of the theology of religions (i.e., the destiny of those outside the church), it also has social consequences in Catholic spirituality:

It is therefore in the midst of the intercessory prayer of the Church—the Eucharist, other sacraments, as well as the daily prayer of the people—in which we are united to the transforming power of the saving death of Christ, and with the prayer of Christ who taught us to pray for the coming of the Kingdom: "Thy Kingdom come."³¹

It is not surprising that different orientations of missionary spirituality are linked with differences in the overall spiritual ethos. Pentecostal nurture of the spiritual life usually involves an emphasis upon dramatic religious experiences and participation in a regular process of discipleship. Active Bible study, personal prayer life, in addition to witness and outreach to unbelievers is emphasized, leaving little room for contemplation. It would appear that Catholicism has had a greater emphasis upon the day-to-day Christian life than Pentecostalism, and that an emphasis on solitude and silence is stronger in Catholicism than in Pentecostalism.³² Both sides recommend further discussion about the relationship between prayer and evangelization.³³

In Pentecostal spirituality, prayer and intercession is not usually related to the sacraments, but rather to charisms, the spiritual gifts. Thus, an ecumenically fruitful discussion also took place about the role of charisms and social justice. But before that topic could be discussed, the question of Spirit-baptism—the fulcrum of Pentecostal theology—had to be touched.

³⁰ *Redemptoris Missio*, # 88, quoted in Müller, "The Biblical and Systematic Foundation of Evangelization," p. 18. The place of the cross in the Christian life was discussed in FR I, 44.

³¹ HQ-CA 1993, #3.

³² HQ-CA 1991, #3.

³³ AGA 1991, III:2.

5. Social and Moral Implications of Charisms

Pentecostal spirituality makes an integral connection between *koinonia*, Spirit baptism, and spiritual gifts:

The life of *koinonia* is empowered by the Holy Spirit; in recent times many have experienced that power through “the baptism in the Holy Spirit.” This presence of the Spirit has been shown in a fresh activity of biblical charisms, or gifts (cf. 1 Cor 12:8-11) reminding all Christians to be open to charisms as the Spirit gives to everyone individually, whether these gifts are more or less noticeable. Some of the charisms are given more for personal edification (cf. 1 Cor 14:4a), while some provide service to others, and some especially are given to confirm evangelization (cf. Mark 16:15-20). All of them are intended to help build up the *koinonia*.³⁴

The doctrine of the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” has become the most distinctive aspect of Pentecostalism and later Charismatic movements. No definitive consensus has yet been reached between Catholics and Pentecostals as to the interpretation of Spirit baptism, but significantly, both parties acknowledged the necessary role of Spirit baptism in *koinonia*.³⁵ Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism centers on the post-conversion empowerment event with spiritual gifts (often speaking in tongues is favored). Catholics have more than one interpretation, the sacramental or actualist interpretation being most widely embraced: Spirit-baptism is seen as a breakthrough to a conscious awareness of the Spirit already received and present through Christian initiation.³⁶

Of all the charisms, *glossolalia* also serves a prayer function (cf. Acts 2:11; 10:46; 1 Cor 14:14-15). The prayer-function among Pentecostals has much to do with a desire for spiritual power to be equipped for service and witness.³⁷

³⁴ FR IV, 27.

³⁵ For the basic consensus, see FR I, 11-15.

³⁶ For a careful study on Spirit-Baptism, see Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991).

³⁷ Kilian McDonnell, OSB, “The Function of Tongues in Pentecostalism,” in *Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1977-1982): A Study in Developing*

Theologically it is highly interesting that some Catholics as well as some Pentecostal theologians have wondered if charisms, especially *glossolalia* could be seen as a sort of *sacrament*. The Catholic Heribert Mühlen, during the first quinquennium (1972-1976), noted the relationship between speaking in tongues and sacramentalism. He called the gift of tongues in Pentecostalism a “substitute sacrament.” He also noted that for Pentecostals the gift of tongues represents a “physical experience” of the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.³⁸ He argues that to emphasize “physical signs”, such as the “signs” pointing to the presence of God, is not necessarily foreign to Catholic sacramentalism—with phenomena like prayer for the gift of tears in the Roman Missal.³⁹ The Catholic co-chair of the second quinquennium, Kilian McDonnell spoke about tongues as having also a memory function, a sort of *anamnesis*. He asked whether tongues could be understood as a sort of sacrament: “The remembering in the Spirit is the recall of the realities of the gospel: Jesus is Lord, the life which the Father pours out, the extravagance, the death and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, the promise of eternal life.” Seen from this perspective tongues becomes what McDonnell calls “a modest sacramental act” in which what was antecedent, what had already been bestowed is brought forth.⁴⁰ The social implications of this statement would be obvious, if not explicated by the dialogue: charism would be participation in the history of Jesus in his healings, outreach to social outcasts, and in challenging the establishment.

The Pentecostal Frank Macchia, while not part of the dialogue team, yet an active observer and interlocutor, draws implications of *glossolalia* for social action. Referring to the sign value of sacraments, Macchia asks, “May not Rahner’s view of ‘sacrament’ help Pentecostals to understand why they regard tongues as such a significant medium for the realization of God’s presence to empower believers for service?”⁴¹

Ecumenism, vol. 2, ed. Jerry L. Sandidge, Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums 44 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 20-56.

³⁸ Heribert Mühlen, “Charismatic and Sacramental Understanding of the Church,” p. 344.

³⁹ Mühlen, “Charismatic and Sacramental Understanding of the Church,” p. 345.

⁴⁰ McDonnell, “The Function of Tongues in Pentecostalism,” pp. 41-42.

⁴¹ Frank Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,” *Pneuma* 15:1 (1993), pp. 61-76 (63). Another Pentecostalist, the social ethicist Murray Dempster, has stressed the communal

Important for Christian social concern is also Macchia's comment on the relationship between *glossolalia* and *theologia crucis*.⁴² While speaking in tongues glorifies the power of Pentecost, it also shares in the "sighings" of the world filled with pain and alienation. Indeed, most Pentecostals have rightly understood *glossolalia* as the "sighs too deep for words" in Romans 8:26.⁴³ And if speaking in tongues participates in the pain of God, it also points to the new creation: "Glossolalia is not only a yearning for the liberation and redemption to come, it is an 'evidence' that such has already begun and is now active. This evidence of God's transforming and liberating activity is an essential element of divine theophany in Scripture."⁴⁴

6. Concluding Reflections: Challenges for Future

The ecumenical significance of the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue is obvious and far-reaching. The fact that these two churches—so radically different from each other and often faced with mutual suspicion and conflicts especially on the "mission field" with charges of proselytism abounding—engage the dialogue and are able to give a common, albeit limited, statement on spirituality, evangelization and social justice, points to the future of ecumenism.

In conclusion, I would like to point out challenges awaiting a more focused mutual discussion. First, what is the relationship between *koinonia* and social justice specifically? Much clarification is needed here, and fortunately, we find ourselves living amidst a renaissance of *koinonia*-theology in general and ecclesiology in particular. Catholics tend to highlight the importance of *koinonia* in relation to other (local) churches; Pentecostals focus on *koinonia* at the local level. What would a

and ethical significance of tongues and Spirit baptism in a provocative article titled "The Church's Moral Witness: A Study of Glossolalia in Luke's Theology of Acts," *Paraclete* 23 (Winter 1989), pp. 1-7.

⁴² Frank Macchia, "Sighs too Deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), pp. 47-73 (68-70). See also an important article by Pentecostalist M. M. Duggan, "The Cross and the Holy Spirit in Paul: Implications for Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Pneuma* 7:2 (1985), pp. 135-46.

⁴³ Macchia, "Sighs too Deep for Words," p. 59 n. 37.

⁴⁴ Macchia, "Sighs too Deep for Words," p. 70.

koinonia-spirituality look like that would embrace both of these aspects and how would that advance efforts for social justice?

Second, the relationship between prayer and justice needs more work. No one would downplay the integral relationship. But, theologically, how are these two realities connected? How does the prayer of the church relate to the renewal of social structures? What about intercession? Is there a parallel here between the Catholic idea that the intercession of the church (especially at the Eucharist) is a means of extending salvation to those outside the church? How does Protestant theology in general and Pentecostal in particular relate to that?

Third, the category of power needs scrutiny. In recent years there has been enthusiasm among some Pentecostals and many “Third Wave” Charismatics (those who belong to the second stage of the Charismatic Movement outside mainline churches like Vineyard), over “spiritual warfare” and victorious prayer. Apart from theological questions that relate to that whole concept, one may ask the Pentecostals to expound more clearly their understanding of “spiritual power.” What is it? How does it relate to the question of justice and social structures, or does it have only to do with individual empowerment for service and witnessing?

Fourth, the relationship between charisms and social concern needs more attention. Fortunately, this is another area where Catholic theologians have labored, particularly since the entrance of the Charismatic Renewal into the church in the late 1960s. According to the classical Catholic theology, charisms are usually understood as *gratia gratis data* (different but not separated from *gratia gratis faciens*).⁴⁵ Catholic theology—like mainline Protestant theologies, too—need to be challenged to inquire more actively into the meaning of this theological axiom and how it can be lived out. Pentecostals and Charismatics need guidance to properly balance individual and communal implications. Moltmann’s chiding comment is well worth hearing: “If charismata are not given to us so that we can flee from this world into a world of religious dreams, but if they are intended to witness to the liberating lordship of Christ in this world’s conflicts, then the charismatic movement must not become a non-political religion, let alone a de-politicized one.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *ST I/II*, q.111. a.1.

⁴⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 186.

Other challenges could be raised related to our topic such as the role of Mary in spirituality and social justice (a question that was, indeed, raised in the dialogue),⁴⁷ but let these suffice for starters. The common confession at the end of the 1993 dialogue session reveals a repentant and hopeful spirit:

In repentance we acknowledge our sins and turn from it to God our Savior, praying that through Jesus Christ our Lord we might together find the forgiveness, healing and restoration we need to be faithful evangelizers and doers of justice.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ FR IV, 67; AGA 1993, D.4. For extensive discussion on Mary, see FR II: "Perspectives on Mary" (nos. 58-76) and relevant position papers of that phase.

⁴⁸ AGA 1993, E.

GLOBALIZATION, ECUMENISM AND PENTECOSTALISM
A SEARCH FOR HUMAN SOLIDARITY IN HONG KONG¹

Lap-yan Kung

Globalization is a term employed to describe “a process (or sets of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise of power.”² Thus, globalization is never restricted to the contemporary era, that is, since the late 1960s, but long before the technological advances, world religions unquestionably constitute one of the most powerful and significant forms of the globalization of culture in the pre-modern era, and even possibly now. One of the differences between the pre-modern and contemporary is simply the degree of interconnectedness, but this degree of difference results in a completely different world.³ Kofi Annan, the United Nations’ General Secretary, says that “globalization has an immense potential to improve people’s lives, but it can disrupt—and destroy—them as well. Those who do not accept its pervasive, all-encompassing ways are often left behind. It is our task to prevent this; to ensure that globalization leads to progress, prosperity and security for

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Asian Pentecostal Society at Union Biblical Seminary, Bangalore, India on August 19-20, 2002.

² David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), p.16.

³ See Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World* (New York: Routledge, 2000). He explains the difference in four areas, namely, risk, tradition, family and democratization.

all.”⁴ Surely, this is not simply the task of the United Nations, but rather the task of all people of goodwill. If so, can the Christian church take up this task?

Unlike Hinduism and Confucianism, Christianity itself is always global-oriented, due to its ideology of mission. It is not exaggerated to say that Christian mission is a kind of global movement. Nevertheless, this Christian global movement is not only confined to the concern of saving souls and planting churches, but also it is a cultural and socio-political movement. Put theologically, Christian mission is about the evangelization of God’s kingdom.⁵ It not only evangelizes, but also creates a new culture of life, that is, a life characterized by solidarity in the understanding of co-responsibility, communion and friendship. This is what we call ecumenism. Ecumenism is more than a concern for the unity of the church. Rather it is a unity that brings the churches together in solidarity and communion with one another as well as the people that the churches serve.⁶ But we have to admit that the history of Christian mission is not always like this. It is both promising and disruptive. This is the experience that we, Asian Christians, experience in our countries.⁷ If the central Christian message is a message of humanization,⁸ a critical attitude

⁴ Quoted from Samuel S. Kim, *East Asia and Globalization* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 1.

⁵ See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), pp. 368-446.

⁶ See Emilio Castro, *A Passion For Unity* (Geneva: WCC, 1992).

⁷ The history of missionary work in China is a good example of this. On the one hand, Christian mission was associated with imperial power and often did not take local cultures seriously, and on the other, Christian mission helped us to know the true God, and develop education, medical care and other social activities.

⁸ Some do not feel comfortable with the word “humanization,” because it may neglect the necessity of the vertical dimension of salvation. This view is reflected in the Vatican’s 1984 “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation.” But the World Council of Churches, *The Church for Others and the Church for the World* (Geneva: WCC, 1967), p. 78 affirms that “we have lifted up humanization as the goal of mission because we believe that more than others it communicates in our period of history the meaning of the messianic goal. In another time the goal of God’s redemptive work might best have been described in terms of man turning towards God.... The fundamental question was that of the true God and the church responded to that question by pointing to him. It was assuming that the purpose of mission was Christianization, bringing man to God through Christ and his church. Today the fundamental question is much more than

towards the practice of Christian mission should be taken in order that in the era of globalization it would not be an agency of neo-colonialism, but rather an agency of liberation. I suggest that a spirit of solidarity associated with ecumenism is a Christian witness and challenge to globalization. Pentecostalism would be particularly chosen as an example for reference, because I believe that any ecumenical study is inadequate without taking Pentecostalism seriously (which I will further explain this point later).⁹

1. Globalization in Hong Kong

There is no doubt that globalization brings the belief that “no human is an island” into realization. Only a few can escape from its impact. Nevertheless, it is naïve to hold that globalization is simply a matter of westernization. Of course the western nations, and more generally the industrial countries, still have far more influence over world affairs than do the poorer states. But globalization is becoming increasingly de-centered, and its effects are felt as much in western countries as elsewhere. This is true of the global financial system, and of changes affecting the nature of government itself. What one could call “reverse colonization” is becoming more and more common. “Reverse colonization” means that non-western countries influence developments in the West.¹⁰ Examples abound, such as the Latinizing of Los Angeles, the emergence of a globally oriented high-tech sector in India, or the selling of Brazilian television programs to Portugal. Although globalization is led from the West, bears the strong imprint of American political and economic power, and is highly uneven in its consequences, globalization is not just the dominance of the West over the rest; it affects the United States as it does other countries. On the other hand, some argue that economic globalization is bringing about a denationalization of economies through the establishment of transnational networks of production, trade and finance.¹¹ As S. Strange puts it, “the impersonal forces of world markets...are now more powerful than the states to whom ultimate

of true man, and the dominant concern of the missionary congregation must therefore be to point to the humanity in Christ as the goal of mission.”

⁹ See Jürgen Moltmann and Karl Josef Kuschel, ed., *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* (London: SCM, 1996).

¹⁰ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World*, pp.33-34.

¹¹ Held and others, *Global Transformations*, pp. 3-4.

political authority over society and economy is supposed to belong...the declining authority of states is reflected in a growing diffusion of authority to other institutions and associations, and to local and regional bodies.”¹² Neo-Marxists like W. Grieder and K. Ohmae consider that contemporary globalization represents the triumph of an oppressive global capitalism.¹³ It creates a world of winners and losers, a few on the fast track to prosperity, and the majority condemned to a life of misery and despair. The old north-south division is argued to be an increasing anachronism as a new global division of labor replaces the traditional core-periphery structure with a more complex architecture of economic power. The growing economic marginalization of many “Third World” states as trade and investment flows within the rich north intensifies to the exclusion of much of the rest of the globe. To a large extent, this criticism is valid, but economic competition does not necessarily produce zero-sum outcomes. While particular groups within a country may be made worse off as a result of global competition, nearly all countries have a comparative advantage in producing certain goods that can be exploited in the long run. In addition, globalization is not just an economic issue. The conditions facilitating transnational cooperation between peoples brought by globalization pave the way for the emerging global civil society.

The complexity of globalization makes it impossible for us to pass a simple judgment on it. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the impact of globalization locally. Hong Kong, the city where I live and work, is chosen for this further examination.

From an economic perspective, globalization involves an explosion of global trade, investment and financial flows across state and regional boundaries. The cheap labor and the labor-intensive light industries of Hong Kong of earlier times helped it achieve industrialization by riding the tide of international trade, investment and finance. Nevertheless, this situation has been changed since the early 1980s. With the intensification of international trade, investment and finance, more countries and regions (mainly Southeast Asia) entered the competition for market and capital. Hong Kong finds itself less competitive against some of the newer developing economies. An obvious example of this is that many factories of Hong Kong have moved to China. As a result, employment provided by

¹² S. Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 4.

¹³ See W. Grieder, *One World, Reality or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1997), and K. Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

manufacturing fell from around 880,000 in 1979 to 229,400 in 2000,¹⁴ and the percentage of manufacturing in Hong Kong's gross domestic product dropped from 23.7% in 1979 to 6.2% in 2000.¹⁵ In response to the global economic changes, Hong Kong has taken the route to transform itself from a newly industrialized economy to a world city. Tung Chee-Hwa, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, affirms this view and repeatedly says, "Hong Kong should not only be a major Chinese city, but could become the most cosmopolitan city in Asia, enjoying a status comparable to that of New York in North America and London in Europe."¹⁶ World cities are hub points of the global economy. They are key centers in the spatial organization and articulation of production and markets and are major sites for the concentration and accumulation of international capital. Typically, they are characterized by a concentration of corporate headquarters, banks and firms specializing in producer services.¹⁷

The most obvious of the economic impacts of globalization is the growing gap between the very rich and the very poor. The income disparity of Hong Kong was never small, but it has become even greater in the last two decades. A Gini-coefficient above 0.5 indicates extremely unequal distribution. In the 1980s, the Gini-coefficient for Hong Kong was 0.45, and in 2001, it reached 0.525.¹⁸ Growing income disparity is typical of many world cities. As industries give way to services, employment in cities like Hong Kong tends to expand at both the high and the low end and to shrink in the middle. Lawyers, bankers, accountants and public relations specialists get paid extremely well, while restaurant and laundry workers, many of whom are new immigrants, can barely get by. Apart from serious income disparity, the rate of unemployment grows higher, because a lot of workers have been sacrificed for the economic transformation, that is, from a newly industrialized economy to a world city. The most recent

¹⁴ Department of Statistics, "Employment and Vacancies Statistics (2000)" (<http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2000/eng/07/c07-03.htm>), checked: June 26, 2002.

¹⁵ Chow Tak Hay, "Speech by Secretary for Commerce and Industry (2000)" (<http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2000/eng/04/c04-01.htm>), checked: June 26, 2002.

¹⁶ Tung Chee-Hwa, "2000 Policy Address by Chief Executive" (<http://www.info.gov.hk/pa99/index.htm>), checked: June 26, 2002.

¹⁷ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

¹⁸ E. K. Yeoh, "Alleviating the Disparity between the Rich and the Poor (2002)" (<http://www.info.gov.hk/hwb/text/english/speech/sp1121.htm>), checked: June 26, 2002.

unemployment figure is 7.7% (July, 2002), that is, one out of thirteen working people is unemployed. On balance, Hong Kong so far has been a beneficiary of globalization, but no one can guarantee that Hong Kong can continue to be a beneficiary. In fact, Hong Kong has suffered serious economic difficulties since the Asian financial crisis and it takes much longer road for her to rehabilitate. It is clear that globalization generates a more severe competition among countries and even within a country than a sense of global responsibility and solidarity.

From a socio-cultural perspective, globalization involves the massive movement of people across state borders and the fusion of cultures on a global scale. People movement is not new to Hong Kong. Traditionally, Hong Kong was a major departure point for Chinese emigrants going to other parts of the world. Since the issue of 1997 came up large numbers of Hong Kong residents (about 7% of the population) immigrated to North America, the South Pacific and Europe, but surprisingly, this does not cause Hong Kong a serious problem of brain drain, because many of them once obtain their foreign passports, they return to work in Hong Kong. In fact, the economic and business opportunities provided in Hong Kong unmatched by other locations attracts people moving to Hong Kong. On the other hand, for the purpose of family union, there are 150 people daily coming from China to settle in Hong Kong. Although many of them are unskilled immigrants, they also contribute to Hong Kong in important ways. For example, Hong Kong's birth rate has fallen steadily in the last two decades. Without an increase in fertility, immigration is likely to be the core element of population change. Nevertheless, most of the people in Hong Kong do not recognize the contribution made by the immigrants. Especially since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the people in Hong Kong put the blame on them by condemning them as a burden for Hong Kong, for many of them live on social benefits. Filipinos working in Hong Kong are the second group of people to be blamed, because they are accused of taking up most of the domestic job. Finding a scapegoat and a feeling of exclusiveness become one of the serious tensions caused by globalization.¹⁹

Symbols of western consumerism, such as Coca-Cola and blue jeans, are prevalent in far-off concerns of the world. On the other hand, ethnic cuisine, fashion and music from different parts of the world are now popular fixations of western metropolises. Hong Kong is not only a passive consumer and conduit of international cultural products, but also

¹⁹ Giles Gunn, *Beyond Solidarity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 25-47.

becomes a producer and exporter. Hong Kong's cultural products, be they indigenized international products or purely local creations, have become more influential in other places, especially among other ethnic Chinese communities. Direct satellites bring Hong Kong kung-fu movies, soap operas and pop singers to ethnic Chinese homes. The ideologies and values embedded in these products become part of the shared consciousness of Chinese all over the world. Thus, Hong Kong has emerged as a cultural center in the transnational Chinese public. Nevertheless, the success of Hong Kong's cultural products is simply a success of commercialization, because Hong Kong's popular cultures are mainly dominated by a kind of prosperity ideology (success as measured by money and wealth), an apolitical and amoral mentality, and consumerism.²⁰

Finally, from a political perspective, the impact of globalization refers to the tendency for political decisions and actions in one part of the world to generate widespread reactions and consequences elsewhere. The global movement of people, news and images along with the global flow of goods and capital has turned many a local event into international concerns. For instance, labor policies in one place can affect the wage levels of another, and the environmental standard of one country can have ramifications for the quality of air in another. Traditionally, Hong Kong was largely an apolitical territory. "Living on borrowed time in a borrowed place,"²¹ many devoted themselves to business activities while showing little interest in politics. Since the Tiananmen Square event in 1989 the people of Hong Kong are more active and participatory in social issues than before. Political globalization has not only changed the political structure of Hong Kong, but also imposed serious constraints on China's policy toward Hong Kong. Beijing probably wishes to impose stricter political control over Hong Kong, as it does elsewhere in China, but its capacity to do so is seriously constrained by the political attention that Hong Kong commands on the global political agenda. For instance, the Hong Kong government intends to follow Beijing's move to condemn Falun Gong, but

²⁰ See Ng Chun Hung, ed., *Reading Hong Kong Popular Cultures 1970-2000* (in Chinese; Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²¹ This is the phrase used by Askbar Abbas in his interesting story of Hong Kong's culture, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 2.

the government is hesitant to pass any law to condemn Falun Gong, because the issue of Falun Gong has become an international concern.²²

We notice from the foregoing analysis that globalization is a long-term historical process that is fraught with contradictions. Hong Kong is a beneficiary of globalization as well as a victim. I think this also applies to many countries. In the following, I would like to highlight one particular issue arising from the experience of Hong Kong in order to reflect what the Christian community can respond, namely, the threatening otherness.

2. The Threatening Otherness

If globalization implies a high degree of interconnectedness, the experience of Hong Kong shows that close interconnectedness means high competitiveness. Competitiveness is not necessarily evil, for competitiveness does bring improvement. It is unimaginable that there could be a society without a sense of competitiveness. But under the domination of the market economy, the culture generated by competitiveness seems more threatening than motivating, because competitiveness is not simply about a description of what is going on, but also becomes an ideology in a very business sense. This is successfully reinforced by sports. From the most recent World Cup Soccer (2002) held in Korea and Japan, sport is one of the most successful globalized industries. Ideally, sports bring nations together in contexts supportive of peace and friendship. Although this does occur, the reality is that powerful transnational corporations have joined nation-states as major participants in global politics. Sports have been increasingly used for economic as well as political purposes. Because sports can capture the attention and emotions of millions of people, corporations need symbols of success, excellence and productivity that they can use to create marketing handles for their products and services and to create public goodwill for their policies and practices. This is why corporations have invested so much money into associating their names and logos with athletes, teams and sport facilities. The dominant images and messages are consistent with the interests of the major corporate sponsors, and they tend to promote an ideology infused with capitalist themes of individualism, competition, productivity and consumption. In nations with market economies, sports

²² Lap Yan Kung, "New Religions and Religious Liberty: A Case of Falun Gong," *Fujen Religions Studies* 3 (2001), pp. 187-208 (in Chinese).

are often associated with success and hard work. Instead of reference to collectivism and the common good, there are references to competition and individual achievement. Instead of an emphasis on comradeship, there are stories showing how individuals have reached personal goals and experienced self-fulfillment through sports. In a sense, the vocabulary and stories that accompany sports in market economies tend to emphasize that using competition to achieve personal success and to allocate rewards to people is natural and normal, while alternative approaches to success and allocating rewards are inappropriate.²³

Under the ideology of the market economy, those who fail in competition would be discarded. When competitiveness is portrayed as a fair game, those who fail are no longer considered as the victims of an unequal game, but rather reflect their inability, and therefore, society has no responsibility to take care of them. Put bluntly, poverty is the result of their incompetency. But all we know that globalization does not guarantee fair competition, for the rich always have a better position. For instance, if technology is the infrastructures of globalization, those who are able to access to this technology are in a better position, and contrariwise, the poor are further marginalized. Although the rich may not be the winners in all competitions, the opportunity for the poor to do so is much less than for the rich. But through the implicit ideological propaganda, our society gradually accepts that survival of the fittest is the norm of relationship. As a result, a more self-centered mentality is nurtured.

Globalization brings our world closer, and this assumes that we can experience the diversity of human culture, but this is not always the reality. In fact, the globalization of culture dominated by economic power makes our world less possible or less tolerant for the existence of diversity. Ironically our world becomes more homogeneous. Local cultures are given up for the way of Sony, McDonalds and Coca-Cola, because they represent the signs of modernization. Despite the fact that some local cultures can be preserved, they probably become commercialized under the development (invasion) of tourism. Take the example of sports again. When sport is associated with economic power, this affects people in relatively poor nations to de-emphasize their traditional games, and to focus their attention on sports that are largely unrelated to their own values and experiences.

Last but not least, globalization brings with it the fragmentation of economy and society.²⁴ Globalization increases mobility and the way in

²³ Jay Coakley, *Sport in Society* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), pp. 312-49.

²⁴ Martin Albrow, *The Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), pp. 64-68.

which the autonomous subsystems of the social world are becoming independent together with the increasing competition between high cultures that have taken separate courses in history. When mobility has become the norm, the norms and values of the place and society in which one was born and practical knowledge of them lose their significance. The future of the individual is not determined. This change has transformed human social life. The old communal organization of the social world with its warm nest has been replaced by the impersonal, contractual, formal order of society. The direction of culture, which was formerly regulated by tradition, has primarily been taken over by the individual, who has become autonomous. Transitoriness and the contingent have become the constitutive characteristics of our everyday culture. It has lost its organic unity and has become segmented, like a mosaic.²⁵ A single space which can easily be surveyed has become an enchanted castle with many niches which are unequal because they are incalculable. For a long time politics has been an autonomous sphere of the social system. Soon the economy made itself independent of politics. Multinational concerns have often become more powerful than the states in which they are active. Science and technology have developed their own drives and criteria and forms of development. Research centers, universities and industries are autonomous domains. The media have a cultural power which competes with the educational system. All these and further spheres appeal to their own logic and resist a comprehensive integration. What, then, holds all the independent systems functioning together as a whole in society? What ties together the systems as far as meaning and purpose? And whom should society respond to and judge among all the divergent global claims made by each of its systems? This is what Anthony Giddens calls the “runaway world.”²⁶

Finally, although Hong Kong is on the direction to transform itself to be a globalized city, a globalized city, according to Tung Chee-Hwa, is chiefly understood in terms of economic rather than global responsibility. Thus, globalization does not bring us to share responsibility for other parts of the world. Ironically, it leads us to be more self-centered, because our concern is survival.

Globalization does bring us to have a close interconnectedness, but many people, especially the poor, experience that the close interconnectedness is threatening more than positive, because they are

²⁵ See Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1984).

²⁶ See A. Giddens, *Runaway World*.

forced to follow the so-called globalized (capitalist) way of life. The ambiguity of globalization is its interconnectedness and alienation. The former describes a social reality of relationship, while the latter describes what the nature of this relationship is about. Does this mean that we have to refuse globalization? Perhaps it is not a matter of yes or no, because globalization is unavoidable and unstoppable. Our concern thereby is how to make use of the interconnectedness brought by globalization and formulate it to become a community of friendship rather than a community of aliens. Here, I find Christian experience important.

3. An Alternative Global Movement

As said at the beginning, I consider that the Christian mission is a global movement. This is an ecumenical movement, a movement of friendship. However, I have to admit that the history of Christian mission cannot be separated from western imperialism, although these two are not synonymous.²⁷ Ye Xiaowen (葉小文), the head of the Religious Bureau of the Chinese government, agrees with this.²⁸ Ecumenism means communion (*koinonia*),²⁹ but this is not restricted to the communion among Christian communities. Otherwise, the church would become a ghetto and betray its identity. Theologically speaking, the church is always a sacrament.³⁰ The symbolic and instrumental value of the communion of the church is to serve the purpose of God to gather the whole of creation under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The church is called as a witness to the saving and liberating purpose of God for all creation (Eph 3:8-11). The communion to which the Lord calls the church is a communion for the benefit of the world, so that the world may believe (John 17:21). The church is called as a priestly people to intercede for the salvation of the whole world (1 Peter 2:9). The church, therefore, is a society in the world which exists for the sake of those who are not members of it. Dietrich

²⁷ See Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Mission* (London: Lutterworth, 1966).

²⁸ Ye Xiaowen, "Review The Last One Hundred Years of Religion in China," in *The Future of Religions in the 21st Century*, ed. Peter Ng (Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, 2001), pp. 27-46 (in Chinese).

²⁹ See Nicholas Sagovsky, *Ecumenism, Christian Origins and the Practice of Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³⁰ Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1974), pp. 58-70.

Bonhoeffer wrote, "The church is the church only when it exists for others.... The church must share in the secular problems of ordinary life, not dominating, but helping and serving."³¹ The communion of the church is a parable and a reality anticipating the one humanity. It is an encouragement for every attempt to overcome any of the barriers that divide humanity. Since the church is a sacrament the communion of the church should be visible. Without this visible sign, the church would be fragmented into a multitude of disconnected signs. Moltmann writes, "The visible coming together of visible people in a special place to do something particular stands at the center of the church. Without the actual visible procedure of meeting together there is no church."³² This is why the unity of the church is so important.

I consider that the communion of the church is based on the experience of reconciliation with God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 tells us that the ministry of Jesus Christ is to reconcile humans with God, and the church is called to continue the ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation is about a change of relationship from hostility to harmony. I call this change friendship. God invites humans to be his friends. Does this mean that God needs friendship? On the one hand, the answer is no, because the Trinitarian God is a relational God, and therefore, God does not need something other than himself (herself) to have an experience of communion. On the other hand, the answer is yes, because the Trinitarian God is a relational God, and therefore, God is open to relationship. The openness of God allows humans (the creation) to share their trinitarian mystical love and relationship. The friendship of God with humans is fully revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus' friendship with the sinners and tax-collectors of his time breaks down the barriers of the equality principle. That is to say, the friendship of the "wholly other" God which comes to meet us, makes open friendship with people who are "other" not merely possible but also interesting, in a profoundly human sense. More importantly, Jesus' friendship is not simply for his own sake, but for the sake of his friends, and he even died for them (John 15:14-15). It is interesting to note that in John's eyes, Jesus died for his friends rather than for sinners. The latter still has a sense of inequality, but the former completely changes the God-humans relationship.

The friendship that Jesus shows is an acceptance of others in their difference. Other people's difference is not defined against the yardstick

³¹ D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: SCM, 1971), pp. 382-83.

³² J. Moltmann, *The Church in Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1977), p. 334.

of our own identity and our prejudice about people who are not like us. The difference is experienced in the practical encounter which mutually reveals what we are and what the other is. Therefore, friendship is not about identifying who my friends are, but about sharing my friendship with others. This is a friendship characterized by solidarity, inclusiveness and freedom. The community of Christians thereby can interpret itself not only as an assembly of believers, but also as a society of friends. The motive for this is not the moral purpose of changing the world. It is festal joy over the kingdom of God which, with the name of Jesus and in his Spirit, has thrown itself wide open for “the others.” This is the nature of the ecumenical movement.

The history of the World Council of Churches (WCC) is a concrete example actualizing the unity of the church.³³ The WCC was created in a merger of two prominent movements: Faith and Order, and Life and Work. The continuing existence of these two currents is often recognized; various agenda items within the movement are ascribed to this or that current. While the doctrinal dialogues are assigned to Faith and Order, social, economic and political issues are understood to be the concerns of Life and Work. Various attempts at overcoming the division have been made. The sixth assembly of the WCC (1983) called for the development of a conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The intention was to bind together the so-called socio-political issues with the ecclesiological ones and thus affect a unity of faith and life. Within this search for conciliarity, the unity of the church is more than about doctrinal clarification, but also should include and be tested by a reference to God’s basic attitude towards creation and history. This would help the church to discover in depth the unity already existing and facilitate growth into a wider unity. But this combination is not to promote a belief that “doctrine divides, service unites.” Rather the possibility and reality of mutual service have become important instruments in the growth of trust, the display of mutual love and better service to the world. Common witness through proclamation and service reflects the unity that already exists and nourishes the unity the churches seek. At the same time, the churches must be prepared to find themselves in situations where the type of services they feel called to offer creates controversy and even division among them. If the unity of the church is strong enough to generate service to humanity, it must also be strong enough to stand up to disagreements on the type of service to be given and to engender a degree of trust which will allow them to have confidence that the aims they are pursuing are the same. In a world

³³ See *Crisis and Challenge of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 1994).

in which the reconciling vocation of the church is more necessary than ever, the church cannot offer wise or pious counsel to warring factions in humanity without showing that the church can overcome its own historical divisions and provide a parable of the potential reconciliation of every human conflict.

4. A Spirit of Solidarity

When an environment is considered as hostile and threatening, friendship usually comes into existence for mutual protection. In other words, friendship becomes another word for exclusion. For instance, many of the European nations work together to form a regional bloc (that is, the European Economic Community) in order to protect their interests. Something like this also has been taking place between Hong Kong and Guangdong Province to form a Pearl River Delta Economic Zone. This is the friendship that happens in globalization. Nevertheless, such a kind of friendship does not ease our anxiety, but rather we fall into a deeper anxiety, because our relationship is based on mutual-benefit more than trust.

The Christian ecumenical movement is about human solidarity. It is not about an alliance to defend our own interest. Nor is it generated by our self-interest. Rather it is always for the sake of others, and is a way to overcome individualism (regionalism) and human division by bearing with one another. Nevertheless, ecumenism is not something like business expansion. It is to give more than to receive. More importantly, "it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church."³⁴ Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; to participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people.

God's mission reveals to us his preferential option for the poor.³⁵ The image of God is so universal in the Christian scriptures that the cry of the oppressed becomes a technical linguistic term meaning an appeal reaching up to and moving God in unyielding fidelity to humans. When Israel reflects theologically on the origin of evil in the world, the breakup of fellowship that this evil represents is imaged as the cry of the murdered brother's blood reaching up to God (Gen 4:10). In the prophetic tradition it

³⁴ J. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 64.

³⁵ G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), pp. xxv-xxvi.

is said that God does not hear the prayer of those who have “their hands...full of blood” (Isa 1:17-18). In the Psalms the theme of God who defends the blood spilt when fellowship is broken and the theme of the cry of the oppressed are joined together: “For the avenger of blood has remembered; he has not forgotten the cry of the afflicted” (Ps 9:13). It is these two converging experiences—the experience of the intolerability of oppression and genocidal repression seeking to maintain injustice and the experience of the God of Jesus Christ in the struggle against this death-dealing power.

Besides, it is in the foot washing that the evangelist John perceives the ultimate justification for an attitude of celebrating life in the name of Jesus and his continued presence in history through the Spirit, an attitude that motivates a table fellowship with the poor. Jesus’ practice is not simply an act of humility in the sense of modesty, but as the action of the one who is affirming that in the new human community there is no inequality in the sense of stratified ranks. Nor is there any servitude, but only mutual service, a co-responsibility of brothers and sisters, one to another, a friendship linked to the same mission and the same destiny. To express solidarity is to restore the banners of justice and dignity to the resistance of the poor. God’s solidarity is characterized by the cross. The cross of Jesus reminds us that there is a distinction between the *Pax Christi* and the *Pax Romana*. The cross of Jesus reveals that the authority of God is then no longer represented directly by those in high positions, the powerful and the rich, but by the outcast Son of Man, who died between two wretches. The rule and the kingdom of God are no longer reflected in political rule and world kingdoms, but in the service of Christ. The consequence for Christian theology is that it must adopt a critical attitude towards political religions in society and in the churches. The political theology of the cross must liberate the state from the political service of idols and must liberate humans from political alienation. It must prepare for the revolution of all values that is involved in the exaltation of the crucified Christ.

Globalization brings us closer than before, but it does not necessarily tighten our relationship. On the contrary, many people are left behind, and they are always the poor. Under the ideology of competitiveness, they are no longer to be seen as the victims. Rather they have to be responsible for their “inability,” and as a result, a spirit of indifference is promoted rather than that of solidarity. Christian ecumenism is a movement that is shaped by a spirit of solidarity, because this is the core of the gospel, which is to say, God becomes human. Thus, globalization can be welcome as an instrument for the church to realize human solidarity, because the more we close, the more concrete our prayer is.

5. A New Form of Ecumenism

Globalization is not simply a belief, but is something that has been taking place in our daily life. Therefore, it is not enough just to provide a theoretical-theological reflection on it. Furthermore, if ecumenism is a Christian response to globalization, ecumenism itself has to be a living reality more than a confession.

Apart from the institutionalized ecumenical movement (such as WCC and Christian Conference in Asia), there is a new form of ecumenical movement, namely, the Pentecostal/charismatic movement. Pentecostals proclaim the truly amazing size of the worldwide movement. Beginning in 1901 with only about 40 students in Charles Parham's Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, and gaining world-wide prominence through William Seymour's Azusa Street Mission after 1906, the growth has been exponential. According to Peter Wagner, "in all of human history, no other non-political, non-militaristic, voluntary human movement has grown as rapidly as the Pentecostal-charismatic movements in the last 25 years."³⁶ Within less than a century Pentecostals are in the process of outgrowing all other Protestant churches taken together. A growth from 0 to more than 460 million in 1995 (if these statistics are to be believed) is unparalleled in Protestant church history.³⁷ Barrett projects that according to present trends of figure is likely to rise to 1040 million or 44% of the total number of Christians by 2025.³⁸ Pentecostals are rightly drawing attention to this extraordinary growth.³⁹ Besides, the influence of Pentecostalism is not restricted to Pentecostal churches, but rather its influence penetrates into different denominations (including the Roman Catholics). It is really an ecumenical movement (although I have to admit that Pentecostalism also brings schism among churches). Ralph Martin saw the Charismatic renewal as the vehicle for bringing the sacramental and the Evangelical churches together. In Martin's view, the Charismatic movement was the only force that could weld these forces together for a unified Christian

³⁶ Quote from Vinson Synan, *The Spirit Said "Growth"* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1992), p. ii.

³⁷ See David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

³⁸ D. B. Barrett, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission 1997," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21:1 (1997), pp. 24-25.

³⁹ Lesile Newbigin, *The Household of God* (New York: Friendship, 1954) prophetically saw Christianity moving towards a convergence of three streams, namely, the sacramental, the Evangelical and the Pentecostal.

witness.⁴⁰ Furthermore, people like Harvey Cox⁴¹ and Douglas Petersen⁴² highly appraise this movement and positively consider that Pentecostalism would bring a new impetus to Christianity and society. If so, any study of the ecumenical movement should not ignore Pentecostalism.

What contributions does it bring to the ecumenical community? The history of Pentecostalism shows us that it basically is a contextual grass-root movement. It is a religion of the poor, because it is rooted in the black oral history.⁴³ The black oral quality of Pentecostalism consists of the following: orality of liturgy; narrative theology and witness; maximum participation at the levels of reflection, prayer and decision-making and therefore a reconciliatory forms of community; inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public form of worship that function as a kind of oral icon for the individual and the community; an understanding of the body-mind relationship that is informed by experience of correspondence between body and mind as, for example, in liturgical dance and prayer for the sick. These are the practices that we still can find among Pentecostals although there are various in different churches. The black oral tradition is not simply about an ethnic culture, but rather it symbolizes the outcast, because at that time (the beginning of the twentieth century) the Blacks were discriminated against. Although the white Pentecostal churches of North America do not associate these practices with the history of the Blacks and replace it by the middle-class culture, the Blacks at that time found their identity in Pentecostalism. This is why the Black consciousness and the Pentecostal movement cannot be easily distinguished.⁴⁴ Thus, the Pentecostal movement is a movement about a struggle of the Blacks to be themselves. The Pentecostal movement is a people's movement, and a voice of the poor.

Besides, the Pentecostal movement is an ecumenical movement. It comes from the Blacks, but not confined to it. The early Pentecostals were hopeful that this revival would bring worldwide Christian unity. Charles

⁴⁰ Ralph Martin, *Fire on the Earth* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1975), pp. 30-42.

⁴¹ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995).

⁴² Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might Nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996).

⁴³ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁴ See Robert Beckford, "Black Pentecostals and Black Politics," in *Pentecostals after a Century*, eds. Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 48-59.

Fox Parham, the pioneer of Pentecostalism, was troubled by the confusion of denominationalism. He wrote,

Unity is not to be accomplished by organization or non-organization. Unity by organization has been tried for 1900 years and failed. Unity by non-organization has been tried for several years and resulted in anarchy, or gathered in small cliques with an unwritten creed and regulations which are often fraught with error and fanaticism. We expect to see the time, when baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body, the gloriously redeemed Church without spot or wrinkle, will have the same mind, judgment and speak the same things.⁴⁵

W. F. Carothers who served as the Field Director for Charles F. Parham's Apostolic Faith Movement wrote: The restoration of Pentecost means ultimately the restoration of Christian unity.⁴⁶ Even the Assemblies of God shared the view that something unique was happening in the Pentecostal movement, yet its founders viewed themselves as standing in full continuity with other Christians. From the event of the Azusa Street, the unity that Pentecostals restored was not simply about Christian unity, but rather broke down human barriers caused by racial prejudice, and created fellowship among them.⁴⁷ Vinson Synan writes,

The Azusa Street meeting was conducted on the basis of complete racial equality. Pentecostals point out that just as the first Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:1-11 included "men out of every nation under heaven", the modern "Pentecost" at Los Angeles included people of every racial background. Participants in the meeting reported that "Negroes, whites, Mexican, Italians, Chinese, Russians, Indians," and other ethnic groups mingled without apparent prejudice on account of racial origins. The fact that Cashwell was forced to reform his racial prejudice after arriving at the Azusa Street Mission indicated that the trend in early Pentecostal services was toward racial unity in contrast to the segregationist trends of the times.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Quote from Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, p. 348. See Cecil M. Robeck, "Pentecostals and Ecumenism in a Pluralistic World," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, eds. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, (Carlisle: Regnum, 1999), pp. 338-62.

⁴⁶ Quote from Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, p. 348.

⁴⁷ Lap Yan Kung, "Outpouring of the Spirit: A Reflection on Pentecostals' Identity," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4:1 (2001), pp. 3-19.

⁴⁸ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 170-71.

This is really the sign of the anticipation of one humanity. Nevertheless, the history of Pentecostalism reveals that it took a rather negative attitude towards ecumenical movement and even condemned it. It is not the purpose here to give the reason to it,⁴⁹ but in the last ten years, we notice that the Pentecostal churches retrieve their ecumenical tradition. For instance, the formation of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America claims that its membership would seek new partnerships “in the Spirit of our Blessed Lord who prayed that we might be one. It goes on to pledge a commitment to “the reconciliation of all Christians regardless of race and gender as we move into the millennium.”⁵⁰ In fact, a lot of ecumenical dialogues between Pentecostals and other churches, such as, Roman Catholics, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, WCC have taken place in the last decade.

Unlike the traditional ecumenism of that denominational structures and theological systems standing in the way of organizational unity from the top down, the experience of the Pentecostals occurs in local prayers and praise meetings. It emphasizes both the participatory of the laity and the plurality of the structures of the churches.⁵¹ This is due to their belief of charisms. According to St. Paul, charisms are given by the Spirit in Christ, but are never restricted to a particular circle of persons. This is always universal, and no members of the church are without charisms. Therefore, the division into those who serve the community and those who allow themselves to be served is ecclesologically untenable: each person is to serve with his or her specific gifts and each is to be served in his or her needs. Nevertheless, charisms given by the Spirit are not for the sake of individual enhancement. They are always for the sake of building up the church, and therefore, the universal distribution of the charisms implies shared responsibility for the life of the church. At the same time, the emphasis on charisms of Pentecostals allows them to accept the differences among them, because charisms are given by the Spirit. This is why their service allows different ways of expressions coming from the congregations. A kind of unity in diversity and diversity in unity emerges. Nevertheless, this is an ideal or a vision far from reality. In fact, Harold

⁴⁹ Robeck, “Pentecostals and Ecumenism in a Pluralistic World,” pp. 342-44.

⁵⁰ “Pentecostal Partners: Racial Reconciliation Manifesto,” *Pneuma* 17:2 (1995), pp. 218-222 (218).

⁵¹ See Harold D. Hunter, “We Are the Church: New Congregationalism,” in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge*, eds. Jurgen Moltmann and Karl Josef Kuschel, pp. 18-21.

Hunter complains about “the rise of bureaucracies and shibboleth monitors” in the Pentecostal churches. Nancy Bedford, who teaches theology in Buenos Aires, made the following observation there about the ethos of some rapidly growing charismatic churches:

It centers on following spiritually gifted *candillos* (largely male) who are both charismatic and authoritarian. Thus the form seems congregational but the ecclesiological substance reverts to the worst kind of priest-centered Catholicism.... It is an example of the gospel adapting to a culture and growing (in some case phenomenally)—but at what price!⁵²

Despite it, the Pentecostals still can provide a different ecclesiology that inspires our understanding of ecumenism.

Apart from the deficiencies, what Pentecostal movement shows us is a movement of the poor of that it allows their way of life to be integrated into the Christian faith, a movement of friendship of that it seeks for unity, and a movement of valuing each individual of that it believes God’s charism given to each individual. Krister Stendahl wrote, “The Spirit as teacher renews the faith of the church and the intellectual quest of humanity; the Spirit as unifier renews the love of the church and the solidarity of humanity; the Spirit as liberator renews the justice of the church and the moral energy of humanity; and the Spirit as vivifier renews the hope of the church and the aspirations of humanity.”⁵³ This is the spirit that our world urgently needs in order that we can see others as companions and friends rather than the threatening aliens.

6. Pentecostals in Captivity

If the above analysis is the tradition of Pentecostalism, our concern is to what extent this understanding is still found among the Pentecostals in Hong Kong.⁵⁴ I do not have a statistical survey on Pentecostalism in Hong Kong, but it does not mean that Pentecostalism among Christianity in

⁵² Quote from Hunter, “We Are the Church,” p. 43.

⁵³ Krister Stendahl, *Energy of Life* (Geneva: WCC, 1990), pp. 49-50.

⁵⁴ The following criticism is not only found in Hong Kong, but also in other countries. See Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger, ed., *Pentecostals after a Century* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). In this book, cases of Pentecostalism in Britain, South Africa, Chile and South Korea are chosen.

Hong Kong is less influential. Many churches in Hong Kong have felt themselves drawn to emulate the charismatic style or simply encountered it as a tendency embraced by many of their own members. Some traditional churches like the Methodists even hold two separate forms of worship service (charismatic worship and traditional worship) in order to satisfy the needs of different groups of their church members.

For the analysis purpose, I identify there are three different charismatic groups in Hong Kong. The first group is the Pentecostal churches associated with the historical Pentecostal tradition. They may be very different in the understanding and practice of Pentecostal teachings, but there is no main difference between them and the Evangelical churches, for they consider saving souls and planting churches the prime mission of the church. They never speak on any social issues, for they believe that spiritual revival is the answer to the fallen world. The second group is the Evangelical churches with charismatic practice, such as healing. Because of the fact that the theology of these churches does not take social transformation as an integral part of mission, they pay no attention to the history of Pentecostalism but selectively borrow (copy) some practice of Pentecostalism that they find useful. Their main concern is how to make the church more appealing to their members instead of how the church can serve society better. Besides, due to the difference between Pentecostal and Evangelical theology, it often leads to controversy among them, and even schism.⁵⁵ Finally, there are charismatic groups who identify themselves with “the third wave” more than the historical Pentecostal tradition. They have a strong zeal for mission. Although they never consider that striving for social justice is the mission of the church, they really work among with the poor and marginalized. For instance, St. Stephen Society mainly takes care of the drug addicts and the homeless; JiFu mainly takes care of the new immigrants; Light of the Temple Street mainly takes care of the despised. Some may criticize that these are all charity works and far from social justice but no one can deny the importance of these works. Nevertheless, my concern is what happens to most of the historical Pentecostal churches. When Pentecostalism becomes very influential in Christianity, according to Barrett and Newbigin, what contribution it can make to the churches and society in general? I am convinced that if Pentecostalism is faithful to its tradition

⁵⁵ For instance, one congregation of the Evangel Free Church (Hong Kong) breaks away from its denomination. In fact, the pastor of this congregation is asked to leave the Evangel Free Church, for he introduces charismatic elements into the congregation.

and belief, it can create an alternative to the global-capitalistic system. Before that, the Pentecostals in Hong Kong have to repent in four areas.

Firstly, the Pentecostals in Hong Kong are inclined towards a kind of religious (denominational) chauvinism, and lose the Pentecostals' ecumenical spirit. Religious (denominational) chauvinism is a projection of a particular religious (denomination) identity with the claim to be the universal. Here religions vie with each other to catch the global religious market and sell their spiritual goods as the best, and even the only one. What appears to be a global outreach hides a power-agenda that is behind such aspirations as to see the whole world as its own faith. The process of globalization has added fuel and supplied the instrumentalities for the competing of religions, and indeed for religious (denominational) conflicts. What is worse is that religious (denomination) chauvinism does not allow any room for self-criticism, incapacitates it to revise its own traditional image of the other religious groups. In this way, the insider/outsider polarity gets theologically, culturally and politically rooted at the expense of genuine universality. The attitude is that of self-righteousness and exclusion. Religious nationalism is but a political expression of an ideologically oriented religious chauvinism. Much like the process of globalization which progresses by continuously excluding more and more people, so too religious (denomination) chauvinism excludes all those who do not belong to it. It could assume different forms and expressions, from a theological re-assertion of "without the baptism in the Spirit no salvation" to political and cultural exclusion of Christians and Muslims as aliens and as not belonging to the Indian nation because they are not Hindus.

Secondly, church growth becomes the ideology of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong, and the Pentecostal churches become more inward looking and self-centered. In order to recruit more members, the Pentecostals accommodate themselves to fit the needs of society. An example of this is the Yoido Full Gospel Church, which becomes the model for Pentecostals. Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho's philosophy of ministry is "find need and meet need." For him, the important question is how the Korean church can meet what the majority of Korean people need. Why do the Korean working class and particularly the women go to the shaman? Because they need health, wealth and success in their life ventures. Cho's preaching meets those needs exactly: "Anything is possible if you have faith." He often claims that the Christian faith is positive thinking and that Jesus Christ is a positive thinker.⁵⁶ Consequently, the gospel loses its transforming power,

⁵⁶ See Yoo Boo-Woong, *Korean Pentecostalism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 115-136.

but becomes a consumer product. When church growth becomes a significant sign of God's blessing, there is no place for statistics on how many souls die without Christ every minute if they do not take into account how many of those who die because of hunger and violence. With the ideology of church growth, the gospel is truncated in order to make it easy for everyone to become Christian. Church growth can be a way out for the churches to go on sinning under a respectable name, but not all that grows is the church. Cancer grows too.

Thirdly, Pentecostalism in Hong Kong is inclined towards a kind of prosperity theology. When our society has become preoccupied with material prosperity and obsessed with concern for health, Pentecostals become a captive to this life. The good life of TV commercials defined by possession- a well-furnished house, late-model car, high-tech imports gives rise to prosperity theology. Prosperity theology is fundamentally anthropocentric and is a product of the highly individualistic and self-centered culture of late twentieth century western capitalism. Besides, in the midst of social change and disruption, the one thing left that we think we can control is our bodies. Having lost faith in traditional communities and institutions, they took within themselves for answers. This narcissism signifies not so much self-assertion as a loss of selfhood.

Finally, signs and wonders, especially healing, become the phenomena of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong. These phenomena are considered as the presence of the power of the Spirit. Different "healing assemblies" are held in Hong Kong. W. MacDonald describes the healing evangelists as follows:

Single women, especially widows, are the preferred diet of this species of religious wolf. The evangelist weeps and melts the heart of the women. He declares that the Kingdom of God is about to collapse and his own stronghold is in danger unless substantial financial resources are sent to him immediately. But Paul never collects money to build up organization.... The greatest threat to the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in the last two decades of this century will be the rise and fall of personal kingdoms, because when they fall, as inevitably they must, the faith of those who do not have their eyes on Jesus, will fall.⁵⁷

They see the world as a cosmic and moral duality. Everything is either divine or demonic. They emphasize the conflict between God and the evil, but the tendency of many, including John Wimber's *Power Evangelism*, is

⁵⁷ W. MacDonald, "The Cross Versus Personal Kingdom," *Pneuma* 3 (1982), pp. 26-37 (35).

to see this struggle against demonic powers as too other-worldly and not to see that spiritual warfare must correspond to the geography of evil—this sinful and evil structures of society. They must see that the texture of social living makes no easy distinctions between the personal and social.⁵⁸

Pentecostalism, according to my thesis, is a powerful movement of the poor, of unity and valuing each individual, and as such is pregnant with potential for the transformation of society. It can generate a new culture in an era of globalization, that is, human solidarity. However, if it does not re-traditionalize its tradition, it would easily become institutionalized, withdraw from social struggles with the people and turn to become a ghetto or a middle class's prosperity gospel. For this conformity with the schemata of this (capitalist) world, the price is the sacrifice of the poor: the tears of the poor who are discarded by society. The price is the millions of starving people whose own subsistence economies have been destroyed in the interests of a so-called free-market, because it does not fit the schemata of this world, the schemes of the *koinonia* of the elites.

7. Ecumenism at the Crossroads

Roland Robertson, a sociologist, draws upon globalization theory to describe a series of processes by “which the world becomes a single place, both with respect to recognition of a very high degree of interdependence between spheres and locales of social activity across the entire globe and the growth of consciousness pertaining to the globe as such.”⁵⁹ But he sees it,

There is an emerging problem of the definition of the global human situation. The increasing sense of shared fate in the modern world rests, primarily, upon material aspects of rapidly increasing global interdependence and conflicts associated with the distribution of material and political power. On the other hand, notwithstanding recent developments relevant to the embryonic crystallization across national boundaries of modes of discourse concerning, in the broadest sense, the meaning of the modern global human circumstance, global

⁵⁸ Eldin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 201.

⁵⁹ R. Robertson, “The Sacred and the World System,” in *The Sacred in a Secular Age*, ed. Phillip Hammond (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 19.

consciousness is indeed relatively unformed in comparison with the mere sense impression of material interdependence.⁶⁰

Globalization demands a new sense of meaning, but the materialist accounts do not suffice.

In such a context, fundamentalism addresses classic issues of group boundaries and identity in a world undergoing a clear process of globalization. Robertson comments to this point:

With respect to both the exacerbation of concern with societal identities and the nature of individual attachment to one's own society, it would be expected that societies in the modern world would experience fundamentalist movements which make special claims to exhibit the real identity of society in question and also, perhaps, the true meaning to be given to the global circumstance. Indeed, we have witnessed the proliferation of such movements across the globe in recent years- some of them being explicitly concerned not merely with the identity of the societies in which they have arisen but also with the positive and negative identities of other societies in the international system- indeed, with the meaning of the global condition itself. My argument is that the fundamentalist and absolutist religious (and non-religious) movements of our time should be seen in terms of global developments and not simply in terms of their being reactions to particular *Gesellschaft* trends which a large number of societies have in common.⁶¹

The strain brought along by globalization is the lack of a new integrative meaning system for the new global economic and political interdependence. Absent alternative voices in providing meaning for this new dislocation of received worldviews and discourses, fundamentalism enters the arena with its own meaning system.

The case of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong reveals to us that it inclines to fundamentalism more than ecumenism. This does not only restrict to Hong Kong, but is also found in other part of the world.⁶² What concerns me most is the tribal mentality of fundamentalism, not the

⁶⁰ Roland Robertson and JoAnn Chirico, "Human Globalization and the World Wide Religious Resurgence: A Theoretical Explanation," *Sociological Analysis* 46 (1985), pp. 224-238 (225-26).

⁶¹ R. Robertson, "A New Perspective on Religion and Secularization in the Global Context," in *Secularization and Fundamentalism Reconsidered*, vol. III, eds. Anton Shupe and Jeffery Hadden (New York: Paragon, 1989), pp. 52-66 (65).

⁶² See David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

contents of its belief, because the former always leads to some kind of militant exclusivism. Put bluntly, it creates boundaries among people rather than breaks down human barriers caused by nations, race, gender, religions and ethnic. The ambiguity of Pentecostalism is that it is a worldwide movement, but not necessarily ecumenical. Nevertheless, the origin of Pentecostalism is ecumenical. Therefore, Pentecostalism is at the crossroads, whether it sees itself as an ecumenical movement or just a “Pentecostal” movement in a restricted sense.

Errata for *AJPS* 5:2 (July 2002) Issue

The editors apologize to two authors for our oversights. The corrections are:

- Table of Contents: The title which Erlinda Reyes reviewed is *Jesus the Healer* instead of *The Holy Spirit: An Appeal for Maturity*. The actual text contains correction information.
- The last sentence of Monte Rice (p. 312) failed to appear in its complete form. The last sentence should read:

This pattern of “critical reflection and action” as a didactic purpose seems to reflect then the Acts 13:1-2 missiological paradigm, wherein both the didactic and prophetic ministries helps the church respond to what the Spirit is saying.

Our web version has been corrected. Please accept the editors’ sincere apology to the contributors and our valued readers.

THE CALCUTTA REVIVAL OF 1907 AND THE REFORMULATION
OF CHARLES F. PARHAM'S "BIBLE EVIDENCE" DOCTRINE¹

Gary B. McGee

1. Introduction

"God is solving the missionary problem," trumpeted the *Apostolic Faith* newspaper, published by the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California.² Indeed, "the Lord has given languages to the unlearned, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Zulu and languages of Africa, Hindu and Bengali and dialects of India, Chippewa and other languages of the Indians, Esquimaux, the deaf mute language and...the Holy Ghost speaks all the languages of the world through His children."³ The best-known attempt to demonstrate this proficiency came when Alfred G. ("A. G.") Garr, pastor of the Metropolitan Holiness Church in the city, and his wife Lillian, left for the east coast in July 1906 to board ship for India, the first missionaries to leave Azusa for the "regions beyond."⁴

Unlike their Protestant missionary counterparts who often struggled to learn the necessary languages for mission work, the Garrs insisted they had already received the ones they needed directly from the Holy Spirit before they even left the shores of America. They could now avoid the time-consuming delay of formal language study—usually requiring several years—and begin preaching once they arrived. (For premillennialists like the Garrs, little time remained to evangelize before

¹ This essay has been prepared in honor of Dr. A. C. George, Dr. Ivan M. Satyavrata, and the faculty of Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore, India.

² Untitled note, *Apostolic Faith*, November 1906, p. 2, col. 4.

³ Untitled note, *Apostolic Faith*, September 1906, p. 1, col. 4.

⁴ Others in the party of five included their infant daughter, her African-American nursemaid, Mariah Gardner, and another missionary, "Miss Gammon."

the imminent coming of Christ; bypassing language school would save valuable time.) Though a missionary to India visiting Los Angeles had challenged Alfred's ability to speak Bengali, he went still confident that he could not only speak the language, but Chinese as well.⁵ Lillian claimed Tibetan and Chinese.⁶

The notion of God bestowing unlearned languages on missionaries—the “gift of tongues”—just as he had on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost had been discussed in mission circles for at least a century before they embarked for India. It became a topic of conversation at a

⁵ Arthur S. Paynter, “Fanaticism,” *Moody Church News*, September 1923, p. 5. Referring to the notes in his diary, Paynter wrote: “I have always regarded it as providential that I was allowed to meet the first Pentecostal missionary who went to India from the United States. This was some 18 years ago. A mutual friend introduced me to the missionary and, in course of conversation, I inquired what Indian language he intended to learn. The friend, who had brought us together, replied that the missionary was going to Calcutta as he had received the gift of Bengali tongue, and thus it would not be necessary for him to study a language. This interested me greatly for I had only just learned from secular papers of the then-called “Tongue Movement” in California. After a while I took the brother aside and asked him if he would mind talking to me in Bengali. He at once agreed to do so and spoke perhaps for a minute. Twice over, after intervals and apologizing for seeming curiosity, I made the same request and, twice over, the brother talked to me in what he thought to be Bengali. I then told him that I knew Hindi, a sister language, that had he been speaking to me in Bengali, I must have understood at least a word, but did not do so and added it was impossible for me to believe that he was speaking Bengali at all. He replied he was quite certain he had received the gift of the Bengali language and had been told so by two Indian boys he had met in America. On reaching Calcutta he was quickly undeceived for no Bengale could understand him. His wife, who was present and who seemed quite a bright Christian woman had, both she and her husband assured me, received the gift of the Chinese language. I remember writing in my diary concerning the couple ‘earnest, sincere people, but undoubtedly fanatical.’”

Garr's confidence was based on the recognition of his Bengali by an Indian that he met in Los Angeles. The *Apostolic Faith* (L.A.) reported in September 1906, p. 4, col. 2: “Bro. Garr was able to pray a native of India ‘through’ in his own language, the Bengali.” In 1914, he recounted: “But after [the Lord] baptized me in the Holy Spirit, He sent me [to India]. When I received the baptism I was speaking in the Hindustani language. A Hindu was present and he said, ‘You are speaking my mother tongue,’ and he told me what I said, and the Lord showed me plainly I was to go to India”; “Divine Wisdom Given the Faithful Missionary,” *Latter Rain Evangel*, July 1914, p. 18.

⁶ A. G. Garr, et al., “Pentecost in Danville, Va.,” *Apostolic Faith*, October 1906, p. 2 col. 3.

gathering of the Northampton Baptist Association in 1792 where William Carey asked the leaders “whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not binding on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent.” Probably most students of missions have heard about the sharp rebuke that followed: “Young man, sit down.... When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without consulting you or me.” Unfortunately, the last part of the scolding got lost in the retelling of the story: “Besides, there must first be another pentecostal gift of tongues!”⁷ Learning the vernacular languages seemed an almost insurmountable hurdle for westerners. Thirty-eight years later, a woman in Scotland claimed to receive languages for overseas evangelism.⁸ Interest increased especially after 1880 as radical Evangelicals grew apprehensive about the slow pace of conversions in the mission lands and the nearness of Christ’s return.⁹

Though early Pentecostals did not originate the idea of receiving unlearned languages, their linkage of a foreign language to baptism in the Holy Spirit set them apart. Early in the Calcutta revival, A. G. Garr not only had to face his inability to speak Bengali, but also had to re-examine the actual meaning of speaking in tongues.

This study investigates the revival from a historical and theological perspective. It also shows why Garr, more than any other Pentecostal at the time, began the process of reformulating the “Bible evidence” doctrine that had been taught since the earliest days of the movement.

2. Pentecost at Calcutta

The Garrs felt divinely commissioned as the “first Pentecostal missionaries to cross the seas to tell to missionaries and natives of India and China that God had visited the earth and given the ‘Latter Rain.’” Among the first to see “God’s mighty power” at Azusa, they now formed the vanguard of Pentecostal missionaries.¹⁰ When leaders of the

⁷ S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey* (New York: George H. Doran, c.1923), p. 50.

⁸ Robert Herbert Story, *Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Robert Story* (London: Macmillan, 1862), pp. 202-3, 210.

⁹ Gary B. McGee, “Shortcut to Language Preparation? Radical Evangelicals, Missions, and the Gift of Tongues,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25 (July 2001), pp. 118-23 (119).

¹⁰ B. F. Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored* (St. Louis: Gospel Publishing House, 1916), p. 96. The Garrs were unaware that the first Pentecostal missionary

Metropolitan Church Association (known also as the “Burning Bush”) to which their former congregation in Los Angeles belonged rejected their newfound understanding of Holy Spirit baptism, they no longer felt restrained by a “small fraction of the Holiness people,” nor even a single country. Echoing the sentiments of John Wesley, the world had become their parish.¹¹

Arriving in Calcutta, the capital of British India, in late December 1906, they prayed for three weeks for a door of ministry to open.¹² When invited to a prayer meeting of missionaries and Christian workers, they readily accepted. On the next day, Susan Easton, head of the Woman’s Union Missionary Society (WMUS) work in Calcutta, opened the doors of the Mission House on Dhurmatullah Street for the Garrs to report on “God’s visitation in America.” “With the exception of one or two,” they wrote, “we found the whole company very receptive, and when the Spirit spoke through us in other tongues, the reverence and deep hunger with which it was received proved to us that we had found the people to whom God [had] sent us.”¹³ At an evening service they again recounted the events of the outpouring of the Spirit in Los Angeles. Afterward, Pastor C. H. Hook of the historic Carey Baptist Chapel (built by Carey) at Lal Bazaar in the city asked them to begin preaching “this blessed ‘Truth’” at his church. Pentecostal meetings began there on January 13, 1907.

The meetings overlapped with the close of a missionary conference that had been in progress since December. Missionaries had come from across the subcontinent and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to hear two well-known teachers: Otto Stockmayer, a Swiss pastor, advocate of divine healing, and featured speaker at the Keswick conferences in England,¹⁴

had preceded them by two years. Mary Johnson, along with her colleague Ida Andersson, who spoke in tongues several years later, were products of a Pentecostal revival among Swedish-Americans at Moorhead, Minnesota and Fargo, North Dakota and left for Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa in November 1904. See Darrin J. Rodgers, *Northern Harvest: Pentecostalism in North Dakota* (forthcoming).

¹¹ Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored*, p. 98.

¹² For their initial difficulties after arriving in Calcutta, see A. G. Garr, “Divine Wisdom Given the Faithful Missionary,” *Latter Rain Evangel*, July 1914, pp. 19-20.

¹³ Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁴ For Stockmayer’s beliefs on divine healing, see Paul Gale Chappell, “The Divine Healing Movement in America” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1983), pp. 49-54.

and Robert J. Ward, director of the Missionary Training Home at Coonoor in South India and editor of the widely read *Prayer Circular*, a monthly periodical that promoted revival in India.¹⁵

With most of the missionaries staying over to attend the services at Carey Baptist, it seems obvious that for many the conference had not lived up to expectations. One participant, Max Wood Moorhead, the Presbyterian secretary of the YMCA in Ceylon, recalled, “At the close of those Waiting Days we were all about as hungry and dry as when we started.” Stockmayer had not been able “to bring to that little flock God’s message for the hour,” perhaps because they wanted an experience beyond the now predictable Keswickian call for the “overcoming life.”¹⁶ Missionary Etta Costellow remembered that her heart responded as Stockmayer spoke of the “Bride of the Lamb—of the Overcomers,” but wondered how she could become one.¹⁷

The meetings at the church stretched from January 13 to February and then afterward into March at a large house rented by Moorhead on Creek Row.¹⁸ The services usually began around 5 p.m. and lasted five or six hours. While the reports fail to cite the number that attended, the accommodations would have precluded a large gathering. The mixed company of Americans, Europeans, Eurasians and—presumably English-speaking—Bengalis, included missionaries, businessmen and British soldiers stationed in the city.

¹⁵ See “Rev. R. J. Ward, Congregational Minister, St. Helens,” *The Christian*, May 26, 1892, pp. 17-18.

¹⁶ Max Wood Moorhead, “The Latter Rain in Calcutta, India,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 17, 1920, p. 9.

¹⁷ Etta Costellow, “After Two Years,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, August 1909, p. 3.

¹⁸ It appears the meetings ended in March, due in no small part to the return of the missionaries to their places of ministry. Revival is also alleged to have occurred independently of Garr’s meetings at a Methodist orphanage for girls on Elliott Road directed by Fanny Simpson; see Maynard Ketcham and Wayne Warner, “When the Pentecostal Fire Fell in Calcutta,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 3 (Fall 1983), pp. 5-6; cf., Fanny A. Simpson, “Application for Appointment as Missionary by the Foreign Missions Department, General Council of the Assemblies of God,” August 11, 1931 (Editorial Office Files, Assemblies of God World Missions, Springfield, Mo.). Calcutta remained a center for Pentecostal revival as evident by the following article: “Some Impressions of the Calcutta Convention,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, July 1910, pp. 9-10.

In his messages, Garr stressed the importance of “tarrying” to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, traditionally understood as the “second blessing” of sanctification in Wesleyan-holiness circles.¹⁹ But unlike his holiness tutors, Garr—and his mentors at Azusa Street—separated sanctification from Holy Spirit baptism, viewing the former as preparation for the spiritual empowerment of the latter.²⁰ Naturally, it proved to be no small task to convince some in his audience that their previous experience of Spirit baptism was not the Pentecostal baptism after all, because they had not spoken in tongues and neither had “signs and wonders” (Acts 5:12) followed in their ministries.²¹ “Of course the devil is going to make a hard fight on this as he has always done on every ‘new, old’ step the saints of God have determined to take, as he did with Luther, Wesley, and others,” he told his hearers. In fact, “the very first thing you must do in order to be able to receive it is to *find out that you have not got it.*”²²

His preaching on repentance struck a responsive chord and produced public confessions of sin, some of which were so “black” that a “sense of delicacy” prevented Moorhead from mentioning them in his earliest account of the revival. The deep sense of conviction of sin resulted in people falling to the floor, howling, shrieking, groaning “as if the judgment day had already come,” sobbing, writhing, shaking “as if realizing that they were sinners in the hands of an angry God,” and “wails of despair...so heart-rending that they might have come from the regions of the damned.”²³ Other features included the frequent reading of jubilant Psalms; vocal expressions such as “Praise the Lord,” “Glory to God,” “Hallelujah,” in addition to “holy laughter.” A unique form of praise came with a “Spirit inbreathed wordless song” that was occasionally chanted. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, different voices

¹⁹ Costellow, “After Two Years,” p. 3.

²⁰ A. G. Garr, “Tongues: The Bible Evidence to the Baptism with the Holy Ghost,” *Pentecostal Power*, March 1907, pp. 3-4, reprinted as “Tongues: The Bible Evidence,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, September 1907, pp. 40-47. For the purposes of this paper, I have used the original article, unless otherwise indicated.

²¹ Garr, “Divine Wisdom,” p. 20.

²² Garr, “Tongues,” p. 2.

²³ Max Wood Moorhead, “Pentecost at Calcutta,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, March 1908, p. 7. This article was reprinted from the first issue of the periodical published in early 1907.

blended creating “awe-inspiring” singing in tongues.²⁴ (Pentecostals in America and Europe referred to this phenomenon as the “heavenly chorus” and the “heavenly choir.”²⁵) In one instance, a person even wrote in an unknown language; when holding a pen, their hand “was moved rapidly by an unseen power across the sheet [of paper], line after line [writing] Spirit-given messages which wait for interpretation.”²⁶ Another time, a “strong current of wind” blew through a “seekers’ meeting” making it seem as if they were reliving the Day of Pentecost themselves.²⁷ Sometimes solemnity reigned as believers engaged in intercessory prayer with “groans that words cannot express” (Rom 8:26).

Moorhead noted the similarity of the physical manifestations with those that occurred in the meetings of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. By appealing to precedent, he endeavored to defend the legitimacy of the revival against the censure of its detractors.²⁸ Hardly novel to the Calcutta revival, such revival phenomena had marked the larger awakening among Indian believers that began in 1905 and continued into 1906.²⁹ The disapproval may

²⁴ Moorhead, “Pentecost at Calcutta,” p. 9.

²⁵ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: The Roots of Modern-Day Pentecost* (S. Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1980), pp. 56-57 described its occurrence at Azusa Street as the “heavenly chorus.” Also, Stanley H. Frodsham, *With Signs Following: The Story of the Latter Day Pentecostal Revival* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1926), p. 111. Reports of the phenomenon surfaced during the New Order of the Latter Rain where it was perceived as adding legitimacy to the revival; see Richard M. Riss, *Latter Rain: The Latter-Rain Movement of 1948 and the Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Awakening* (Mississauga, Ont.: Honeycomb Visual Productions, 1987), pp. 82-83.

²⁶ Moorhead, “Pentecost at Calcutta,” p. 10.

²⁷ Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, p. 128.

²⁸ This line of reasoning, however, still used by some revivalists to defend such phenomena, was sharply challenged by F. B. Price, “Manifestations Genuine and Counterfeit,” *Indian Witness*, April 18, 1907, p. 252. Though published a month after the revival ended, it accurately reflects the debate that occurred during the revival.

²⁹ For example, see T. Walker, “Present Religious Awakenings in the Church in India,” *Church Missionary Review* 58 (May 1907), pp. 280-90; J. Pengwern Jones, “The Revival in the Khassia Hills,” *Indian Witness*, June 7, 1906, p. 359; J. E. Robinson, “Days of Power and Blessing at Asansol,” *Indian Witness*, December 21, 1905, pp. 803-4. For a general survey of the 1905-6 revival, see J.

partially be explained by the fact that these were Euramericans and Eurasians (e.g., Anglo-Indians) engaged in such behavior. While Indian Christians might be excused for following indigenous modes of worship when the Spirit moved upon them, westerners needed to exercise more restraint.

3. Pentecostal Tongues

The move to Creek Row freed the meetings from the annoyance of curious and sometimes skeptical spectators at Carey Baptist Chapel. (On one occasion, a minister of the Church of England, alarmed that some of his flock had become interested in the “new teaching,” marched into the church and “peremptorily commanded the leader to bring the meetings to a close”).³⁰ In regard to the services, Moorhead reported, “Suddenly a seeker would burst out in prayer in an unknown tongue which would be followed by a chorus of praise and thanksgiving from the hearts of those that rejoiced that the Pentecostal sign of the Pentecostal gift had been given.” At other times “a single word or phrase in the new tongues would be given as an earnest of the language” or a “voice might be heard for the first time, singing God’s praises in the new tongue.”³¹

Those who received described the spiritual effects in several ways. Costellow said it brought “new life of the Spirit, which has increased in joy and sweetness as the days and months have passed,” as well as a “new illumination of the Word.”³² Moorhead said that Spirit baptism “brought one into the sphere of the supernatural, the sphere of the Holy Ghost Who can now work in and through one’s being much more effectually.”³³ Finally, Mary Chapman said that as the Spirit took control of the organs of speech, speaking in tongues “[gave] vent to the eternal

Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: Evangelical Awakenings, 1900-*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), pp. 130-56.

³⁰ Moorhead, “Latter Rain,” p. 7.

³¹ Moorhead, “Pentecost at Calcutta,” pp. 9-10.

³² Costellow, “After Two Years,” p. 4.

³³ Max Wood Moorhouse, “A Personal Testimony,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, September 1907, p. 38.

weight of glory.”³⁴ No one, however, mentioned languages for missionary evangelism.

The Calcutta revival received coverage even though the city newspapers pointedly ignored it. Moorhead began publishing *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, a series of lengthy pamphlets that circulated across the subcontinent and were sent to Europe and North America; participants wrote letters to the editors of the *Apostolic Faith* in Los Angeles and other sympathetic periodicals; and the Garrs printed at least one issue of *Pentecostal Power*. Hostile press coverage, particularly from the Calcutta-based Methodist *Indian Witness*, also extended awareness. In its pages, Frederick Price dismissed the meetings as too small in attendance to be of any lasting importance, compared speaking in tongues to “barnyard cackle,” and concluded that the emotionalism sprang from nervous disorders. Worst of all, he grimaced, the “cornerstone” of the delusion rested on “the position that there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit without the sign of speaking in tongues.”³⁵

Significantly, the debate did not center on whether or not someone might speak in tongues under the inspiration of the Spirit, but on Garr’s insistence that it had to accompany Spirit baptism. This particularly aggravated the controversy, especially for those who had witnessed the recent awakening and considered it a genuine outpouring of the Spirit. An editorial in the *Indian Witness* pinpointed the core issue: “[There] are some [missionaries] who seem to think that there is of necessity loss of spiritual power where there is a loss of manifestation.” Furthermore, “this wrong idea found absurd illustration in the preaching and belief that the gift of tongues always accompanies the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that the incoherent babbling of someone unconscious on the floor was evidence of the gift of the Spirit; while all good people, no matter how devoted, spiritual and successful, from Pentecost unto now, who had not thus babbled or talked with tongues, known or unknown, had failed to receive the Holy Ghost!”³⁶

Condemnation also came from Arthur T. Pierson, editor of the influential *Missionary Review of the World*, published in New York and London. Most of those susceptible to the “emotional mania” in the meetings “have been *women* of the more emotional, hysterical type,” he

³⁴ “Three Calcutta Witnesses,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, September 1907, p. 36.

³⁵ Price, “Manifestations,” pp. 251-2.

³⁶ “Revival in India,” *Indian Witness*, July 11, 1907, p. 442.

charged, revealing the prevailing view of women as emotionally frail. Pierson also attributed the reported visions of Jesus (for example, the account of seeing “[Jesus] sitting beside the [person] in a tram-car”) to a “heated brain...common with insane patients or those whose nervous system is abnormally excited, quite apart from any devout habits.”³⁷ Criticisms of what appeared to be excessive emotionalism—“fanaticism” as people called it—and the probability of demonic influence in this behavior paralleled similar charges leveled against Pentecostals in America.³⁸ Growing fears about the broader movement certainly contributed to the misgivings about the happenings in Calcutta.³⁹

Not surprisingly, both camps dug trench lines. Amid the clamor, the Pentecostals compared themselves to the disciples who had also been mocked for speaking in tongues on the Day of Pentecost. In Moorhead’s estimation, “All who are stirred up to seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost should know that the path of the Pentecostal life is identical with the way of the Cross...for the life of one who has really received the Spirit’s baptism is inseparably connected with the shame and the reproach of the Cross.”⁴⁰ For his part, Garr roundly scolded the churches that refused the Pentecostal message. The *Indian Witness* took him to task for anathematizing a highly revered missionary evangelist in India as a “sneaking devil,” for giving “ranting predictions of impending doom,” and using “delusive methods.”⁴¹ It also referred to the notable defection

³⁷ Arthur T. Pierson, “Speaking with Tongues”—II, *Missionary Review of the World* 20 (September 1907), pp. 682-84 (683).

³⁸ Untitled article, *Indian Witness*, August 1, 1907, p. 494. See also, Grant A. Wacker, “Travail of a Broken Family: Radical Evangelical Responses to the Emergence of Pentecostalism in America, 1906-16,” in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp. 23-49.

³⁹ Both the *Bombay Guardian* and the *Indian Witness* published a warning in March 1907 about the Pentecostal movement from the British writer Jessie Penn-Lewis in which she alluded to the happenings in Calcutta: J. Penn-Lewis, “Words of Caution Respecting the Manifestation of ‘Tongues,’” *Bombay Guardian*, March 30, 1907, pp. 8-9; “Mrs. Penn-Lewis on the True and False in the Revival,” *Indian Witness*, March 28, 1907, pp. 202-3.

⁴⁰ Moorhead, “Pentecost at Calcutta,” pp. 10-11.

⁴¹ Price, “Manifestations,” p. 251. The Pentecostal movement in India and Sri Lanka was later embarrassed by a prediction that Colombo, Ceylon would be destroyed by an earthquake before July 1908. Given by a Sri Lankan Christian woman, Moorhead endorsed it in his *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*

of R. J. Ward from the new teaching early in the revival to point out that spiritually mature and responsible Christians would soon detect its error.⁴² No doubt, this proved to be an acute disappointment and embarrassment to Garr and his supporters.

Moorhead published the testimonies of “reputable” people who embraced the new message in his *Cloud of Witnesses*. Captain T. W. Angell Smith of the British Army, along with missionaries Mary Chapman; “Sister Nelson” and Mary Johnson from Ceylon; Susan Easton of the WUMS; Etta Costellow, director of a WUMS orphanage; and “Miss Salatti,” director of the Salvation Army Rescue Work,⁴³ and, of course, his own account.⁴⁴

(the issue [Pamphlet No. 3] was published either in late 1907 or early 1908). He later apologized and took responsibility for publicizing the prophecy; see “A Private Letter not Intended for Publication.” The Garrs later received a slight reprieve from J. Pengwern Jones, one of the best-known publicists of the recent awakening. Meeting with them in the summer, he affirmed them as “God’s servants,” prayerful and desirous of evangelizing non-Christians, but errant in their teaching of the “gift of tongues as a proof of the fullness of the Spirit”; see J. Pengwern Jones to Jessie Penn-Lewis, 4 July 1907. These sources are available at the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo. (Hereinafter FPHC.)

⁴² The *Indian Witness* refers to C. B. Ward as the defector (August 1, 1907, p. 494). However, this is unlikely since the article in the *Prayer Circular* was written by R. J. Ward (“The Prayer Circular and the Gift of Tongues,” April 1907; reprinted in the *Indian Witness*, April 18, 1907, p. 249). Ward’s earlier endorsement may be the anonymously printed “This Is That,” *Triumphs of Faith*, March 1908, pp. 100-4.

⁴³ For information on these individuals, see “Three Calcutta Witnesses,” pp. 34-36; Mary Johnson, “In Calcutta, India,” *Apostolic Faith*, February to March 1907, p. 1, cols. 2-3; Costellow, “After Two Years,” pp. 2-4; Lawrence, *Apostolic Faith*, p. 102; Sister A. G. [Lillian] Garr, “In Calcutta, India,” *Apostolic Faith*, April 1907, p. 1, col. 1; see also, Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, “Woman to Woman: Susan Easton’s Missionary Vision,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 12 (Winter 1992-93), pp. 4-8, 26.

⁴⁴ Moorhead had served as editorial secretary for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions; for his testimony of conversion, see Max Wood Moorhead, “A Bank Clerk’s Conversion: A Personal Testimony,” *Bombay Guardian*, December 28, 1912, pp. 6-7. He also played a later role when the issue of universalism arose in the Pentecostal movement through the publication of Charles Hamilton Pridgeon’s *Is Hell Eternal; or Will God’s Plan Fail?* (1918). The Assemblies of God (U.S.A.) and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) condemned the teaching. Moorhead wrote the rebuttal for the PAOC: “Pridgeonism,” *Pentecostal Testimony*, November 1923, pp. 7-8.

4. Calcutta in Pentecostal History

It remains unclear how much Alfred and Lillian Garr knew about the awakening of 1905-6 and how it had impacted the Methodist churches (“Our Jubilee Revival”) and other churches in the country.⁴⁵ Neither can it be ascertained whether they had heard about the Pentecostal activities in south India that began in July 1906. Some discovery obviously followed their arrival since Lillian reported that copies of the *Apostolic Faith* had preceded them, creating a spiritual hunger among those they met. But more importantly, she found that “the revival had already broken out among the natives, and some were speaking in tongues.”⁴⁶ Unfortunately, it cannot be determined if this refers to previous events in south India under the ministry of the well-known revivalist Minnie F. Abrams or elsewhere.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems strange—even ethnocentric—for the Garrs to announce that Captain Angell Smith was the first to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit in India.⁴⁸

To Moorhead and Garr, the Pentecostal movement in India arose exclusively from the Calcutta revival. Moorhead credited it as the “first general outpouring of the Spirit” in the country, a statement that hints of some doubt about its absolute uniqueness.⁴⁹ Accordingly, the end-times outpouring of the Spirit began in America and then spread around the world as “rivers of Living Water were flowing from Los Angeles as a

⁴⁵ For the influence on the Methodist churches of India, see Frank W. Warne, *The Revival in the Indian Church* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1907); also Frederick B. Price, ed., *India Mission Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia* (Calcutta: Methodist Publishing House, 1907).

⁴⁶ Sister A. G. Garr, “In Calcutta, India,” p. 1, col. 1.

⁴⁷ See Gary B. McGee, “Minnie F. Abrams: Another Context, Another Founder,” in *Portraits of a Generation*, eds. James R. Goff, Jr., and Grant Wacker (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2002), pp. 87-104.

⁴⁸ Lawrence, *Apostolic Faith*, p. 100.

⁴⁹ Moorhead, “A Short History of the Pentecostal Movement,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, November 1908, p. 21.

center to the uttermost parts of the earth.”⁵⁰ Garr shared this view, but considering that the promise of Joel (2:28-9) referred to a worldwide outpouring, he seemed relieved to remark in March 1907: “Reports are coming in from all over the world about how people are speaking in tongues, even before they heard of the Los Angeles meeting. Word comes from Russia, Ontario, Canada...[the] United States, Burma, and India.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, the focus on Calcutta as the birthplace effectively removed the memory of the earlier movement.⁵² Ironically, by the time the revival ended in March 1907 and a total of thirteen or fourteen had spoken in tongues, scores—possibly hundreds—of believers in south India had already testified to the experience.⁵³ In view of the relatively small number of people who received the Pentecostal baptism in Calcutta, one can only wonder if Garr’s subsequent preaching tour across the subcontinent didn’t have more of an actual impact on the expansion of the movement.⁵⁴

Several reasons may have stood behind conferring the accolade of “first general outpouring of the Spirit” on Calcutta. First, the Garrs and

⁵⁰ Moorhead, “Latter Rain,” p. 9. Notice his contradiction in “Short History,” p. 22. This historical interpretation parallels that of Frank Bartleman who referred to Los Angeles as the “American Jerusalem,” in *Azusa Street*, p. 63.

⁵¹ Garr, “Tongues,” p. 4.

⁵² See Gary B. McGee, “‘Latter Rain’ Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth-Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues,” *Church History* 68 (September 1999), pp. 648-65.

⁵³ Sister A. G. Garr, “In Calcutta, India,” p.1, col. 1; Moorhead counted “ten or more” in “Short History,” p. 22. As far as I can tell, all but three or four of the recipients included: T. W. Angell Smith, Blanche Burnham, Mary Chapman, Etta Costellow, Susan Easton, Mary Johnson, L. Magnussan, Max Wood Moorhead, “Sister Nelson,” “Miss Salatti.” I have not been able to determine if C. H. Hook received the Pentecostal baptism. Though I find the small number surprising, it does not diminish the fact that Calcutta had a ripple effect in other parts of India as missionaries returned home; see Lillian Garr, “Pentecost in India,” *Good Report*, June 1, 1913; H. Wise, “Pentecost in India,” n.d. (photocopy of unpublished mss.), pp. 1-2. Available at FPHC.

⁵⁴ Lawrence, *Apostolic Faith*, pp. 103-5. Even with Garr’s glowing reports about his travels, one must be careful not to exaggerate his impact on the expansion of Pentecostalism in India. There is much more to be learned about the revival in South India among the Indian Christians and also in the mission stations of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. A broad picture of Pentecostalism in India from 1906-10 has yet to be written.

Moorhead may not have been aware of other Pentecostals in India at the time of the Calcutta revival, though Lillian's statement that Indian Christians were already speaking in tongues makes this unlikely. Second, Abrams and Pandita Ramabai (director of the world famous Mukti Mission near Kedgaon) did not derive their view of tongues from the teachings of Parham. Hence, because they allowed that some might receive Spirit baptism without tongues, they could not be considered orthodox Pentecostals.⁵⁵ Third, the assumption that the outpouring had begun in Los Angeles may have led them to downplay any circumstances that failed to support their theory.⁵⁶

5. Reformulating the Doctrine

Alfred Garr learned the "Bible evidence" doctrine from William J. Seymour, who had studied under Parham, the originator of the teaching, at his Bible school in Houston, Texas in late 1905.⁵⁷ After Seymour arrived in Los Angeles and the revival began in April 1906, he taught the doctrine even before he had spoken in tongues himself. The doctrinal connection between the two men became evident when the *Apostolic Faith*, which Seymour helped produce, declared that Parham "was surely raised up of God to be an apostle of the doctrine of Pentecost."⁵⁸

To Parham, tongues-speech served several functions: it signified the "last days" outpouring of the Spirit; verified the reception of Holy Spirit

⁵⁵ Minnie Abrams, "A Message from Mukti," *Confidence*, September 15, 1908, p. 14.

⁵⁶ See Joe Creech, "Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History," *Church History* 65 (September 1996), pp. 405-24. For an excellent contribution to the history of Pentecostalism in south India, see A. C. George, "Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore, South India," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4 (July 2001), pp. 215-37. Interestingly, when Minnie F. Abrams told the story of the Pentecostal movement in India, she excluded mention of the Calcutta revival: "How the Recent Revival Was Brought about in India," *Latter Rain Evangel*, July 1909, pp. 6-13.

⁵⁷ For Seymour's changing stance on the doctrine, see Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "William J. Seymour and 'the Bible Evidence,'" in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 72-95.

⁵⁸ "The Pentecostal Baptism Restored," *Apostolic Faith*, October 1906, p. 1, col. 1.

baptism, which brought the fullness of the Spirit (often understood by early Pentecostals as the “sealing” of the Spirit [Eph. 1:13]); and provided linguistic expertise for God’s elite band of end-times missionaries.⁵⁹ “How much better it would be for our modern missionaries to obey the injunction of Jesus to tarry for the same power,” he contended, “instead of wasting thousands of dollars, and often their lives in the vain attempt to become conversant in almost impossible [languages] which the Holy Ghost could so freely speak.”⁶⁰ What purpose then did they serve on the home scene? Given the dead formality of the American churches, congregations needed to hear sermons preached in tongues. When interpreted, the jolted hearers would know they had received a message directly from God.⁶¹

From 1901 through 1908, his “Bible evidence” doctrine (later popularly called the “initial evidence”) reigned supreme among Pentecostals and formed the chief doctrinal distinctive of classical Pentecostalism.⁶² During these years, the *Apostolic Faith* and other periodicals continued to print testimonies of people receiving known languages. In the earliest book-length exposition of Pentecostal truths, published in 1907, the holiness-Pentecostal George F. Taylor strongly affirmed the missionary value of tongues.⁶³ Although Garr continued to maintain that he had received Bengali at Spirit baptism, his inability to use it in preaching was a disappointment. “I supposed [God] would let us talk to the natives of India in their own tongue, but He did not,” wrote Garr from Hong Kong in 1908. “As far as I can see, [He] will not use that means by which to convert the heathen, but will employ the gifts—such as wonderful signs of healing and other powers.” Furthermore, “I have

⁵⁹ For the development of Parham’s theology, see James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), pp. 62-86.

⁶⁰ Charles F. Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, 2nd ed. (Baxter Springs, Kan.: Apostolic Faith Bible College, n.d.), p. 28.

⁶¹ Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, p. 31. This probably reflects his understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:22 where tongues serve as a sign to unbelievers.

⁶² Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., coined the term “Classical Pentecostal” in “Holy Spirit and Pentecostalism,” *Commonweal*, November 1968, pp. 198-204.

⁶³ G. F. Taylor, *The Spirit and the Bride* (Falcon, NC: Falcon Printing, 1907), pp. 37, 50-51.

not seen any one who is able to preach to the natives in their own tongue with the languages given with the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁴

This left him with no alternative but to reexamine the doctrine, amid the swirl of controversy that engulfed it. Given the mission ethos of the Pentecostal movement, it should come as no surprise that the “flaw” in Parham’s doctrine—the theoretical belief that one could preach in tongues at will—would be corrected in a mission context in the actual practice of ministry. To present his views in print, Garr published the periodical *Pentecostal Power* in March 1907, with the byline taken from Jude 3: “Earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.”⁶⁵ In a lengthy article, “Tongues: The Bible Evidence to the Baptism with the Holy Ghost,” he explained his new understanding of tongues-speech, answered his critics in Calcutta, and those of the doctrine in America.⁶⁶

He first recounted how he arrived at the doctrine. Told at Azusa that he should not seek for the gift of tongues, but for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he learned that the Spirit would then speak through him in the same way in which he spoke through the disciples at Pentecost. “This put a new thought in my head that I had never had before...that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was accompanied with the gift of tongues in every case, and that those who do not speak in tongues as the disciples did are not really baptized with the Holy Ghost.” In fact, “God had really sent the gift of tongues as the witness of our being fully baptized with the fullness of God.” He then appealed to the pattern of five narratives in the Acts of the Apostles that link tongues and Spirit baptism either explicitly or implicitly: the Day of Pentecost (2:4); the Samaritan Pentecost (8:17-8); Paul’s experience (9:17-8); the reception of the Spirit at the home of Cornelius (10:44); and the same with the Ephesian disciples (19:6).⁶⁷ Speaking in tongues is “bestowed immediately upon the reception of the

⁶⁴ A. G. Garr, “A letter from Bro. Garr,” *Confidence*, Special Supplement to *Confidence*, May 1908, p. 2. Boddy published letters in the supplement to specifically address the failure of Pentecostal missionaries to preach in the languages of their hearers.

⁶⁵ Only one known issue (March 1907) has survived; it may have been the only one. Available at FPHC.

⁶⁶ The article gained a far wider audience when Moorhead reprinted it with some changes and editorial improvements as “Tongues: The Bible Evidence,” *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, September 1907, pp. 40-7.

⁶⁷ Garr, “Tongues,” p. 2.

Holy Ghost...and not before.”⁶⁸ In fact, “when the Holy Ghost baptism comes on any one that one will in every case speak in new tongues.”⁶⁹

In a pivotal adjustment, he added, “the reason we speak so much about the gift of tongues is not so much on account of the tongues themselves, *but it is what the tongues stand for*; namely the precious fullness of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.” This substantially moved the focus away from preaching. Consistent with other North American Pentecostals like Parham, Seymour and Taylor, he saw tongues as the sign of the outpouring of the Spirit and the evidence of the Spirit’s fullness, but differed from them by setting aside the evangelistic function. The attention now centered on prayer in tongues as the source of spiritual empowerment, an approach that highlighted the mystical dimension of tongues-speech in the spirituality of the recipient.⁷⁰ “It is the sweetest joy and the greatest pleasure to the soul when God comes upon one in all one’s unworthiness and begins Himself to speak in His language,” he mused. “Oh! the blessedness of His presence when those foreign words flow from the Spirit of God through the soul and then are given back to Him in praise, in prophecy, or in worship.” Paul had experienced the same joy (1 Cor 14:18), but unfortunately had to correct the Corinthians because they had erred by looking just on the “pleasure of speaking those foreign words, and neglected the duties to the unsaved.”⁷¹

To explain what Paul meant when he said that one could speak “mysteries with his spirit” in tongues to God with no one present understanding them (1 Cor 14:2), he appealed to the languages of angels referred to in 1 Corinthians 13:1. Since the person “is not speaking an *earthly language*, therefore [they] cannot be understood by anyone on this earth unless the *interpretation* is received from God.”⁷² Thus, tongues-speech might be in known languages, as well as the unknown languages of the heavenly sphere. Garr undoubtedly hoped this would counter the criticisms of those who described tongues as “barnyard cackle” and “unintelligible gibberish.”⁷³

⁶⁸ Garr, “Tongues,” p. 3.

⁶⁹ Garr, “Tongues,” p. 4.

⁷⁰ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 57-62.

⁷¹ Garr, “Tongues: The Bible Evidence,” September 1907, p. 43.

⁷² Garr, “Tongues,” p. 3.

⁷³ H. Gulliford, “Speaking with Tongues,” *Harvest Field*, April 1907, p. 133.

Like other Pentecostals, he did not explore why God would have his people “speak with foreign lips and strange tongues,” as Pentecostals interpreted Isaiah 28:11, as the vehicle of empowerment. Neither did he examine the pneumatology of the Lucan corpus as later theologians would do or consider other questions that present-day Pentecostals sometimes raise.⁷⁴ As with the majority of Pentecostal writers throughout the history of the movement, he looked primarily at the effects of tongues-speech: personal spiritual edification (1 Cor 14:2, 4); an increase in love for Christ; new interest in Bible study; more desire to evangelize; and an enhanced awareness of the imminent return of Christ.⁷⁵

The “fullness” of the Spirit brought by Spirit baptism not only enhanced spiritual vigor, but also brought demonstrations of divine power. “Now friend,” he implored his readership, “don’t go on any longer with an old empty hull of a religion—saying you are baptized with the Holy Ghost when these signs are not following you and you know it.”⁷⁶ After all, Jesus had stated before his ascension, “These signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well” (Mark 16:17-8). In this way, Garr directly countered the argument that a loss of manifestations did not necessarily denote a lack of spiritual power.⁷⁷ On the contrary, in the wake of Spirit baptism, signs and wonders should consistently appear in one’s ministry.⁷⁸ If tongues constituted the initial

⁷⁴ For example, Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); Anthony D. Palma, *The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001); Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke’s Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

⁷⁵ A. A. Boddy, “Speaking in Tongues: What Is It?” *Confidence*, May 1910, p. 100.

⁷⁶ Garr, “Tongues,” p. 4.

⁷⁷ “Revival in India,” p. 442.

⁷⁸ It is significant that Garr’s reasoning on this point is somewhat inconsistent. While he emphasizes that signs and wonders will follow exclusively in the ministry of those who have received Spirit baptism with tongues, he also admits that healings and exorcisms have occurred among non-tongues speakers. Nevertheless, these demonstrations of spiritual power fail as proofs of Spirit baptism; see Garr, “Tongues,” p. 2.

evidence, then increased zeal and displays of God's power represented the "subsequent evidence."

6. Calcutta in the Development of Pentecostal Doctrine

In the history of Christianity, the blueprints of doctrinal development have not been left in the sole possession of the professional schools of theological architecture. The New Testament itself, far from including a systematic theology by modern criteria, contains gospels and letters, which address issues of faith and practice as they arose in the churches. Growth in doctrinal insight has characterized all Christian movements since the time of the early church and has been shaped by theological questions, new insights arising from revival movements, and a myriad of cultural and historical factors.⁷⁹ For example, after the death of Martin Luther in 1546, Lutheranism almost foundered from differences of opinion over the correct interpretation of his theology; eventually they were resolved and unity was restored.⁸⁰

Behind the discussion on Holy Spirit baptism and Pentecostal phenomena stood more than a century of biblical and theological reflection. From John Wesley, Joseph Fletcher, Phoebe Palmer, Asa Mahan, Charles Finney, to Reuben A. Torrey and A. B. Simpson, the notion of a subsequent experience of grace in the believer's life—dubbed the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the latter half of the nineteenth century—had been scrutinized.⁸¹ Charles Parham stood in a long line of holiness teachers who sought to better understand what occurred in Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, and 19.

With the disappointment in tongues for preaching, Pentecostals might have been tempted to discard the phenomenon altogether, but that did not happen due to the transforming nature of the experience. In the context of Bible study and seeking empowerment for world

⁷⁹ Peter Toon, *The Development of Doctrine in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. xi. For the impact of revivals on missions and doctrine, see Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Irvine, CA: Regnum Books, 1994), pp. 112-21.

⁸⁰ Eugene F. Klug and Otto F. Stahlke, *Getting into the Formula of Concord: A History and Digest of the Formula* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), pp. 9-15.

⁸¹ See Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987).

evangelization, Garr demonstrated the close relationship between the intense restorationism of the Pentecostal movement and pragmatism.⁸² Simply put, when the application of tongues for preaching failed, he went back to the New Testament to gain a more accurate understanding, but without questioning the fundamental integrity of the doctrine. In this respect, he took the lead among Pentecostals in reviewing the function of tongues and was the first to do so in print. Though copies of *Pentecostal Power* and Moorhead's *Cloud of Witnesses* containing his doctrinal exposition reached America and Europe, the full extent of his influence on other Pentecostals awaits further study.⁸³

The two Pentecostal movements in India reveal the breadth of the issues involved, with the earliest theological division among Pentecostals—tongues as required evidence—surfacing there first. The movement in south India influenced by Abrams shows how Wesleyan-holiness and Keswickian/Higher Life interest in the Holy Spirit could lead to occurrences of tongues-speech without people having heard about events in North America. Classical Pentecostalism in India ultimately survived the earlier movement because those baptized in the Spirit at Calcutta were convinced that the pattern of tongues in Acts established an indispensable spiritual standard; certain missionaries in south India affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance embraced the doctrine (e.g., Kate Knight, Christian Schoonmaker);⁸⁴ and because Euramerican missionary reinforcements came and established institutionalized Pentecostalism in the country (e.g., Assemblies of God, Church of God [Cleveland, Tenn.]).

The life of Alice E. Luce, a missionary to India and later to Hispanics in North America, illustrates the spiritual pilgrimage of some early Pentecostals. A friend of Abrams, she was baptized in the Spirit somewhere in India in 1910. Upon her return to England, Luce met with

⁸² Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 10, 35-57.

⁸³ The Metropolitan Church Association's periodical, *Burning Bush*, published in Waukesha, Wisconsin, referred to the article by Garr in *Pentecostal Power* and strongly condemned it; see "God's Two Gifts of Tongues," *Burning Bush*, June 20, 1907, pp. 4-6.

⁸⁴ Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), p. 87. See the tract by Kate Knight, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit" (Fredonia, NY: Pentecostal Home, n.d.), p. 9; and Christian Schoonmaker, "A Testimony from India," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Chicago), July 1, 1910, p. 5.

the Keswick mission committee that had sponsored her and was questioned about her sympathies with the “tongues movement.” Affirming that God still gave the gift of tongues, “she told the committee that she did not consider tongues an essential gift and she would not teach about the subject, but she had found spiritual blessing through occasionally receiving this gift in prayer.”⁸⁵ In 1915 she entered the United States and received missionary ordination from the Assemblies of God in the short period before it had a creedal statement. (At that time, the application for ministerial credentials simply asked, “Have you an experimental knowledge of salvation and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues?”⁸⁶) That Luce stayed in the denomination after it adopted a confession of faith in 1916 and then declared initial evidence to be its “distinctive testimony” two years later suggests that for her and others the phase of theological transition ended with embrace of the reformulated doctrine.⁸⁷ It is noteworthy that her *Pictures of Pentecost* (1930) carries a ringing endorsement of tongues as initial evidence.⁸⁸

The preaching of “this blessed Truth” at Carey Baptist Chapel set a process in motion that led to a more biblical and relevant understanding of the Pentecostal baptism. The charismatic experience of tongues-speech for every believer in the reception of the Spirit’s fullness became the hallmark of Classical Pentecostal doctrine and spirituality. It soon bore fruit in the worldwide expansion of the movement.

⁸⁵ Charles Price and Ian Randall, *Transforming Keswick* (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: OM Publishing, 2000), p. 158.

⁸⁶ “Application Blank for Ordination Certificate” (General Council of the Assemblies of God, St. Louis, MO, 1915), p. 1.

⁸⁷ One of the most poignant reflections on the struggle that some early Pentecostals had with the doctrine of initial evidence is found in Bertha Pinkham Dixon’s *A Romance of Faith* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 71-6, 150-55. Available at FPHC. Unlike Luce, Dixon moved away from the doctrine and joined the Christian and Missionary Alliance where interest in speaking in tongues eventually withered.

⁸⁸ Alice Eveline Luce, *Pictures of Pentecost: In the Old Testament* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1930), pp. 8, 55-6.

BOOK REVIEWS

Burgess, Stanley M., ed. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002. 1278 pp., hardback, ISBN:0-310-22481-0, US\$49.99.

Christianity in the twentieth century experienced a remarkable resurgence of charismatic spirituality, a dimension of Christian life largely obscured for centuries. This renewal was initially defined as the Pentecostal movement, featuring a cluster of churches and groups that for fifty years was largely shunned by mainstream Christianity. By mid-century, however, the teaching and experience of the Pentecostals began to appear among a broad spectrum of Christian bodies. Previously, people experiencing the Pentecostal "baptism in the Holy Spirit" were regularly driven from the established churches. From the 1950s onward, however, ministers and lay persons reporting a charismatic experience were increasingly accepted in the parent denomination. This "renewal" movement, marking those experiencing Pentecostal phenomena but remaining in their own denominations, was dubbed the "Charismatic Movement." In the 1960s, the renewal spilled over into the Roman Catholic Church, spreading rapidly around the world. At the same time that the charismatic renewal was growing rapidly, the "classical" Pentecostal bodies continued to experience phenomenal growth, especially in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Few, if any, Christian movements in the twentieth century reached the breadth of impact of the Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal. By the year 2000, after just one century, this dimension of Christianity had been estimated to reach about 795 million believers (p.300).

In 1988, Stanley Burgess and Gary McGee produced a notable volume, the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, published by Zondervan Publishing House. The purpose was to provide a resource for serious students of the renewal. Nothing of this magnitude had been attempted previously. Dozens of scholars contributed useful articles, supplemented by bibliographical resources. The limitation, however, of this enterprise was that it was largely limited to the North American scene. To be sure, this was indeed the fountainhead of the great twentieth century outpouring, but as the century wore on, it was apparent that the story was woefully incomplete without a world-wide accounting. This need led Stanley Burgess to embark on the immense task of marshaling the resources of scholars worldwide with a view to providing a more comprehensive report of the burgeoning revival.

Burgess included much of the previous material from the first dictionary, but added a host of additional writers, so that the new international edition embraces the work of about 140 contributors. The editor has chosen to redefine the categories employed in the study of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, attempting to differentiate with greater refinement the distinctive components to be found within the renewal.

Burgess identified three essential distinctions. The first is the classical Pentecostals who are broadly recognized as those who look back to Charles F. Parham in Topeka, Kansas, 1901, from whence a connected history can be charted for groups that generally teach about a baptism in the Spirit, separable from conversion, marked by speaking in other tongues. Wesleyan and non-Wesleyan sub-groups, as well as Oneness Pentecostals, fall within this category.

Second, Burgess has defined the Charismatic movement as the acknowledgement by mainline Christian denominations of the value and presence of the gifts of the Spirit for the church today. The renewal touched many of the established Protestant church bodies and the Roman Catholic Church, particularly from the 1960s onward. Many non-denominational churches and ministries identified with this Holy Spirit emphasis, as well as groups that continued to function within their parent denominational bodies. The emphasis in these groups was not baptism in the Spirit, but rather, the exhibiting of various gifts of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues as "initial physical evidence" of a baptism in the Spirit was not a significant issue in this grouping.

Burgess has adopted a third category, "Neocharismatics." He has identified more than 18,000 independent, indigenous and postdenominational groups that do not readily fit into the first two categories. This is essentially a "catch-all" term to lump together the diverse people and groups who have a common interest in the work of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, power encounter, signs and wonders, and Pentecostal-like experiences, but who do not claim to be "Pentecostal." Peter Wagner's "Third Wave," a term he coined to describe Evangelicals in the 1980s who disavowed Pentecostal identification, but who embraced Pentecostal-like experiences, fits this pattern.

The editor has included in his study a number of unusual indigenous groups, chiefly located in Africa, that some would judge to be only marginally identifiable as Christian. Some of these groups are sufficiently large that they can hardly be disregarded.

Burgess is to be commended for attempting to embrace as large a scope of people as can be envisioned within the framework of his study. The reader who questions the validity of some of these groups is certainly free to make his/her own examination.

The volume is structured conveniently into three major parts. Part I is a Global Survey. This is an overview of the allocation of the diverse groups that are studied in more detail in the dictionary portion of the volume. Part II is a set of Global Statistics. This is heavily based on the work of David B. Barrett (*World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2001). Barrett's research has no equivalent. He has provided the most useful data available. No one else seems to be engaging in the kind of statistics gathering that he has exhibited for many years. Nonetheless, a caution must be registered about the manner in which such statistics are gleaned. There seems to be no means available to check on the accuracy of such reporting, since Barrett stands alone in his field. Some scholars would like to see an accounting of how Barrett has arrived at some of his numbers. Be that as it may, Burgess has been of necessity dependent on the work of Barrett.

The third section of the book (Part III) is the dictionary proper. Hundreds of articles fill this section. Each article is supported with a helpful bibliography. The breadth and range of the articles is a rich lode for the beginning student, as well as the seasoned scholar.

Concluding the volume are such helpful items as a Timeline for the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, a careful list of resources for the pictures that embellish the book. A series of indices is included, as well: personal names, an index of countries and regions, groups and associations, a listing of relevant periodicals, and finally, a general index.

Although Burgess contemplates a seven-volume encyclopedia to follow the dictionary, this dictionary is virtually an encyclopedia of Pentecostalism as it stands. The *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* is without any doubt one of the most important resources for understanding this great renewal to appear in our lifetime.

William W. Menzies

Forbes, George. *A Church on Fire: The Story of the Assemblies of God of Papua New Guinea*. Mitcham, Victoria, Australia: Mission Mobilisers, 2001. 416 pp., paperback, ISBN: 0-646-41734-70, no price.

One of the truly impressive stories of Pentecostal missions is the role of the Australian Assemblies of God (AOG) in the neighboring country of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Beginning with an initial exploratory foray into the East Sepik region of the country by Hugh Davidson in 1948, a small cadre of dedicated Australian missionaries gradually carved out a mission station and established a permanent base of operations near Maprik. Fifty years later a great jubilee celebration commemorated the phenomenal growth of the work. More than 900 churches had been established in that time, spreading over much of this mountainous land. With more than 800 indigenous tribal languages, one can imagine the enormous challenge facing Christian missionaries.

George Forbes, General Director of Assemblies of God World Missions from 1973 to 1999, has written a fairly comprehensive account of the origins and development of the Assemblies of God in Papua New Guinea. For many years, PNG was the sole mission field of the Australian AOG, although under the leadership of George Forbes, the Australian AOG vision reached 30 fields by the time of his retirement. Forbes had almost continuous contact with the missionaries in PNG, the national leaders and he made numerous trips to PNG. Few, if any, have been better equipped to tell this story than George Forbes.

Forbes was not trained to be a missions historian, so one should not expect a professional document. Nonetheless, although the book exhibits something of a "homespun" character, it provides an intimate, warm and authentic picture of the life of the missionaries, their trials and successes, and faithfully recounts the stories that form the kernel of true history.

Of special significance in this story is the development of strong national church leadership in the PNG AOG. The Australian missionaries mentored emerging national leaders, readily making a place for an autonomous national church body. Several Bible schools, most notably the Port Moresby Bible College, have contributed greatly to the development of capable national church leaders. Important to the success of the AOG in PNG has been the demonstration of Christian compassion. The development of clinics and elementary educational institutions endeared these sacrificial missionaries to the local tribal people. A creative missionary methodology of special value in the East Sepik Province was the use of house boats on the great Sepik River. Kevin and Glenys Hovey lived for years on the river. Forged out of personal

experience, living among the primitive tribal peoples, Kevin Hovey, now the General Director of Australian World Missions, fashioned a model for Pentecostal missions that has projected him into a role of leadership in the training of missionaries, basing his teaching on the proven experience in the field. His book, *Before All Else Fails*, is highly regarded as a missions resource tool. Hovey supports the emphasis in Forbes' book that much of the success of the work in PNG must be assigned directly to the work of the Holy Spirit. Among the animistic peoples of the interior of PNG, the demonstration of God's power has repeatedly verified the truth claims of the gospel. Early on, outpourings of the Spirit marked the gatherings of national church leaders. The teaching of the baptism in the Holy Spirit has proven to be a key to the success of the AOG in PNG.

A Church on Fire is a faithful account of one of the remarkable missions success stories of our time. Perhaps a bit repetitive in style, nonetheless this chronicle of the work of earnest missionaries in a culturally-diverse land discloses not only the transforming power of God in the lives of primitive people, but also the steadfastness of a small band of Pentecostal missionaries. George Forbes has given us a case study in Pentecostal ministry worthy of careful and thoughtful study for all who wish to work in an alien culture.

William W. Menzies

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Printed in the Philippines

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