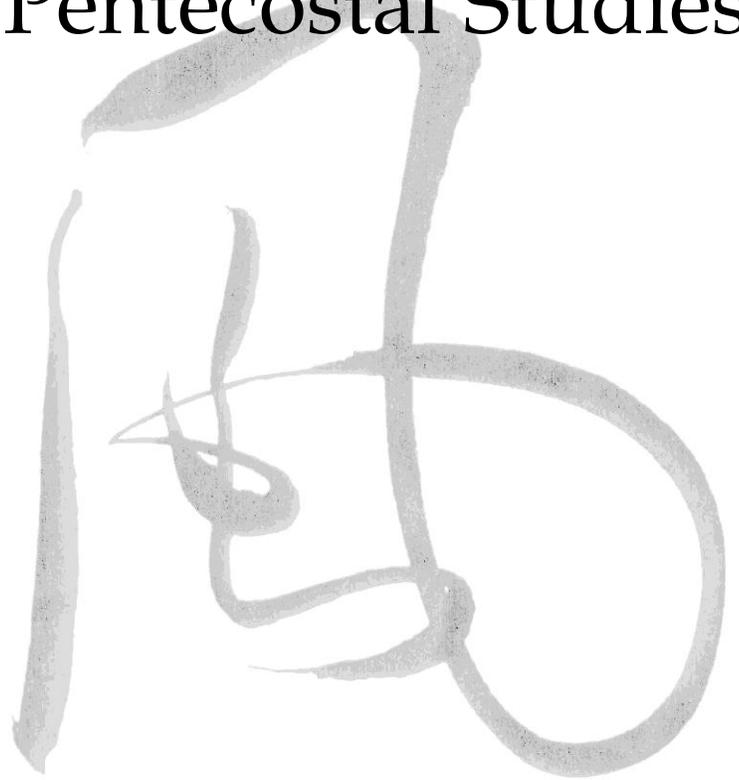


Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies



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For the following areas, you may contact the following friends for subscription orders and other inquiries:

For North America: Paul Elbert, Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN 37320-3330, USA (email: pelbert@windstream.net)

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Mr. Tan Woon Khang, 41 Nadia, 10 Persiaran Residen, Desa Parkcity 52200 Kuala Lumpur (email: tanwk8@yahoo.com)

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FROM THE APTS ADMINISTRATION

We are once again in a time of transition and change. After ably serving as the Academic Dean and managing editor of *AJPS* from 2006, Dr. Paul Lewis and his family felt that the Lord was leading them to resign their positions at APTS and serve a one year term as a missionary in residence at our sister school, the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, MO, before taking a year to visit their supporting churches in the United States. On behalf of the APTS leadership, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Lewis for his excellent work on the *AJPS*.

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Dave Johnson has accepted our invitation to replace Dr. Lewis. Dave's wife, Debbie, has also joined the editorial team. Dr. Johnson joined APTS in 2007 as an adjunct member of the faculty and, in 2012, along with his wife, upgraded his status to non-resident, regular faculty, meaning that they will be teaching on campus or at an extension site at least once a year. He has also accepted appointment as the director of the APTS Press.

Dr. Johnson is passionate about doing theology in context and is committed to reflecting on how the gospel of Jesus Christ can be articulated, understood, and acted upon in Asia. He brings a wealth of ministry background to this position. Ordained by the Assemblies of God (USA) in 1986, he traveled for a number of years in the States as an evangelist after making several short term trips to the Philippines, he moved here as an appointed missionary with the Assemblies of God World Missions (USA) in 1994. He and his wife met on the APTS campus in 1996, when she was serving the seminary as the English teacher, and they were married the next year.

Since coming to the Philippines, Dr. Johnson has been serving in evangelism and church planting. He has had the opportunity to lead people to the Lord and help plant dozens of churches. He served for six years as the country moderator for the Assemblies of God Missionary Fellowship (AGMF USA). He has also directed the translation of the *Full Life Study Bible* commentary and notes into both the Tagalog and Cebuano languages of the Philippines. In 2009, he published his first

book *Led by the Spirit: The History of the American Assemblies of God Missionaries in the Philippines* (Manila: ICI Ministries), which can be viewed at www.daveanddebbiejohnson.com. His second book, *Theology in Context: A Case Study in the Philippines* will be published by APTS Press in 2013. The Johnsons continue to serve in the Bicol region, located in the southern part of Luzon, the Philippines' main island, and visit the Baguio campus as needed.

A native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, he was raised in a Christian home and came to know Christ at an early age. He was baptized in the Holy Spirit, called into the ministry, and directed by the Lord to join the Assemblies of God all in one three month period when he was 18 years of age. He earned a B.A. in Bible from Central Bible College in Springfield, MO, in 1984, his masters of divinity from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, also in Springfield, in 1987, and a doctorate in missiology from the Asia Graduate School of Theology—Philippine campus in 2004.

Apart from the ministry, he enjoys dinner out with Debbie, fellowship with friends, weightlifting, basketball, walking, reading, and playing with Sam, his purebred Doberman.

Sincerely,

A. Kay Fountain, Ph.D
APTS Academic Dean

PENTECOSTAL IDENTITY: RECLAIMING OUR HERITAGE

First, I would like to join Dr. Fountain in thanking Dr. Paul Lewis for his excellent service to AJPS and wish him God's best in his future endeavors. I was privileged to be his classmate many years ago in seminary, and it has been wonderful to watch God use him in various capacities since then. Please join me in prayer for Paul, Eveline, Rachel and Anastasia as they walk into the bright future that God has for them.

We also have a new book review editor, Dr. Teresa Chai, a Malaysian Assemblies of God missionary who will be joining the APTS faculty this coming year. I would like to thank Dr. Roli de la Cruz for his years of excellent service. He and Amy have moved to the USA, and we wish them God's best. As a result of both transitions, however, there will no book reviews until the next edition.

I would also like to thank Dr. Fountain for the invitation to serve in this position, which I will do while Debbie and I continue to live in the Legaspi City area (southern Luzon) where we are involved in evangelism, church planting and leadership development. While I never thought of myself as a theological journal editor, this opportunity, in a sense, is a dream come true. For many years I have been active in doing theology in the Philippine context, especially in preaching and teaching. Lately God has been directing me to invest more time in the research, writing and reflection, preparation, I believe for this position, which will demand that I expand my horizons. I pray that I am up to the challenge.

This edition of AJPS is dedicated to two faithful servants of God who have now gone on to their eternal reward, Dr. William "Bill" and Doris Menzies. Dr. Menzies was a long time Assemblies of God educator who served as the president of APTS from 1989-1996 and chancellor from 1996-2011. Doris worked faithfully alongside him in various capacities, the most important being the mother of their two sons, Glen and Bob.

The 20th Annual William Menzies Lectureship Series, which was also done in honor of Bill Menzies, was hosted by APTS in Baguio from January 30 through February 2, 2012, with Dr. Glen Menzies and

Dr. Bob Menzies as the special speakers. All of the articles in this edition, except for the first two, were presented at the Lectureship.

The opening articles are two biographical sketches by Glen and Bob that provide an inside look into the warm humanity and accomplishments of their parents. From Doris and a friend sneaking into movies theaters to Bill taking the family on tours through historic battlefields, those of us who did not know them well are given a glimpse of their lives.

The materials presented at the Lectureship then follow. In a *Full Apostolic Gospel Standard of Experience and Doctrine*, Glen Menzies takes us back to the beginning of the Assemblies of God and seeks to articulate how our founders viewed themselves, especially as it related to being apostolic and evangelical” through the official documents they left behind. In his second article, *Speaking So Others Will Hear*, he challenges Pentecostals, especially the American Assemblies of God, to rethink their ecclesiology, especially in light of the post modern era that has impacted the West. In Bob Menzies’ article *The Role of Glossolalia in Luke-Acts*, he leads us into an exploration of role of tongues both in the life of the church and in the lives of individual believers, focusing in on Luke’s perspective. A slightly modified version of this article will appear in his forthcoming book *Why I am a Pentecostal* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House).

Three papers by other scholars were also presented at the lectureship. One was published in a previous edition of the Journal. The others are presented here. Jean-Daniel Pluss takes on a historical journey of God’s grace and points in the direction of the development of a Pentecostal pneumatology of the same. Steve Hong then shows how denominationalism had adversely impacted the unity of the global body of Christ and gives some biblical recommendations in a better direction.

Finally, I would like to welcome Kim Snider and Kaye Dalton who, along with my wife, have joined Roger and Glenda Dutcher, Dickie Hertweck and Ruth Wilson on the editorial team. Juliet Pasqual continues to do an excellent job as the Journal secretary on the APTS campus. My thanks to them for joining me in this endeavour.

David M. Johnson, D-Miss, Editor

WILLIAM W. MENZIES' LIFE SUMMARY

By his sons Glen W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies

William W. Menzies (July 1, 1931–August 15, 2011) was well known in Pentecostal circles as an educator, historian and theologian. He was also a missionary who spent the latter decades of his life between two poles: Springfield, Missouri, where he lived on-and-off for fifty years, and Baguio City, Philippines, where he served as President and Chancellor of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS). Over the course of his career he taught full-time or served as an administrator at five institutions of higher learning: Central Bible College (1958-1970), Evangel University (1970-1980), the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (1974-1984), California Theological Seminary (1985-1987), and APTS (President 1989-1996; Chancellor 1996-2011). The author of nine books and numerous articles, he also founded, along with Vinson Synan and Horace Ward, the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS), which was among his most important accomplishments. He also served as the first President of the SPS and the first editor of its journal, *Pneuma*. To us, however, he was simply "Dad."

"Bill," as his friends called him, was born in New Kensington, PA. He was the son of William E. and Sophie B. Menzies. Named after his father, his parents always called him "Junior."

William Sr., our grandpa, had earned a degree in electrical engineering from Penn State and spent much of his life engaged in both engineering and church planting. He would work for a while in engineering to save money. Then he would quit his job and build a church building. Grandma would play her trombone, both would

preach, and when they got enough people coming to support a regular pastor, they would turn the church over to the new pastor and Grandpa would go back to engineering and saving more money. Eventually, the family moved to Dayton, Ohio, which is really where dad grew up.

One of Dad's teen-age passions was ham radio, and he held a ham radio operator's license until the day he died. He fiddled with receivers, transmitters, matchboxes and antennas. Glen remembers him telling a story about a neighborhood friend who also loved to work on things, including ham gear. Unfortunately, this friend's parents would not let him own a screwdriver. They wanted him to grow up to earn a living with his head, not his hands. So this friend would sneak over to Dad's place whenever he needed to use a screwdriver.

His first ham radio transmitter was a used model he found at the attractive price of \$20.00. Apparently he did not have the money, so he convinced his mother to let him get the transmitter and help him finance the purchase. She was impressed with all of his research on the cost and became convinced he had located a good deal. What he did not tell his mom was why the transmitter was available. Apparently the previous owner had been electrocuted by it. If his mom had known, she never would have let him buy such a deadly machine. However, Dad put a "bleeder resistor" across the big can condenser that had killed its owner, making it much less of a hazard.

These stories explain something important about Dad. His attitude was: Why not be good with both your head and with your hands? Dad was not interested in either mindless labor or in abstract theory that never connected with real life. He appreciated good theology, but good theology for him also meant that it impacted the life of the church.

When Dad graduated from high school he planned to become an engineer like his father. He enrolled at Ohio State. Somehow, he quickly sensed that this was not what God wanted for him, and he soon transferred to Central Bible Institute (CBI) in Springfield, Missouri, feeling that God had placed a call to ministry on his life.

Dad distinguished himself in school, earning good grades. Elmer Kirsch, a friend and classmate, remembers him as a "brilliant" student. Another schoolmate from those years once complained to Glen

that Dad had often set the curve, making the classes rougher on him than they would have been otherwise. During Dad's last year at CBI he was layout editor of the yearbook and was chosen as class speaker.

At Dad's funeral we were both surprised to learn that Dad had sung in the male chorus at CBI, since we never thought of him as being musical. We also learned that one of his roles was class "publican," a junior class official who was charged with collecting dues. We wish we had known about this earlier. As we were growing up we could have made good use of this, teasing Dad about being a "publican and sinner."

One of the more colorful activities Dad got involved in during his CBI days was the outstation ministry at Bald Knob in Taney County, in the center of Ozark "hillbilly" country. The plan was to plant a church in a one-room schoolhouse. The school had no electricity, but there was a gas lamp hanging from the ceiling.

At that time there was an active feud between two of the families in the area, so some carried guns to the schoolhouse. Also, one gentleman wanted to attend services, but he was afraid to come on his own. He would attend if one of the CBI students would pick him up, because he was quite sure no one would shoot him while he was with a "reverend."

Someone cut the brake lines on Elmer Kirsch's car, and it was only divine providence that kept several of the CBI students from dying in a car plunge from one of those old Ozark switch-back roads that were so common in the early fifties. Kirsch used the emergency brake to get back to CBI.

Despite the opposition, the work prospered and a church of about 60 people was established. Then came the event that ended it all. The wife of the Sunday School Superintendent plotted with a neighbor, who also attended the church, to kill her husband. The bloody deed was done with a pitchfork in the Sunday School Superintendent's barn. There was little law at that time in Taney County, since the sheriff had been run out of town and the deputy had quit lest a similar fate befall him. They finally were able to get a sheriff from Greene County to come down and arrest the murderer. The moral stain from these events killed the CBI out-station efforts at Bald Knob.

Following Dad's graduation from CBI, he decided to attend Wheaton College, near Chicago, in order to obtain a bachelor's and then a master's degree. There he met Doris Dresselhaus, a farm-girl from northern Iowa.

Their first date took place in the basement apartment of Bob and Eilene Cooley. Eilene cooked a special spaghetti meal and no doubt the food was a hit. There is also no doubt that Mom was a bigger hit with Dad than the food. Soon they were married.

After three years of pastoring in Michigan, and the addition of two incredibly handsome young boys to their home, Dad was asked to return to CBI as a teacher in 1958. Although money was scarce and Dad worked hard, those were some of the happiest years of their lives. In 1962 Dad began a two-year leave-of-absence from CBI so he could take doctoral classes at the University of Iowa. His program was in American Church History, and eventually he began work on the history of the Assemblies of God.

When Dad was preparing for his oral exams at the University, little five-year-old "Bobby," as he was called in those days, was impressed by a story Dad told of a man who had fainted during his doctoral examinations. So late in the afternoon on the day of Dad's oral exams, as he returned home from this grueling ordeal, Bobby rushed to the door to meet him, crying out, "Did you faint, Daddy?" Bobby was relieved to learn that things had gone well, and his dad had not fainted.

After returning to Springfield and to CBI in 1964, Dad began serious work on his dissertation. Summers were devoted to travelling the country to interview important figures in Pentecostal history. Since the cost of staying at hotels was prohibitive for our family, Dad purchased a small camper that he hauled all over the United States. Those summers were incredibly interesting. When Dad was off interviewing, Mom and her boys would play in some scenic campsite. On the days Dad was free, we would tour battlefields or historic buildings or national parks.

We were always proud of our dad, a fact that is illustrated by an event that happened in the mid-1960s as our family was driving through the Western part of the United States. We came to a narrow bridge just as a large earth-moving machine was slowly plodding

across. Dad attempted to pass the machine and miscalculated, sideswiping one side of the bridge. It was a scary moment, with the car sliding and tires screeching. When the dust settled, Bobby's small voice broke through the silence, "Dad, I wasn't proud of you back there." Mom and Dad broke into laughter, which did a lot to reassure us that everything was all right. That was perhaps the only moment in his 80 years that either of us was not proud of Dad.

When Dad's dissertation had been completed and his degree conferred, we might have expected Dad's scholarly activity to slow down a bit. Instead, it started all over again. The General Council leadership asked Dad to expand his dissertation into a more comprehensive history of the Assemblies of God. This required more interviewing and more traveling, but we did not mind a bit. More research meant more camping. Finally, in 1971, *Anointed to Serve* was published.

In 1970 Dad announced his decision to move across town to teach at Evangel College. One would think this would not have been a big deal, but this simple decision by a lowly professor produced a huge amount of controversy. When he was about 14, Glen remembers being confronted near the entrance to Central Bible College by someone who felt the need to explain, "You know, your father is a traitor!" Glen responded, "Then maybe you ought to talk to him about that instead of me."

Dad spent a decade teaching at Evangel, during most of which he also served as the Chairman of the Department of Biblical Studies and Philosophy. During that time two of his students were his sons. These too were happy years.

As teenagers we boys always felt we had a sacred responsibility to keep Dad humble. He was not a social or professional climber. Although he always dressed nicely—Mom saw to that!—he was never overly concerned about his clothes. In this sense he was a child of Azusa Street; he lived simply and did not attempt to stand out. He was not a self-promoter. Generally, his clothes were neat, conservative and simple. So whenever Mom did attempt to buy something new or in the slightest bit trendy, we took notice. When Dad

came to the breakfast table wearing his “fancy new clothes,” we would cheer, “Bill Menzies goes modern!”

It was during this time that Dad, along with Vincent Synan and Horace Ward, established an academic society designed to promote research among Pentecostals. Many will regard the founding of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, which today draws hundreds of scholars from around the world to its annual meetings, as one of Dad’s signal achievements. Dad served as the first President of the society and as the first editor of *Pneuma*, the society’s scholarly journal.

At this time, when many Assemblies of God people distrusted scholarship and academic pursuits, Dad, largely because of his godly character, humble spirit and encouraging manner was somehow able to disarm their suspicions. After meeting Dad, people would often think, “Well, I guess these scholars aren’t all bad.” Dad won people over and, in this way, he helped change attitudes within the Pentecostal movement towards higher education and scholarship. In short, he paved the way so that others could follow.

Following his time at Evangel, Dad taught for three years at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, spent a year as Interim President at FEAST (the Far East Advanced School of Theology) and then two years as the Vice-President for Academic Affairs at California Theological Seminary.

Dad was famous for the triangles he often drew on chalkboards or whiteboards. The many ideas and relationships these triangles illustrated are beyond counting. But there was a great deal more to Dad’s teaching than the way he packaged things. He was a firmly convinced Pentecostal, and he believed that Pentecostal identity must be grounded in theology, not sociology. Pentecostals had an important insight into the nature of apostolic Christianity; it was not simply the disgruntled response of people living on the margins of society to their economic plight.

Dad was also a stickler for academic honesty. He did not like it when scholars or organizations intentionally did not tell the truth. For instance, when Dad was preparing *Anointed to Serve*, his history of the Assemblies of God, he accurately pointed out that the AG was strongly committed to pacifism—the refusal to participate in war—prior to

World War II. He was asked to remove this from his book because this was viewed as “inconvenient” in the early 70’s, the Vietnam War era when the book was being prepared. Dad refused to shade the truth in this way, although he tried to find a more diplomatic way to get the basic message across. Dad himself was not a pacifist, but he thought it was important to tell the story accurately.

Dad believed the greatest blunder that the American Assemblies of God (AG) made during his lifetime was the way it ignored the Charismatic Movement, acting as if it wished the Charismatics would simply go away. Not only was this a failure to recognize the hand of God at work, the AG forfeited the opportunity to provide leadership to a movement that needed leadership and stability. In the end, the Charismatic Movement had considerably greater impact on Classical Pentecostalism than Classical Pentecostalism had on the Charismatic Movement. It did not need to be this way.

While Dad was certainly a passionately committed Pentecostal, he rejected any sort of Pentecostalism that minimized the importance of either Scripture or Christ. Another way to say this is that his Pentecostalism was both bibliocentric and Christocentric. While Pentecostals think spiritual experience is important, Dad insisted that all spiritual experience must be judged by the standards of Scripture. He was also skeptical of any emphasis on the Spirit that minimized the importance of Christ. Dad was not the sort of guy to look for parallels between Buddhist mysticism and Christian experiences of the Spirit. He believed the Holy Spirit was “the Spirit of Christ” and would always point to him. Christ is the anchor that grounds any attempt to discern which spirits are of God and which are not.

Prayer was a key to Dad’s ministry. As young boys we remember often seeing Dad pace back and forth in our basement, calling out to God in prayer. Bob recalls borrowing Dad’s Bible once and thumbing through the pages. As he did this, he came across a list of prayer requests. On a small piece of paper Dad had listed a number of items that formed the basis of his daily prayer. One item in particular stood out. He had written something like this: “Lord, help me care less about how other people view me and more about how you view me.” That prayer clearly shaped Dad’s life.

In 1989 Dad became President of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary. For the preceding twenty years Dad had made summer trips teaching in various missionary settings, often in Manila or Seoul. In some ways his appointment at APTS was a natural extension of this part-time missionary activity. Apparently he had proven he had a missionary's heart. Moving to the Philippines gave Dad a new jolt of enthusiasm and energy. He seemed to relish the challenges of cross-cultural ministry and leadership. Also, the fact that some of his students faced the real prospect of imprisonment or martyrdom was a constant reminder of how much was at stake.

In 1996 our mother had a serious heart attack while in the Philippines. Since this resulted in extensive damage to her heart, it effectively ended their ability to live overseas. Mom was put on a transplant list and, in 1998, received a new heart.

After Mom's transplant, Mom and Dad returned to Springfield and lived quiet but joyful lives in retirement until illness took them both. The last eight months of Dad's life were consumed by tending to Mom and spending time with her, a task he fulfilled joyfully. In many ways the care of old people for each other reveals a far deeper love than the passion of newlyweds. We will always remember the way our parents loved each other. And that, apart from their relationship with God, was their most important accomplishment of all.

DORIS L. MENZIES' LIFE SUMMARY

By her sons Glen W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies

Doris L. Menzies (Dec. 16, 1932–May 28, 2011) will likely be best remembered as the loving and supportive wife of her husband, William W. "Bill" Menzies. They were happily married for nearly fifty-six years. Mom was more than simply an extension of our dad. She was an educator, missionary, author, evangelist, and a nurturing mother.

She was a survivor, a sweet lady, but who was also tough. We first expected to lose Mom in 1980, thirty-one years before she actually died. In that year, out of the blue, Mom had a massive heart attack, which the doctors did not expect her to survive. She not only survived one but two more heart attacks, two triple bypass surgeries, a heart transplant, cancer and a traumatic head injury. If someone had asked us in 1980 what we thought the chances were of her living another thirty years, we would have replied, "nearly zero." We regard the last thirty-one years of her life as a special gift from above, and from a kingdom perspective these were probably the most fruitful years of her life.

Mom was born at home on her parents' farm, four miles outside the city limits of Decorah, Iowa, just a few miles south of the Minnesota border. Her parents were Willard and Beatrice ("Betty," née Nordheim) Dresselhaus. She was born on a cold winter day, December 16, 1932. She was the youngest of four siblings; she had two brothers and a sister.

Decorah, where Mom grew up, may have been the most Norwegian town in all of America. It was home to a Norwegian language newspaper, the Vesterheim Museum, which celebrated Norwegian immigration to America, and the Norwegian Singers. They let Mom's dad sing in the Norwegian Singers even though his background was German.

Mom's family lived on a dairy farm. She attended a one-room school near their home, complete with an outhouse, which, for a time, was taught by her older sister, Arlys.

Mom spoke with great fondness of her early days on the farm. She was proud of the fact that her father considered her the *best* tractor driver in the family! She drove the tractor while her dad and brothers ran the baler and stacked the bales of hay behind her.

Mom writes of these early days:

We were a close-knit family, with many uncles, aunts, and cousins living on farms nearby. On the adjoining farm lived Uncle Elmer and Aunt Gladys. My father and Elmer were brothers; my mother and Gladys were sisters. So, I grew up with three double-cousins nearby. I do not remember an unkind word spoken between our families, even though the families worked together much of the time. I had a happy childhood.

Mom attributed this remarkable harmony to the love of Christ, which permeated her home. This same love flowed into and shaped our home life as well. When we think back on our own early years, we too cannot remember one unkind word spoken between our mom and our dad.

Mom committed her life to Christ at the Decorah Assembly of God at the age of nine and never looked back. Her lifetime of service to others flowed from her commitment to Christ. Her double cousin, Rev. Dick Dresselhaus, stated in an email sent shortly after her death: "I have had an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful life that Doris lived for God's glory and praise. I have a distinct memory of the day when Doris walked down the aisle at the little church in Decorah and gave her life to Jesus. She was never the same after that."

In 1951, Mom graduated from Decorah High School. Her high school years must have been happy ones, because she always enjoyed returning to Decorah for class reunions. After high school Mom went to Wheaton College, near Chicago, because at that time the Assemblies of God did not have a liberal arts college. She graduated in 1955. Two weeks later she married Bill Menzies, an aspiring Assemblies of God pastor, at the Decorah AG Church.

For the next three years Dad pastored in Michigan, first at Big Rapids and then at Sturgis. Mom gave birth to a son at each location. Our parents lived simply – perhaps too simply. In Sturgis a room Dad had added on to their mobile home caught fire when a heater exhaust pipe got too hot. Fortunately everyone got out safely, but that event encouraged Dad to give up on the trailer and buy a house, a step Mom really appreciated.

When we moved to Springfield in 1958 so Dad could teach at Central Bible Institute (now College), the weather was extraordinarily hot, with temperatures between 105 and 110 degrees Fahrenheit. While many Asians will be not be impressed by this, to most Americans this is unbearably hot!

While Springfield has been a hub around which much of our parents' lives turned, they did not live there continuously. The Springfield eras can be arranged rather neatly by the houses in which they lived, the first two of which were located on Williams Street, just to the south of Central Bible College.

No doubt it will come as a shock to learn that we boys did not always behave. We have vivid memories of fearing punishment and hiding in the bushes that grew in front of the homes along Williams Street. Often it was only one of us, but sometimes we both became fugitives. Sometimes we hid in the Hortons' bushes. Sometimes it was the Cunninghams' bushes. Occasionally it was our own bushes. When we would do something wrong we knew we deserved to be punished, but we would go and hide until Mom found us. Somehow there was always a lot more mercy when she found us than we deserved or expected.

We boys had an idyllic sort of childhood. At one end of Williams Street was an empty lot where we played ball. At the other end of the street was a thickly wooded area where we played "Army." But we also had the nearby CBI campus, complete with ponds, a dump, and a cave to play in, as well as the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds, and a zoo. In those days zoo was free, so we would ride our bikes around and make plans like, "Meet you at the monkeys at noon." There were lots of kids in the neighborhood and, looking back on it, we lived in a kid paradise.

A lot of what gave our lives their idyllic quality was Mom. She was always outrageously supportive of us. Our art projects were always beautiful, our musical performances always wonderful, and we were diamonds in the rough being polished. Deep down we knew the truth, but we liked having such a devoted fan anyway. The only person she was even more devoted to was our dad.

When Dad shifted from teaching at Central Bible College to Evangel in 1970, we needed to move from the house we rented from CBC, and so our folks built a house a mile-and-a-half north of the Springfield city limits. We had a little acreage, so we put up fencing, built a barn, and pastured a few cattle. The farm-girl in Mom seemed to like the country surroundings.

It was a larger decision when in 1985 our parents decided to leave Springfield. No doubt this decision was made a little easier by the frequency with which we used to sing “I’ll go where you want me to go, Dear Lord” in church. After a few years of ministry in Fresno, California, Mom and Dad returned briefly to Springfield and then moved to the Philippines, where Dad served as President of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary and where Mom was thoroughly involved in hosting visitors and in evangelism.

A note to Robert from Emmanuel and Agnes Fave, church leaders in Papua New Guinea, captures a bit of Mom's heart. Emmanuel wrote:

Agnes and I recall our days in Baguio. We have fond memories of your wonderful mother. I recall how our daughter Vaina wandered off on the APTS campus and ended up at Mum and Dad's house, looking for your daughter, Jessica. Mum ended up giving Vaina a tour of their home. We wondered where our daughter was, until there was a knock on the door of our apartment. It was mum. My wife was quite surprised to see the President's wife with our daughter Vaina next to her. We found out that day how she was willing to let a three-year old little girl lead her about. That day Agnes and I felt a closeness to the Menzies family. That left a deep impression on us to this day.

After nine years in the Philippines, Mom and Dad retired in Springfield, moving into their house on South Celebration Avenue in 1996. It was shortly after this that Mom was added to the heart transplant list centered in Salt Lake City, Utah. Jimmie Long, who grew up as an AG missionary kid in Calcutta, India, was the head of thoracic transplant surgery at the main hospital in Salt Lake City and supervised her surgery. There are a few interesting things to note about Jimmy: He married Bonnie Buntain, Marc and Huldah Buntain's daughter; he was Mother Theresa's heart doctor; and his father, Jim Long, preceded our dad as the President of the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, which was called the Far East Advanced School of Theology at the time.

After living in Salt Lake City for about a year-and-a-half, Mom received a new heart, and her health improved greatly. She lived with that new heart for thirteen years, and when she finally passed away, it was not from a heart attack but rather from kidney failure.

While Mom was waiting for a donor heart, a Filipino pastor wrote her a letter volunteering to give her his own heart. He was offering to give up his life so that our mom could live! Of course,

Mom could not accept his kindness, but it was a moving illustration of Christian love nonetheless.

Somehow, Mom's heart problems awakened in her a passion for evangelism. Apparently her brushes with death made the boundary between this life and the next both more immediate and more real. In her fifties she began to witness to others in a way she never had before, and those encounters often bore fruit. One encounter that she remembered fondly was with a Chinese-Filipina woman named Catalina. Catalina was well-educated and successful, but she had no personal peace. Catalina took a trip to Baguio City, which many regard as the most beautiful location in the Philippines, with the hope of finding the peace she desired. She found peace, but it did not come from the scenery. Mom introduced her to the Prince of Peace. Sometime later Mom was also able to introduce Catalina's niece to the Lord.

While in the Philippines, Mom was active in multiple ministries. She took teams of faculty wives and students to nearby schools and into the city jail. She conducted Bible studies in homes and on campus and traveled throughout East Asia and the Pacific with our dad, bringing joy and happiness everywhere she went.

Mom's heart transplant in 1998 was not only a medical milestone for her, but also a spiritual experience. One day shortly after her transplant, Dad returned home and found Mom weeping. He was concerned and asked her, "What's wrong?" She explained, "These are tears of joy. I have just committed my new heart to the Lord."

Mom was relentlessly optimistic and positive. She always saw the best in other people. This vision of the world was a reflection of her deep faith: She knew Jesus and that made all the difference. Our mother was also an extrovert; she got her energy from being with people. Mom was known for her love of shopping, but what we think she really loved was *shopping with people*. She was always ready for an adventure as long as other people were involved.

Mom sometimes marched to the beat of a different drummer. At Mom's wake her longtime friend June Hurst told our family about how she and our mom were the first women at their church to get their ears pierced, something disapproved by many in the AG at the time, and that it was our mom's idea. We believed this since Mom used to complain about "clamp-on" earrings. To her, putting little vises on a person's ears sounded more like a torture technique than good fashion sense. Apparently when June and Mom got their ears pierced it broke

open the dam and pierced ears soon became the norm at Central Assembly.

June also mentioned that she and Mom used to sneak off to the nearby city of Joplin to watch movies, something that was not generally acceptable in the Assemblies of God back then. We boys never knew about this, but somehow today the image of these two prayer warriors sneaking off to watch movies strikes us as funny.

We should probably explain a little bit about Mom's career as an educator. Mom taught public schools in Michigan, California, Iowa, and for many years in Springfield, Missouri. She taught at several different grade levels, but fourth-grade was her favorite. She also developed an expertise in teaching reading to those who for some reason were not able to get it on the first go-around. When she earned her master's degree at Drury College, the focus of her study was remedial reading.

Mom did not teach full-time when we boys were young – except for the two years when Dad was doing his doctoral course work at the University of Iowa and some extra income was really needed. Instead she would substitute teach two or three days out of the week so that she could spend a lot of time with us. Then, after we got older, Mom returned to full-time teaching.

Mom was a gifted writer. Apparently having a passion for writing goes hand-in-hand with a passion for reading. She described her experiences in soul-winning in a number of articles. Following her heart transplant, Mom wrote a book about her life entitled *Young at Heart*, centering on this life-changing medical procedure.

Mom was a special person, and she was always herself: educator, shopper, evangelist, missionary, transplant recipient, movie sneak, and people lover. Many loved her, and she is greatly missed.

A FULL APOSTOLIC GOSPEL STANDARD OF EXPERIENCE AND DOCTRINE

Glen W. Menzies

I. Introduction

In 1914, the American General Council of the Assemblies of God was organized or “constituted.” Until 1927 its “constitution” was not a formally organized structure spelled out in a governing document, like the Constitution of the United States of America, but rather a semi-formal way of doing things based in part on various resolutions and documents and in part on habit, more closely resembling the “constitution” of Great Britain, which is a tradition rather than a document.

When the General Council first published the minutes of its first two General Councils – which were both held in 1914 – the minutes were preceded by an “Introduction” that attempted to provide the reader with some context for the account of the General Councils which was to follow. Although this introduction was brief, it attempted to encapsulate both what the Pentecostal Movement was about and what the organizers of the General Council of the Assemblies of God hoped to accomplish by the formation of this new fellowship.

I will not pretend that I have fully digested all the values and aspirations that lay behind this Introduction, but today I would like for us to begin by considering the opening line of that document. It reads: “For a number of years, God has been leading men to seek for a full apostolic gospel standard of experience and doctrine.” The comments that follow make clear what is meant by “For a number of years.” It explains that fourteen years earlier “the Lord began to pour out His Spirit in Kansas, then in Texas . . .” Next came Los Angeles, from which this outpouring of the Spirit spread throughout the world.

So, fourteen years into the Pentecostal Movement, when it was important to encapsulate the essence of this movement which the

organizers of the Assemblies of God sought to celebrate and advance by the formation of this new fellowship, the phrase they chose for this purpose was "a full apostolic gospel standard of experience and doctrine." Today I would like to highlight the significance of this phrase, which is also the title of my address. I should also point out that this is a fuller, more complete rendering of the much more common expression "full gospel," a term that used to be widespread but has now largely fallen out of use in the Pentecostal circles I know in America, although I believe it continues to be widely employed in Asia. As we consider the matter of "Pentecostal identity" – to which the theme of this lectureship, "Pentecostal Identity: Reclaiming Our Heritage" points us – I believe it will be helpful to ponder the meaning of "A full apostolic gospel standard of experience and doctrine."

But before we proceed to analyze this potent phrase, I would like to direct your attention to a second expression of identity from the early decades of the Pentecostal Movement. I refer to an abortive attempt to change the name of the Assemblies of God. I have already mentioned that until 1927 the American Assemblies of God was not governed by a formal, written constitution. Since the original goal had been to form a loose fellowship of Pentecostal congregations, only the most minimal organizational structures were desired. While today General Councils occur every two years in the American Assemblies of God, in the early years it was not uncommon to have two or even three Councils in one year. As the years passed and the number of resolutions passed at these various General Councils increased, the patchwork of "combined minutes" from these councils became convoluted and nearly incomprehensible. Also, as the missionary, educational, and publishing enterprises of the Assemblies of God emerged and grew, it became increasingly clear to some leaders that a more formal and more structured organizational framework was needed. John W. Welch was the chief advocate of greater formal structure. Because of this advocacy, in 1925 Welch was not returned to the office of General Chairman, a position he had held from 1915 to 1920 and then again following the death of E. N. Bell, from 1923 to 1925.

Nevertheless, in 1927, after several years of disputation and rancor over the matter, the General Council approved a formal, written constitution. The proposal brought to the General Council by a special committee tasked with that assignment was approved in its entirety, with one notable exception. The new constitution had proposed that the name of the Assemblies of God be changed to the "Pentecostal Evangelical Church." Although the General Council in session

reluctantly agreed that the fellowship needed a more formal structure, changing the name of the fellowship was more than it could bear.

I bring up this abortive name change for two reasons, both of which have some bearing on the issue of Pentecostal identity: First, the proposed name change was part of a larger program of taming the radical anti-institutionalism of the early Pentecostals and moving the Assemblies of God in the direction of denominationalism. The chief question provoked by the drafting of a written constitution was "Does operating under a constitution make the Assemblies of God a denomination? – a vision it had explicitly rejected at its founding. Second is the name itself. An enduring question of Pentecostal identity has been, from nearly the beginning if not the very beginning: Is Pentecostalism a subset of Evangelicalism?

Another more subtle change also took place in 1927: the preamble to the Statement of Fundamental Truths was changed. When originally approved in 1916 the preamble had read:

This Statement of Fundamental Truths is not intended as a creed for the Church, nor as a basis of fellowship among Christians, but only as a basis of unity for the ministry alone (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, 1 Cor. 1:10; Acts 2:42). The human phraseology employed in such statement is not inspired nor contended for, but the truth set forth in such phraseology is held to be essential to a full Gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all truth in the Bible, only that it covers our present needs as to these fundamental matters.

While there was some tinkering with the preamble in subsequent years – mainly by adding a statement that the Bible was "the all-sufficient rule for faith and practice" – the general thrust of the preamble remained unchanged until 1927. In that year, concurrent with the adoption of a formal written constitution, the preamble was altered in a radical way, although the full force of that change was masked by the use of language that allowed the statement to retain its traditional sound and feel. The revised preamble asserted, ". . . this Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, 1 Cor. 1:10; Acts 2:42)." Whereas the previous versions of the preamble had explicitly *denied* that the Statement of Fundamental Truths was to serve as "a basis of fellowship," this preamble explicitly *affirms* that it was intended to function in this way. In its original form the preamble sought to limit

what Assemblies of God ministers proclaimed publicly, but not to corral what they believed or to set forth a requirement for church membership. In contrast, the revised version of the preamble aimed for exactly those things. Moreover, all subsequent versions of the preamble have affirmed that the Statement of Fundamental Truths is to serve as "a basis of fellowship."

This new role for the Statement of Fundamental Truths was a stark contrast to the arch anti-creedalism expressed by the founders of the Assemblies of God. That anti-creedal, anti-denominational stance was effectively articulated by the popular slogan: "Although we have not yet achieved unity of the faith, we have achieved unity of the Spirit." While this slogan predates the founding of the Assemblies of God, the slogan was printed on the masthead of early Assemblies of God publications and its essence was explicitly affirmed in the "Resolution of Constitution" passed as the Assemblies of God was founded in 1914. Echoing Eph. 4:3 and 4:13, this resolution claimed that all those gathered were "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, until we all come into the unity of the faith."

Without doubt two different visions of unity and organizational cohesion were expressed in 1914 and in 1927. In thirteen short years the Assemblies of God had moved from a vision of unity rooted in common experience of the Spirit's work in one's life, i.e., the 1914 vision, to a vision of unity and organizational cohesion anchored in doctrinal conformity, the 1927 vision. In 1914, people with holiness backgrounds and theology fellowshipped with those with Reformed identities, not to mention non-Trinitarians, or even "hypnotists" like John G. Lake. The fledgling Assemblies of God avoided drawing lines of separation based on doctrinal differences.

When the Oneness Controversy produced a crisis in 1915 and 1916, it was agreed that some common standards were needed. The adoption of the Statement of Fundamental Truths in 1916 and then the change in 1927 to make this Statement "a basis of fellowship" were each shifts that brought the Assemblies of God further into the orbit of Evangelicalism, which like the Fundamentalism, has tended to mark off its boundaries on the basis of doctrinal orthodoxy.

In the contemporary American context, the Assemblies of God is widely regarded as "the most evangelical" of the various Pentecostal denominations and fellowships. It is one of the largest and probably the most mainstream Pentecostal group in America. It is well developed institutionally, possessing large educational, missionary, and publishing enterprises. At the founding of the National Association of

Evangelicals in 1942 it was the largest of the organizing fellowships or denominations, and two Assemblies of God ministers – Thomas Zimmerman and Don Argue – have served as presidents of the National Association of Evangelicals. While the Assemblies of God never took the name “Pentecostal Evangelical Church” (written with the initial letters capitalized), there is very little doubt that today it is a “pentecostal evangelical church” (written with the initial letters in lower case).

The underlying question of course is whether or not this evangelical character is a legitimate or an illegitimate manifestation of its core Pentecostal identity. Over the years this issue has been raised by a number of smaller Pentecostal fellowships that seem to hold two key convictions: 1) We are Pentecostal; and 2) We are not Assemblies of God. When probed about this, these critics will often cite objections to the institutionalism, denominationalism, formalism, or even creedalism of the Assemblies of God. These are all characteristics that these detractors would also associate with Evangelicalism. So, like it or not, evangelical identity is a factor in the question of Pentecostal identity.

In this rather extended introduction to some key questions about Pentecostal identity I have attempted to establish two poles that define much of the debate. I think it is possible to consolidate these two poles into one overarching question that will frame our conversation today: How does the commitment to “a full apostolic gospel standard of experience and doctrine” relate to the reality of being a “pentecostal evangelical church”?

II. Pentecostal Commitment to the Importance of Being Apostolic

About a year-and-a-half ago I had the opportunity to do some teaching in Armenia and the Republic of Georgia. Although both of these nations were subjected to widespread atheistic indoctrination during the Soviet era, both are also historically Christian nations, at least in a nominal sense. In fact, Armenia was the first nation to embrace Christianity as its official state religion, which happened in the year 301 A.D., a dozen years before the practice of Christianity became legal throughout the Roman Empire. In both Armenia and Georgia, the Eastern Orthodox Church dominates the religious landscape, often opposing or harassing Pentecostal and Evangelical outreach. In

Armenia Eastern Orthodoxy is called the Armenian Apostolic Church, and in Georgia the Orthodox Church is called the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Notice that both formal names contain the word “apostolic.”

As I was teaching a group of pastors in Tbilisi, Georgia, one of them made a comment about how the Orthodox leaders would often dismiss Pentecostal pastors and Pentecostal churches as not being “apostolic.” I asked him what he said in response. Basically he said, “Nothing much,” implicitly accepting the criticism that Pentecostalism is a recent development disconnected from the apostolic Christianity of the first century.

I challenged him not to accept this. Pentecostalism is built squarely on the ideal of representing apostolic Christianity. The earliest Pentecostals more commonly called themselves “Apostolic Faith” than Pentecostal. Painted in big letters on the side of the Azusa Street Mission were the words “Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission.” Pentecostalism must be apostolic or it is not Pentecostal at all.

This seemed to come as a new revelation to this Georgian pastor, so I further explained that Pentecostals simply have a different theory of what makes a church “apostolic.” The Eastern Orthodox, much like Roman Catholics, claim to be apostolic because they are led by bishops who stand in unbroken succession from the first bishops who were ordained by the apostles. This succession of “pastors of the church,” as both Orthodox and Catholic bishops are understood, is thought to guarantee that the true faith will remain protected.

Pentecostals, like other Protestants, reject this concept of what it means to be apostolic because it is clear that a continuous succession of leadership does not guarantee a continuous succession of correct doctrine and spiritual experience. The Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church bears little resemblance to the apostolic Christianity portrayed in the New Testament.

A moment's reflection will illustrate why this is the case. In America there is a common children's game called “telephone.” Perhaps this game is played here in the Philippines as well. Children all sit in a circle and one of them whispers some comment into the ear of the child next to him. That child then turns and tries to whisper the same thing into the ear of the next child, who also turns and whispers to the next child, and so on. Usually there is lots of laughing and giggling because the original comment keeps getting changed until it makes absolutely no sense at all. Eventually the circle is completed and someone whispers into the ear of the child who made the original

comment. This child then announces to everyone what was originally said and what ultimately was repeated back to her. The final form of the comment always ends up being completely different from the original. Of course the experience of the Church has been very much like a game of intergenerational "telephone," with the teaching of the Church undergoing wild transformation over the years.

It is for this reason that Protestants in general take a different approach to assessing apostolicity. Protestants consider a church to be apostolic when it proclaims the same truths as the apostles proclaimed. The way to test for this is to compare what one's congregation or fellowship proclaims with what is taught in the New Testament, and then to make corrections as necessary. Thus Protestant churches are to be *semper reformanda* – "ever reforming" – constantly standing vigil to protect "the faith once and for all delivered to the saints," to use the language of Jude 3.

III. The Apostolic Faith: Continuity or Rupture

As I have reflected on my answer to this Georgian pastor, I have felt that while I emphasized an important truth – that Pentecostalism must be apostolic – my answer had still been incomplete. Implicit to the criticism endured by Pentecostal pastors in the Republic of Georgia from the mouths of the Orthodox is the idea that a truly apostolic church cannot be a recent arrival but rather must have existed throughout the life of the Church. This conception of apostolicity is built firmly on the notion of *continuity*. The Orthodox Church is the true church because it is the same church that Christ founded, the same church that the apostles led, and it has existed institutionally in an uninterrupted fashion from the beginning.

In contrast, the Pentecostal conception of its apostolicity is built on the notions of *rupture* and *restoration*. Not long after the close of the Apostolic Age the mainstream church lost its way. Yes, there may still have been a righteous remnant of those who remained faithful, the 7,000 who refused to bow a knee to Ba'al, but as a whole the church ceased to transmit the Apostolic Faith. The connection with the dynamism that originally launched Christianity had been ruptured.

When the restoration came, starting at Topeka and then Azusa Street and moving from there literally around the world, this constituted an eschatological event usually explained in the language of the prophet Joel. The "latter rain" had begun to fall. According to this

paradigm, the “former rain” referred to the initial outpouring of the Spirit in the Apostolic Age, whereas the “latter rain” mentioned by Joel pointed to the renewed outpouring of the Spirit in the twentieth century. Consequently, as the Introduction to the Minutes of the 1914 General Councils puts it, “almost every city and community in civilization has heard of the Latter Rain outpouring of the Holy Ghost.”

There was another aspect to the eschatological expectation of these early Pentecostals: the end of the age was at hand. The Introduction to the Minutes of the 1914 General Councils speaks of “the prophecy which has been predominant in all this great outpouring,” and summarizes it as “Jesus is coming soon.” For the early Pentecostals the linkage between the Pentecostal Revival and the Second Coming was palpable. Just as John the Baptist had been a forerunner heralding the first coming of the Messiah, the Pentecostal Revival was to be a forerunner heralding the Messiah’s second coming.

The eschatological nature of these events indicated that nothing of what had happened was the result of human ingenuity, methods, or virtue; it was entirely the work of a sovereign God. While the early Pentecostals valued deep devotion and piety, they did not believe Pentecost had come to them because they were better Christians than their forebears or better Christians than their contemporaries in non-Pentecostal Bible-believing churches. They were simply recipients of divine grace.

If this gracious outpouring of the Spirit was considered a forerunner to the Second Coming, it was also considered a *restoration* of what the Church had once had but then lost. It was as if the Apostolic Age had returned and the intervening period of church history marked by institutionalism, formalism, creedalism, and lack of spiritual power had never existed.

No doubt to some this claim seemed to be warmed-over porridge. Had not the Protestant Reformation amounted to a similar claim? Had not Luther claimed that the Roman Church had become apostate and needed to be restored or reformed? Was not the Reformation slogan *Ad fontes* – “To the sources” – a cry for restoration to New Testament Christianity?

But the early Pentecostals claimed more than the Reformers. They called for a restoration not only of apostolic doctrine, but also apostolic experience. They claimed that the same life and power that animated the Church during the Apostolic Age was once again present in their midst. They claimed it was possible to live the book of Acts in the twentieth century.

Since the Reformation, Protestantism had understood a true church to exist wherever “the sacraments are rightly performed and the gospel rightly proclaimed.” Unfortunately this had led to what many early Pentecostals decried as “dead orthodoxy.” The problem was not with the doctrine that was taught. The problem was not with the administration of the sacraments. The problem was that, even with those blessings, church life bore little resemblance to the dynamism depicted in the New Testament. Doctrine by itself simply was not enough. Liturgy and sacrament by themselves were not enough. The presence and power of the Spirit were necessary if one was to experience the “full gospel.”

IV. “This is That”

One of the reasons the early Pentecostals believed the “apostolic faith” had been restored to them involved the way they read Scripture. While Acts 2 was the primary text, other texts – especially Joel 2 and Acts 10 – were also important.

A key interpretive paradigm was found in Acts 2:16, a verse from Peter’s Pentecost sermon. After observing the puzzlement of many Diaspora Jews over hearing their native languages spoken by people from other lands, Peter declares, “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” In this way, Peter maps his own experience and the contemporary experience of others into the framework of Scripture in order to locate an interpretation that can explain those experiences.

A similar “this is that” moment is related in Acts 10 when at the house of Cornelius Peter and his fellow Jews are shocked to observe a group of Gentiles “speaking in tongues and extolling God” (vs. 46). Peter concludes that these Gentiles had received the Spirit just as he and his comrades had on the day of Pentecost on the basis of the similarity of their experiences.

When the early Pentecostals implored Christ Jesus to clothe them with power from on high and then found themselves speaking in tongues, they too had a “this is that” moment. It only seemed reasonable to connect their own experiences with the very similar events recorded in the New Testament.

Ever since the Dead Sea Scrolls first began to be published, scholars have noted the similarities of Peter’s interpretation to a kind of commentary commonly called the *Pesher*. Most prominent among the *pesherim* from Qumran are the *Habakkuk Pesher* and the *Nahum*

Pesher. The name comes from the Hebrew word *pesher*, which simply means “interpretation.” The expressions *Pishro* (“Its interpretation is . . .”) or *Pesher haDavar* (“The interpretation of the matter is . . .”) occur frequently in these works.

Both the *Habakkuk Pesher* and the *Nahum Pesher* are sectarian works that recount how the Teacher of Righteousness related biblical prophecy to contemporary events. Modern scholars may find many of these interpretations fanciful, but the disagreement is largely over how narrowly to apply ancient prophecies. Habakkuk uses the imagery of a fisherman and his nets to portray great military powers snatching up their helpless victims, who are portrayed in Habakkuk as unsuspecting fish. The *Habakkuk Pesher* makes clear that the Romans are the fisherman described in this prophecy. And just as the fisherman “worships” his nets as the source of his prosperity, so too the Romans worship their own military might as the source of their prosperity.

It is hardly surprising that the Teacher of Righteousness would read Habakkuk this way, finding significance for this prophecy in the events of his day. This is not very different from Martin Luther finding echoes of Paul's conflict with the Judaizers in his own struggle with Rome. Yes, it is true that Luther thought of his situation *paralleling* Paul's conflict, while the Teacher of Righteousness probably believed that Habakkuk prophesied with precisely the Roman armies in his mind, so this comparison is imperfect. Nevertheless, the Teacher of Righteousness was not the crazy person some scholars make him out to be.

As Acts 2 presents the matter, Peter's reading of Joel more closely resembles the interpretation of the Teacher of Righteousness than that of Martin Luther. He argues that Joel foresaw the events that had come upon them, not just that these events were similar to other events that Joel describes.

On the other hand, the relationship that Peter finds between the Gentiles in Cornelius' house and the events that occurred on the Day of Pentecost is primarily one of similarity. Nevertheless, there is also a sense in which Luke portrays Acts 10 as a further fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that the Spirit would be poured out on “all flesh.” In the situation recounted in Acts 10, the “flesh” in question is hard-to-imagine Gentile flesh. In a way this must have seemed even more amazing to Peter than what had happened on the Day of Pentecost. God's Spirit had been poured out on those who were generally understood by the Jewish community to stand outside of the people of God.

It is clear that many of the early Pentecostals believed Joel had predicted not only the Day of Pentecost described in Acts 2 but also the modern Pentecostal Movement. Acts 2 represented "the early rain" and Azusa Street represented "the latter rain."¹ While personally I am not prepared to give assent to this interpretation, I understand the rationale behind it.

V. The Triumph of the Vision of Continuity

There is a certain irony in the way Pentecostals talk about how the Apostolic Age relates to the history of the Church that follows. If they are talking to cessationists – those who believe the gifts of the Spirit are not for today – Pentecostals will emphasize continuity: through the centuries the gifts of the Spirit never disappeared from Church life. However, if they are speaking with Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, or Anglicans, they will emphasize the decline of the Church following the Apostolic Age. Both *continuity* and *rupture* are part of the usual Pentecostal historiography.

In this way Pentecostal historiography resembles a Baptist movement known as "Landmarkism," which claims that the true Church is made up exclusively of congregations that practice believer's baptism. While beginning in the third century most of the Church came to practice infant baptism, according to Landmarkism there has always been an unbroken line of churches that remained true to the apostolic practice of believer's baptism. The name "Landmarkism" comes from Proverbs 22:28, which reads, "Remove not the old landmark," and so Landmark churches were understood to be those that had remained true to the apostolic pattern. As in Pentecostalism, both rupture and continuity are necessary ingredients for this movement's self-understanding. Also, the fact that Landmarkism predates Pentecostalism, beginning in the mid-1850s, suggests that it may have had some impact on the nascent Pentecostal movement.

But it is precisely at this point, in the question of how much to emphasize continuity with the historic Church and how much to focus on rupture with the more immediate past, that the tensions between Pentecostal identity and Evangelical identity come to the fore. It is

¹Forty years later the paradigm would be adjusted during the so-called Latter Rain Movement. According to this newer paradigm Azusa Street was understood to be Joel's "early rain" while Joel's "latter rain" prophecy was fulfilled in the eponymous revival of the late 40's and early 50's.

clear that at first the motifs of rupture and restoration predominated in Pentecostalism and in the Assemblies of God. The language of “latter rain” and “this is that” demonstrates this. Consider too these comments from 1922 by Daniel W. Kerr, the primary author of the Statement of Fundamental Truths:

Sacred church history reveals the fact that the church fell. Revelation 2 and 3 prophetically set forth the fall of the church, and its declining condition to the end of the age.²

For a fellowship that emphasized the fallen state of the mainstream church, “to the end of the age,” as Kerr puts it, it is hardly surprising that it did not have much use for the creeds and the councils of church history. But then the “new issue” of oneness challenged the casual way that the young Assemblies of God approached theological diversity. The fellowship chose to affirm the truth contained in the Nicene Creed and the judgments of the first four ecumenical councils, as did most Protestant denominations. It chose to declare itself to be Trinitarian, even though the word “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible. It chose to align itself with the historic church, over against a more radical Pentecostalism that rejected the entire theological enterprise of the post-Apostolic Church.

While in 1916 the Statement of Fundamental Truths was not yet held to be a “Basis for fellowship,” it did launch the Assemblies of God on a more Evangelical trajectory than its previous arc suggested. When in 1927, the Preamble to the Statement of Fundamental Truths was modified and a formal written constitution was approved, this new trajectory was solidified. Finally, when in 1942 the Assemblies of God became a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals, the Evangelical identity of this Pentecostal fellowship became anchored in stone.

VI. How does being Evangelical affect Pentecostal Identity?

So, we have reached the crux of my lecture today. There is the rather important question: How does being Evangelical affect one’s Pentecostal identity? There is also the even more urgent question: Must Evangelical identity eventually eclipse one’s Pentecostal identity?

²Daniel W. Kerr, “The Basis for our Distinctive Testimony,” *The Pentecostal Evangel* (Sept 2, 1922), 4.

Both Pentecostals and Evangelicals seek to ground what they say and do in the Bible, so there is no problem there. Both Pentecostals and Evangelicals also lay claim to apostolicity, although in somewhat different ways. While Evangelicals claim their churches are apostolic because they proclaim apostolic (i.e., New Testament) doctrines, Pentecostals claim this and more. In addition to apostolic doctrine we also claim to manifest and to transmit to others “apostolic experience.”

Fortunately the Evangelical standard is a subset of the Pentecostal standard. If the Evangelical standard for apostolicity somehow contradicted or disallowed the Pentecostal interest in the recovery of “apostolic experience,” then it would not be possible to be both Evangelical and Pentecostal. Happily this is not the case.

The area of greatest tension between Evangelical identity and Pentecostal identity appears to be in the area of historiography. While both Pentecostals and Evangelicals affirm both continuity with the past and rupture, it seems that Evangelicals emphasize continuity more than Pentecostals. This also bleeds over into Hermeneutics. Pentecostals are more comfortable declaring “this is that” than are many Evangelicals. If someone gives a prophetic utterance in church, Pentecostals are likely to proclaim, “this is that” described in the New Testament. Evangelicals will likely avoid making such a clear connection. If someone speaks in tongues, Pentecostals are likely to affirm “this is that” depicted in the book of Acts. Again, Evangelicals may remain skeptical, even if they affirm the possibility of *glossolalia* today. Many Evangelicals are willing to allow New Testament experiences and practices to remain theoretical, whereas Pentecostals feel the need to replicate these New Testament experiences and practices as fully as possible.

VII. Conclusion

So, what should we conclude about the dual identity of the Assemblies of God, a self-described Pentecostal fellowship that manifestly is also Evangelical? Clearly these two identities are pulling the AG, as well as similar organizations, in slightly different directions, but this has been happening from the beginning of its history.

The fears that the founding generation expressed about denominationalism, creedalism, and institutionalism were well-founded, for the Assemblies of God has changed considerably over the years.

But it still retains a commitment to seeking after not only apostolic doctrine, but also apostolic experience.

As the eschatological urgency that gripped the first generation of Pentecostals recedes – we no longer constantly hear the prophetic word “Jesus is coming soon” constantly in our churches – Pentecostals in the future will need to build stronger bridges with the heritage of historic Christianity. We will need to speak more about continuity with the past and less about rupture and restoration. In short, we will need to begin to take church history more seriously. And perhaps that is a way of saying that we will continue to become more Evangelical.

My hope is that as this future unfolds, we will also be able to bring many Evangelicals along with us in pursuit of the life and vitality depicted in the book of Acts so that we may all embrace “a full apostolic gospel standard of experience and doctrine.”

SPEAKING SO OTHERS WILL HEAR

Glen W. Menzies

I. Introduction

In my first lecture I discussed the delicate relationship between Pentecostal identity and Evangelical identity. In this lecture I would like to discuss how we Pentecostals can articulate our theology in a way that makes it easier for our non-Pentecostal Evangelical brothers and sisters to hear our message and absorb it.

One of the issues this raises has to do with basic communication theory: For whom is our theologizing intended? If it is intended only for ourselves, then we can feel free to use whatever language is most convenient or meaningful for us. If, however, our theologizing is intended for others, then we ought to think about how outsiders process whatever we are saying. My contention is that we ought to be apologists for Pentecostalism and make our theology as winsome as possible to the larger Evangelical community. However, to this point in time we have largely been speaking language that we find familiar and comfortable, even though it sometimes introduces unnecessary barriers for Evangelicals who have the potential to embrace Pentecostal theology.

There are two main issues I would like to address in this regard. The first is how we Pentecostals discuss church leadership or what are sometimes called “offices” and “ministry gifts.” The second issue concerns our language of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

II. Church Leadership

If the twentieth century was “the century of the Holy Spirit,” so far the twenty-first century seems destined to be “the century of the Church” – at least in Pentecostal and Evangelical circles. Everywhere I

look I see theologians and New Testament scholars grappling with ecclesiology. While in the past Evangelicals have been content to agree to disagree about ecclesiology, dismissing the doctrine of the church as of at most secondary importance, today many are acknowledging the importance of filling out this long-neglected area of systematic theology.

Several factors are driving this new impetus. One is globalism. As people are exposed to ever expanding varieties of cultures and ways of making decisions, static traditions and structures are being challenged. Another factor is the growing acceptance of both the importance and the necessity of ecumenical dialogue. Again, encounter with alternative approaches leads to reassessment of customary theories and structures. Maybe even more important than these first two factors, especially in an American context, is the challenge to traditional ways of "doing church" raised by the transition of society from a modern to a postmodern paradigm. One last factor leading to reassessment of what the Church is and how it ought to operate is the growing problem of frustration and burn-out among pastors.

I will not take the time today to develop each of these factors in depth, but I would like to probe two areas a little further. As American society becomes more postmodern, the place of the sermon as the centerpiece of public worship is being challenged. While proclamation of the gospel is integral to the life of the Church, it does not necessarily have to be conducted by one person giving a monologue to a large group of listeners sitting in rows facing the preacher. In addition, the idea of "attractional evangelism" – built on the model of encouraging the unchurched to attend services or events held in a church building where hopefully they will be saved – is gradually being replaced. Even in churches where the sermon has already been replaced as the centerpiece of the service by band-driven worship, the "attractional model" generally prevails. In contrast, newer postmodern models are more relational and usually feature informal gatherings, often at homes or coffee shops, which are coordinated by cell phones and social media. If the pulpit and the pew are symbols of church practice in the modernist paradigm, the couch and the coffee mug are symbols of church practice in the postmodern world.¹

While Ed Stetzer of LifeWay Research reports that 98 percent of American pastors agree with the statement "I feel privileged to be a

¹I would like to thank my colleague Dr. Kerry ("Mac") McRoberts for conversations that have heightened my awareness of these changing paradigms.

pastor,”² it is also true that a majority of pastors find it easy to get discouraged and a majority struggle with feelings of loneliness.³ According to a study by the Alban Institute and Fuller Seminary, half of American pastors drop out during their first five years in the ministry,⁴ and Ray Oswald of the Alban Center says that half of pastors will be fired or forced out of their positions within the first ten years of their ministry.⁵ Such problems as well as pressure to be a “superman” who is great at everything have led to a flurry of articles in recent years about pastoral burnout.

So what does all of this have to do with Pentecostalism? My contention is that many of the problems of contemporary church life grow out of poor ecclesiology, and that adoption of a truly Pentecostal ecclesiology will do much to reinvigorate contemporary church life. What is puzzling about all of this is that the functional ecclesiology of most Pentecostal churches in America is not different from that of non-Pentecostal churches. To say this somewhat differently, the ecclesiology of most American Pentecostal churches is not Pentecostal at all.

III. Clergy-Oriented Churches

The primary problem is that Pentecostal churches have become too clergy-oriented. I am not arguing for some kind of Quaker approach to church structure that eliminates formal leadership. The New Testament recognizes leaders in the church and so should we. But I do reject the view that professional ministers are to conduct most or all the ministry of the church. Eph. 4:11-12 makes clear that it is “the saints” who are to be equipped for the work of the ministry, and so the primary role of church leaders is as equippers.

Today in American Pentecostal circles it is quite fashionable to establish “Schools of Ministry.” Are these schools designed to equip

² Ed Stetzer, “Brand New Research on Pastors and their View of Ministry,” *The LifeWay Research Blog* (October 20, 2011), www.edstetzer.com/2011/10/pastors-feel-privileged-and-po.html.

³ David Roach, “Survey: Pastors feel privileged and positive, though discouragement can come,” *LifeWay Biblical Solutions for Life* (October 5, 2011), www.lifeway.com/Article/Research-Survey-Pastors-feel-privileged-and-positive-though-discouragement-can-come.

⁴ Kristin Stewart, “Keeping Your Pastor: An Emerging Challenge,” *Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences* 13.3 (Summer 2009) 112-127: 112.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

all the saints for ministry? No, their purpose is to train church leaders – “ministers.” This terminology reflects a basic misunderstanding of New Testament ecclesiology.

In fact, if someone asks a typical member of an American Assemblies of God church if a “deacon” is a member of the clergy or the laity, almost certainly the response will be, “Deacons are laymen.” If that same person is asked if a “minister” is clergy or laity, the response will be, “Ministers are clergy.” The problem, of course, is that both the English word “deacon” and the English word “minister” translate the same Greek word *diakonos*.

No doubt some of this confusion stems from the language of the New Testament itself. Paul can call himself a *diakonos*, but this does not mean that all of the saints are not also to function as *diakonoi* as well.

Even greater problems surround the word “pastor” – *poimén* in Greek. If a visitor who knew nothing about Christianity were to investigate a cross-section of Assemblies of God churches in America, he or she might conclude, “That holy book they consult all the time must speak a great deal about pastors because almost everything that happens in these churches revolves around pastors.” This visitor might also observe that a person with the title “Pastor,” “Senior Pastor,” or “Lead Pastor” is the top leader in a local congregation, and that in large churches there may be numerous associate or assistant pastors. Churches have Executive Pastors, Administrative Pastors, Media Pastors, Worship Pastors, and even Pastors of Evangelism – ignoring the perfectly serviceable New Testament term “Evangelist.” Similarly, they sometimes have “Teaching Pastors” – ignoring the more straightforward term “Teacher.”

But does New Testament usage justify this overwhelming emphasis that Pentecostals typically place on pastors today? The answer clearly is no.

The word *poimén* occurs in the Greek New Testament 18 times. It is used only once, however, to describe the office of pastor (Eph. 4:11). Everywhere else it either refers to a literal shepherd, Jesus as the Good Shepherd, or it is used metaphorically to suggest that leaders ought to take care of people in the same way as a shepherd cares for his sheep.⁶

So why do Pentecostals, in much the same way as other Protestants, place so much emphasis on pastors?

⁶The specific citations are Matt. 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Mark 6:34; 14:27; Luke 2:8; 2:15; 2:18, 2:20; John 10:2; 10:11-12,14,16; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 13:20; and 1Pet. 2:25.

Much of the blame for this falls on the shoulders of John Calvin. What is ironic about this is that without realizing it, Pentecostals have largely embraced a theology of ministry built on a cessationist foundation.

IV. Calvin's Relegation of Apostles and Prophets to the Apostolic Age

Calvin's cessationism is widely acknowledged.⁷ When he compared the portrait of church life depicted in the book of Acts, in which miracles and prophecy figure prominently, with the church life he observed in sixteenth-century Europe, he noticed a great disconnect. Why did the church of his day not experience the same dynamic as in the Apostolic Age? Rather than concluding that the fault lay with his contemporaries, he concluded that God must have intended the prophetic and the miraculous to end with the close of the Apostolic Age. And this perspective certainly affected his view of church leadership.

Since he served for much of his life as the Pastor of St. Pierre, the Reformed Church in Geneva, Switzerland, Calvin considered Ephesians 4, the lone place in the New Testament where the word *poimén* appears as a title, to be a key ecclesiological passage. And because he observed an overlap between the gifts of the Spirit Paul mentions in Romans and 1 Corinthians and the ministry gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4, Calvin extended his cessationist paradigm to the interpretation of Ephesians 4 as well. As we will see, he effectively reduced the five-fold ministry of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers" to pastors and teachers, with a special emphasis on the role of pastors.

He judges apostles and prophets to have disappeared with the Apostolic Age.⁸ Whatever vestigial functions of those offices might

⁷ A clear statement of Calvin's position is found in the remarks on Eph. 4:11 in his *Commentary on Ephesians*: "It deserves attention, also, that of the five offices which are here enumerated, not more than the last two are intended to be perpetual. Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets were bestowed on the church for a limited time only – except in those cases where religion has fallen into decay, and evangelists are raised up in an extraordinary manner, to restore the pure doctrine which had been lost. But without Pastors and Teachers there can be no government of the church."

⁸ Calvin's position that apostles have disappeared is not quite absolute. In his *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will* (ed. A. N. S. Lane; trans. G. I. Davies; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), p. 28, Calvin suggests that Martin Luther was a contemporary apostle:

remain have been transferred to the pastor.⁹ In a particularly interesting exegetical move, Calvin expects pastors to be "called" to ministry based on the example of the Old Testament prophets and the example of the apostle Paul since pastors now fill the space they once occupied. [One wonders if he believed first-century pastors were ever "called" before they inherited the residue of the apostolic function.]

V. An Excursus on Apostles

It might surprise many of those assembled here to learn that, while I certainly do not consider myself to be a cessationist, calling me a "partial cessationist" would not be entirely unfair. This is because I do not believe we have apostles of Christ in the fullest sense of the term ministering among us today. And since I am attacking an ecclesiology built on Calvin's cessationism, I should probably expand upon the limited way in which I agree with Calvin on this matter.

Perhaps I should make clear at the outset that I believe the word "apostle" is used several different ways in the New Testament. I will list seven different uses, although perhaps there are more.

First, there is "the Twelve," a designation familiar to us from the gospels, but which also appears in 1 Cor. 15:5 and in Rev. 21:14. Acts 1 relates the story of how at first the Church tried to maintain the number of apostles at twelve by substituting Matthias for Judas, who had by this point departed not only from the faith but also from life itself. The criterion used to select candidates for this office is instructive. Peter makes the fledgling Church's goal clear:

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us – one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22).

"Concerning Luther there is no reason for him [i.e., Albertus Pighius] to be in any doubt when now also, as we have done previously, we openly bear witness that we consider him a distinguished apostle of Christ whose labor and ministry have done most in these times to bring back the purity of the gospel." Nevertheless, Calvin considered the appearance of an apostle in post-apostolic times an extraordinary occurrence.

⁹ It can be argued that Calvin believed the vestiges of the office of prophet were transferred to the teacher, not the pastor (see *Institutes* 4.3.5). Yet this becomes a distinction without a difference since in the end Calvin argues that the pastor also performs all the functions of the teacher.

The new apostle was to join the remaining eleven in witnessing to the authentic teaching of Jesus and witnessing to his resurrection. It is also interesting that Acts makes no mention of further replacements to the Twelve, even after the death of James the brother of John is recorded (Acts 12:2).

The list of resurrection appearances recounted in 1 Cor. 15 is particularly interesting because an appearance to "the Twelve" mentioned in vs. 5 is followed by an appearance to "all the apostles" (vs. 7). Clearly Paul understood apostleship to extend further than the Twelve.

Of course one reason Paul does not limit the number of apostles to twelve is that this would exclude him as an apostle, an office he adamantly maintains Jesus Christ bestowed on him personally. While he opens most of his epistles with a reference to his apostolic status, 1 Cor. 9:1 makes clear that Paul grounds his apostolic authority in his personal, physical encounter with Jesus: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" While he had not been privy to the teaching of Jesus during his earthly ministry, based on his encounter with the risen Lord, Paul was able to serve as a witness to the resurrection. Nevertheless, he recognized that there was something abnormal about his apostleship since he had become a witness to the resurrection, not only after Easter Sunday, but also after Christ's ascension. This is why Paul says of himself, "Last of all, as to a miscarriage, he appeared also to me" (1 Cor. 15:8). Just as in a miscarriage the baby comes unnaturally early, Paul became a witness to the resurrection unnaturally late.

An intriguing question revolves around what Paul means by the express "last of all" in this verse. Does he mean, "I was the last person ever to become a witness to the resurrection"? Or, does he simply mean, "I am the last witness to be mentioned in this list"? Either option is possible grammatically. I think, however, that Paul regards his own encounter with Christ to serve as a conclusion and a climax to the list of resurrection appearances the Church prized and continued to recite to itself. Similarly, I think Paul was saying that there would be no more resurrection witnesses, no more apostles in the fullest sense of the term.

If the Twelve and Paul constitute the first two categories of apostles, the various individuals who are called apostles in the New Testament, even though they are neither part of the Twelve nor are Paul, comprise the third category. Barnabas (Acts 14:14) and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7) would be counted in this group.

Those with the gift of the Spirit or a ministry-gift called "apostles" (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11) comprise a fourth group.

The fifth category differs somewhat from the first four, which designate varieties of "apostles of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 8:23 mentions "apostles of churches," emissaries empowered to act on behalf of the churches that send them out. Epaphroditus, who is mentioned in Phil 2:25, was an apostle of the church at Philippi, sent to help Paul when he was in prison. Just as an apostle of Jesus Christ is empowered to conduct business on behalf of Jesus, an apostle of a church is empowered to conduct business on behalf of that church.¹⁰

The sixth category of apostle is Jesus Christ himself, who in Heb. 3:1 is called "the apostle and high priest of our confession."

And finally, "false apostles" are mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:13 and Rev. 2:2. Because they are not true apostles, perhaps they do not belong in this list.

So, what should we make of all this? Clearly the New Testament teaching about apostles is complicated.

Three principles seem helpful to me:

- 1) Because we no longer have people around who have had physical encounters with the risen Christ, the Church today does not have apostles in the fullest sense.
- 2) This does not mean that some apostolic function is not currently needed or present. Just as Jesus sent out the Twelve to carry the good news of the Kingdom of God wherever they went, today we still need to have people carry this good news to places that have not heard. I make a distinction between "apostles in the fullest sense" and the "apostolic function." There is a foundational character to apostolic work and we continue to need pioneers who will take the gospel into new territory.
- 3) In some ways the words "missionary" and "apostle" are alike. "Missionary" is related to the Latin verb *missio*, which means, "I send out." "Apostle" is related to the Greek verb *apostello*, which also means, "I send out." While their etymologies are similar, there is a distinct difference in connotation. The word "apostle" suggests a level of authority that is missing from the

¹⁰ This principle is in keeping with Jewish tradition. According to rabbinic teaching: ". . . a man's agent is like unto himself" (*M. Berakoth* 5.5), which is to say that one cannot empower an agent to conduct business in his name and then later repudiate what was done as not representing his will.

word "missionary." Apostles had a special role in communicating foundational truth to the Church that present-day missionaries do not have. While we should respect and honor the role of missionaries, we would never confuse the authority of their teachings with that of the New Testament, which was written by the apostles and their close associates.

VI. Calvin's Teaching on Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers

After that rather lengthy digression on the various sorts of apostles mentioned in the New Testament, it is time to turn back to consider Calvin's understanding of the remaining ministry-gifts mentioned in Eph. 4:11. First of these is "evangelists."

Calvin understands the term "evangelists" to refer to individuals who were "auxiliary" to the apostles.¹¹ As he says,

‘Evangelists’ I take to be those who, although lower in rank than apostles, were next to them in office and functioned in their place. Such were Luke, Timothy, Titus, and others like them; perhaps also the seventy disciples, whom Christ appointed in the second place after the apostles [Luke 10:1].¹²

In a way Calvin's view of evangelists makes them similar to Tertullian's "apostolic men" – those who were closely associated with the apostles and who functioned in similar ways, but were never called apostles.¹³ Unfortunately, there is no biblical evidence supporting this position.

While I think Calvin's view of evangelists is off the mark, it is an improvement over the idea so common in the early church that the term "evangelists" simply meant "gospel writers." According to this earlier view, God had supplied his people with exactly four evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Since there was no longer either the need for additional gospels or the possibility that more gospels would be written, this office had disappeared.

Of course such a view of evangelists is critically unaware. The term "evangelist" cannot have meant "gospel-writer" in 2 Tim. 4:5 where Timothy is charged to "do the work of an evangelist." And

¹¹ *Commentary on Ephesians, ad loc.* 4:11.

¹² *Institutes* 4.3.4.

¹³ In *De praescriptione* 32.1 Tertullian states that the first bishops were appointed either by apostles or "the apostolic men who continued steadfast with the apostles."

when Philip is described in Acts 21:8 as “Philip the evangelist,” this certainly was not a reference to Philip's literary achievements. In the same way, the word “evangelist” could not have meant “gospel-writer” as it is used in Eph. 4:11.

While Calvin's view of the matter is an improvement, the practical result was essentially the same. He concurs that the office of evangelist was a temporary one that had passed off the scene, and whatever residue of its functions remained had, as in the case of the apostle, been transferred to the pastor.

If “evangelist” as used in the New Testament could not have meant “gospel writer” and if there is no evidence that it meant “an auxiliary to an apostle,” what did this term mean? In my own humble opinion, in the first century, before there was the collection of documents we think of as the New Testament, the term probably referred to an expert in the oral traditions of the teaching of Jesus and the stories of his ministry. These oral traditions were preserved and cherished in the early church and it was likely those called “evangelists” who specialized in preserving and proclaiming these traditions and in training others to preserve and proclaim these traditions. The earliest evangelists may also have used the Church's memories of Jesus to proclaim that a new era of salvation had dawned. I would agree with Calvin in a limited sense that the function of the evangelist has changed somewhat. We no longer have keepers of the oral tradition, but we still need to proclaim the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

After eliminating apostles, prophets, and evangelists as contemporary possibilities, all that remained of the ministry gifts listed in Eph. 4:11 were pastors and teachers. This reduced the offices of the church to two, and subsequent thinkers have done little to correct this warrantless imposition on the biblical text. In fact, on the basis of Granville Sharp's rule of Greek Grammar (proposed in 1789) many have collapsed these two offices into a single unit, the “pastor-teacher.” The theory is that since in the Greek text one definite article appears to modify both the word “pastors” and the word “teachers,” a single concept is envisioned. Recently, however, research by Daniel Wallace suggests that, even if Granville Sharp's rule holds for nouns in the singular, it does not hold for nouns in the plural, and for this reason I believe Eph. 4:11 speaks of “pastors” and “teachers” as separate categories.¹⁴

¹⁴ I'd like to thank my colleague Dr. Philip Mayo for pointing Wallace's insight out to me. While Wallace does not regard pastor-teacher as a single category, he does suggest

While Calvin lived and died long before Grandville Sharp was born, and he never collapsed “pastors” and “teachers” into a single category of “pastor-teacher,”¹⁵ he accomplished much the same thing by insisting that all pastors were teachers, even if it was not true that all teachers were pastors. As he says,

Next come pastors and teachers, whom the church can never go without. There is, I believe, this difference between them: teachers are not put in charge of discipline, or administering the sacraments, or warnings and exhortations, but only of Scriptural interpretation—to keep doctrine whole and pure among believers. But the pastoral office includes all these functions within itself.¹⁶

The net result has been that in many Protestant churches the five offices mentioned in Eph. 4:11 have largely been collapsed into a single office, that of the pastor. While there are also teachers, these teachers can do nothing that the pastor cannot also do. Thus all the leadership responsibility for the Church described in Ephesians 4 is vested in the pastor, and I would submit that this is neither a valid New Testament model nor an acceptable Pentecostal model. It denies the clear New Testament teaching that God distributes his gifts throughout that body so that no single member can function independently of the others.

Calvin believed in that there was "one holy catholic apostolic church," to use the words of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. For him, the test of whether or not a church was apostolic was whether or not its pastor proclaimed the same faith as had been proclaimed by the apostles and was recorded in Scripture. Thus the preaching of the word was moved to the center stage as the guarantor of the legitimacy of each and every congregation.

that pastors and teachers are more closely related to one another than the other gifts in the list. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 284.

¹⁵ While Granville Sharp may have articulated the grammatical principle with new rigor and precision, a remark on Eph. 4:11 in Calvin's *Commentary on Ephesians* makes clear that the fundamental premise had already been suggested by earlier grammarians: "Pastors and Teachers' are supposed by some to denote one office, because the apostle does not, as in the other parts of the verse, say, 'and some pastors and some teachers,' but *tous de poimenas kai didaskalous*, 'and some, pastors and teachers.' Chrysostom and Augustine are of this opinion . . ."

¹⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.5.

I have often heard it said that the Assemblies of God is “a pastors’ movement.” I think this means that the collective will of its pastors decides every decision. Today that may well be the reality, but it is inconsistent with our Pentecostal message and heritage. In fact, the Assemblies of God was not always a “pastors’ movement.” While no official role call was kept at the first General Council of the Assemblies of God that met April 2-12, 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, an official roster was made at the second General Council that met seven months later at the Stone Church in Chicago. According to this roster, there were more evangelists in attendance than pastors.

At the present time many in the Evangelical world are uncomfortable with the partial and un-Biblical ecclesiologies they have inherited. While I don’t think Pentecostals have articulated a fully formed ecclesiology either, I think there is potential for Pentecostals to lead the way toward a more comprehensive and sound ecclesiology built on recovery of church life animated by gifts of the Spirit, ministry by the laity, and leadership by a more well-rounded assortment of equippers. This will mean that pastors will no longer have to be supermen, and it will move ministry beyond something that only happens at services or events.

If we articulate this message clearly and lovingly, I think it is a message our non-Pentecostal brothers and sisters in the Evangelical world will hear and appreciate.

VII. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

At the outset of this lecture I hinted that we Pentecostals could express our doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit in a more winsome manner. The audience I have in mind is non-Pentecostal Evangelicals, and I want to make clear that I am not proposing that we make our message more palatable by diluting or rounding the corners off of our distinctives. I just think we can express the same ideas we have expressed in the past in a more attractive way.

The central problem is that we act as if the expression “baptism in the Holy Spirit” is a technical term in Luke-Acts, when it is not. I will probably surprise no one here today when I explain that the noun phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit” never occurs in Scripture. Its verbal corollary “baptize in the Holy Spirit” certainly does occur, and it was John the Baptist’s expression of choice, but Luke does not confine himself to this phraseology when he discusses the empowering that is

available to all believers as a result of the Holy Spirit being “poured out on all flesh.”

In fact, Luke uses at least eight different expressions to identify this endowment with power: "baptized in the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5; 11:16), "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9,52), "full of the Spirit" (Acts 6:3,5; 7:55; 11:24), "receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15,17,19; 10:47; 19:2), "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38), “the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8); being "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49), and "[God] giving the Holy Spirit" (Acts 15:8). This proliferation of expressions suggests that the common Pentecostal insistence on the use of one Biblical expression as the correct formal name for this important work of the Spirit is misguided. If we are going to go down the road of recognizing John the Baptist’s formulation as determinative, the question might even be raised why we don’t use the double tradition’s variation “baptize . . . with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16).

But some might insist, we have to call it something and what is wrong with calling this experience “baptism in the Holy Spirit”? This is a good biblical name and it has a long tradition within the Pentecostal Movement.

Yes, this is true, but it also creates an unnecessary obstacle for our Evangelical friends. When they read 1 Cor. 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit,” they rightly conclude that here Paul is discussing conversion, the new birth. They have difficulty understanding that the imagery of baptism is used here in 1 Cor. 12:13 to depict the Spirit’s agency in incorporating the believer into the body of Christ, and that a separate experience is also depicted in Acts 2 using the imagery of baptism, but with Jesus as the agent and the Spirit as the element into which the individual is immersed.

The problem is not that Pentecostals are unable to defend the position that baptism language is used in two different ways in 1 Corinthians 12 and Acts 2, it is that the whole problem is largely unnecessary in the first place. It is better to avoid a problem altogether than to be able to resolve the problem successfully.

If a typical Baptist were asked, “Do you believe that additional experiences of the Holy Spirit are available to the believer following conversion?” he would almost certainly answer, “Yes, of course.” If he were asked, “Do you believe it is possible for the Holy Spirit to convey

additional spiritual power to a believer who asks for that power?” again the answer is almost certain to be in the affirmative.

The difficulty Pentecostals have in communicating with many Evangelicals is not so much with the concept we are proposing, but rather with the language we use. I think we would be much better off using a non-biblical expression such as “empowerment with the Spirit” or “empowerment in the Spirit” than “baptism in the Spirit.” This would avoid the cognitive interference produced by 1 Cor. 12:13 – a passage most Pentecostals do not associate with the Pentecostal experience anyway – and it would help us avoid fixating on one Biblical formula when there are so many additional formulae that express basically the same meaning.

VIII. Conclusions

The Pentecostal Movement is now over a century old and the American Assemblies of God will hit that milestone in a couple more years. As we reflect on “Pentecostal Identity: Reclaiming Our Heritage” – the theme of this lectureship – it is important that we go beyond ourselves. We must celebrate the work to which the Lord has called us. This requires that we be “other-oriented.” An “inward-focused Pentecostalism” is a contradiction in terms.

In my two lectures I have attempted to assess the relationship between Pentecostal identity and Evangelical identity, suggesting that they overlap but also that they push in slightly different directions. I have expressed my belief that Evangelicalism has been affecting and will continue to change the Assemblies of God, but I also have expressed my hopes that Pentecostalism will impact Evangelicalism.

More specifically I have suggested that a turn in the direction of Pentecostal ecclesiology provides an attractive way forward for Evangelicals, and that by changing the language we Pentecostals use, we can communicate our pneumatology more effectively to our Evangelical friends.

I hope you have found these ruminations helpful.

THE ROLE OF GLOSSOLALIA IN LUKE-ACTS

Robert P. Menzies

We Pentecostals have always read the narrative of Acts, and particularly the account of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), as a model for our own lives. The stories of Acts are our stories: stories of ordinary people in need of God's power; stories of fishermen called to bear bold witness for Jesus in the face of great opposition; stories of peasants persevering in the midst of great suffering; stories of powerful, demonic adversaries seeking to discourage and destroy. Pentecostals the world over identify with these stories, especially since so many face similar challenges.¹ This sense of connection with the text encourages us to allow the narrative to shape our lives, our hopes and dreams, our imagination.² So, we read the stories of Acts with expectation and eagerness: stories of divine guidance offered through dreams and visions; stories of wonderful miracles bringing joy and open hearts; stories of divinely inspired perseverance in the face of indescribable suffering; and, above all, stories of the Holy Spirit's power, enabling ordinary disciples to do extraordinary things for God.

We Pentecostals have never viewed the gulf that separates our world from that of the text as large. The fusing of our horizons with that of the text takes place naturally, without a lot of reflection, largely because our world and that of the text are so similar. Whereas western

¹ One Chinese house church leader put it this way, "When Chinese believers read the book of Acts, we see in it our own experience; when foreign Christians read the book of Acts, they see in it inspiring stories." His point was clear: our experience of persecution, or our lack of it, impacts how we read Luke's narrative. On the Pentecostal orientation of the Chinese house church movement, see Luke Wesley, *The Church in China: Persecuted, Pentecostal, and Powerful* (AJPS 2; Baguio: APTS Press, 2004).

² On the role of imagination in the hermeneutical enterprise, see Joel Green, "Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke," in Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and Anthony Thiselton (eds.), *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation* (Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 6; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 59.

theologians and scholars of the past two centuries have exerted great energy wrestling with how to interpret biblical texts that speak of God's miraculous activity, Pentecostals have not been afflicted with this sort of angst.³ While Rudolph Bultmann developed his demythologizing approach to the New Testament,⁴ Pentecostals quietly (well, perhaps not so quietly) prayed for the sick and cast out demons. As Evangelical theologians, following in the footsteps of B.B. Warfield, sought to explain why we should accept the reality of the miracles recorded in the New Testament; but, at the same time, not expect them today,⁵ Pentecostals were (at least in our eyes) witnessing Jesus perform contemporary "signs and wonders" as he established his church.

No, the hermeneutic of most Pentecostal believers is not overly complex. It is not filled with questions about historical reliability or "outdated worldviews." It is not excessively reflective about theological systems, cultural distance, or literary strategies.⁶ The hermeneutic of the typical Pentecostal believer is straightforward and simple: the stories in Acts are "my" stories. This is not to say that Pentecostals fail to exercise discernment or judgment. After all, not all stories are filled with the exploits of heroes. There are villains and not every aspect of a story is to be emulated. However, the fact remains, Pentecostals have readily embraced the stories of Acts as "our" stories, stories that shape our identity, ideals, and actions.

I would suggest that strong arguments could be made for viewing this simple, narrative approach to the book of Acts as one of the great strengths of the Pentecostal movement. It is undoubtedly a

³ Sociologist Margaret M. Poloma notes that "Ever since the famous Azusa Street Revival (1906–1909) in Los Angeles...the Pentecostal/Charismatic (P/C) movement has battled the forces of modernity with revival fires" (*Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* [Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press], 2003, 15).

⁴ Rudolph Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in H.W. Bartsch, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate by Rudolf Bultmann and Five Critics* (ET New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 1-2: "The mythical view of the world which the New Testament presupposes...is incredible to modern man, for he is convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete."

⁵ On Benjamin Warfield's cessationist views, see Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles* (JPTSS 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 41–111.

⁶ Although this remains true at the grassroots, there is a growing group of Pentecostal theologians and biblical scholars as evidenced by this journal. Note also the Society for Pentecostal Studies and its journal, *Pneuma*, as well as the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*.

large reason for its rapid growth around the world.⁷ The simplicity of reading the text as a model for our lives, without angst about the miraculous or how it all fits into complex theological systems, clearly enables the message to be readily grasped by people in pre- or semi-literate cultures, people that function in more experiential and less cognitive cultures. We should not forget that these people represent the majority of the inhabitants of our planet. They, too, generally exhibit little concern about stories filled with miracles, but rather readily identify with them.⁸

I am convinced that this simple hermeneutic, this straightforward approach to reading Acts as a model for the church today, is one of the key reasons why an emphasis on speaking in tongues played such an important role in the formation of the modern Pentecostal movement. Certainly the link between speaking in tongues and baptism in the Holy Spirit has marked the Pentecostal movement since its inception. Without this linkage it is doubtful whether the movement would have seen the light of day, let alone survived.

Glossolalia has been crucially important for Pentecostals the world over for many reasons, but I would suggest that two are of particular importance. First, as I have noted, speaking in tongues highlights, embodies, and validates the unique way that Pentecostals read the book of Acts: Acts is not simply a historical document; rather, Acts presents a model for the life of the contemporary church. Thus, tongues serve as a sign that “their experience” is “our experience” and that all of the gifts of the Spirit (including the “sign gifts”) are valid for the church today. Secondly, tongues calls the church to recognize and remember its true identity: the church is nothing less than a community of end-time prophets called and empowered to bear bold witness for Jesus. In short, the Pentecostal approach to tongues symbolizes significant aspects of the movement: its hermeneutic (Acts and the apostolic church represent a model for the church today) and its theological center (the prophetic and missionary nature of the Pentecostal gift). For Pentecostals, then, tongues serve as a sign that the calling and power of the apostolic church are valid for contemporary believers.

⁷ Philip Jenkins suggests that the Pentecostal movement should be identified as “the most successful social movement of the past century” (*The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 8).

⁸ On several occasions, as I have translated orally the testimonies of Chinese believers for visitors to China from Western nations, I have been tempted to tone down their references to amazing supernatural occurrences for fear that their foreign visitors might think they are crazy.

In the following essay, I would like to explore, from Luke's perspective, the role of tongues in the life of the church and the individual believer. I will first highlight the importance of starting our inquiry with the right mindset by describing the assumptions regarding tongues that should inform our study. I will then attempt to elucidate Luke's perspective on tongues, particularly his attitude toward the role of tongues in his church. Then, I shall seek to describe Luke's understanding of the role of tongues in the life of the individual believer. Finally, I shall summarize my findings and their significance for contemporary Christians.

1. Important Assumptions: Tongues or Languages?

Many Christians seeking to examine the biblical teaching on tongues begin with faulty assumptions. Chief among these would be the notion that glossolalia was either non-existent in the early church, or at the most, that it was experienced very rarely by a limited few. The teaching, prevalent in some quarters, that references to "speaking in tongues" in the NT typically denote the supernatural ability to preach in a foreign language, previously unknown to the speaker (xenolalia), has cast a long shadow. Furthermore, the impression is often given that the NT authors rarely discuss this strange practice and that, when they do, they do so with great hesitation and are largely negative and condescending in their remarks. However, a review of the biblical evidence, as we shall see, suggests that these assumptions are flawed and need to be reconsidered.

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues is actually described in numerous passages in the New Testament.⁹ In 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul refers to the gift of tongues (γλῶσσαις)¹⁰ and uses the phrase λαλέω γλῶσσαις to designate unintelligible utterances inspired by the Spirit.¹¹ The fact that this gift of tongues refers to unintelligible utterances (e.g., the glossolalia experienced in contemporary Pentecostal churches) rather than known human languages is confirmed by the fact that Paul explicitly states that these tongues must be interpreted if they are to be understood (1 Cor. 14:6-19, 28; cf. 12:10, 30).

⁹ See 1 Cor. 12-14; Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6; note also Mark 16:17 and Romans 8:26-27.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 12:10; 12:28; 13:8; 14:22, 26.

¹¹ 1 Cor. 12:30; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 6, 13, 18, 23, 27, 39.

In Acts 10:46 and 19:6 Luke also uses the phrase λαλέω γλώσσαις to designate utterances inspired by the Spirit. In Acts 10:46 Peter and his colleagues hear Cornelius and his household “speaking in tongues and praising God.”¹² Acts 19:6 states that the Ephesian disciples “spoke in tongues and prophesied.” The literary parallels between the descriptions of speaking in tongues in these passages and 1 Corinthians 12-14 are impressive. All of these texts: (1) associate speaking in tongues with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; (2) utilize similar vocabulary (λαλέω γλώσσαις); and (3) describe inspired speech associated with worship and prophetic pronouncements. Additionally, since 1 Corinthians 12-14 clearly speaks of unintelligible utterances and there is no indication in either of the Acts passages that known languages are being spoken - indeed, there is no apparent need for a miracle of xenolalia in either instance (what foreign language would they have spoken?) - most English translations (including the NRSV) translate the occurrences of λαλέω γλώσσαις in these texts with reference to speaking in tongues. The Chinese *Union Version* translates in a similar fashion, using a phrase (*shuo fang yan*) that refers to regional dialects or, for contemporary Christians, glossolalia.

The references to γλώσσαις in Acts 2:1-13, however, raise interesting questions for those seeking to understand this passage. The first occurrence of γλώσσαις is found in Acts 2:3, where it refers to the visionary “tongues of fire” that appear and then separate and rest on each of the disciples present. Then, in Acts 2:4 we read that those present were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to “speak in other tongues (λαλεῖν ἑτέροις γλώσσαις) as the Spirit enabled them.” This phenomenon creates confusion among the Jews of the crowd who, we are told, represent “every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). The crowd gathered in astonishment because “each one heard them speaking in his own language” (διαλέκτω; Acts 2:6). These details are repeated as Luke narrates the response of the astonished group: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language” (διαλέκτω; Acts 2:7-8)? After the crowd lists in amazement the various nations represented by those present, they declare, “we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues” (γλώσσαις; Acts 2:11)!

Since Acts 2:11 clearly relates γλώσσαις to the various human languages of those present in the crowd, most scholars interpret the “tongues” (γλώσσαις) of Acts 2:4 and 2:11 as referring to

¹² All English Scripture citations are taken from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

intelligible speech. The disciples are enabled by the Spirit to declare “the wonders of God” in human languages that they had not previously learned. This reading of the text has encouraged the NRSV and the Chinese *Union Version* to translate γλώσσαῖς Acts 2:4 and 2:11 with the term “language” and its Chinese equivalent.

However, it should be noted that this text has been interpreted differently. Some scholars, admittedly a minority, have argued that the “tongues” (γλώσσαῖς) of Acts 2:4 refer to unintelligible utterances inspired by the Spirit.¹³ According to this reading, the miracle that occurs at Pentecost is two-fold: first, the disciples are inspired by the Holy Spirit to declare the “wonders of God” in a spiritual language that is unintelligible to human beings (i.e., glossolalia); secondly, the Jews in the crowd who represent a diverse group of countries are miraculously enabled to understand the glossolalia of the disciples so that it appears to them that the disciples are speaking in each of their own mother-tongues. Although this position may at first sight appear to be special pleading, as Jenny Everts points out, there are in fact a number of reasons to take it seriously.¹⁴

First, it should be noted that Luke uses two different terms, both of which can refer to language, in Acts 2:1-13: γλώσσαῖς (Acts 2:4, 11) and διάλεκτος (Acts 2:6, 8). The term διάλεκτος clearly refers to intelligible speech in Acts 2:6, 8 and it may well be that Luke is consciously contrasting this term with “the more obscure expression of ἑτέρας γλώσσαῖς” in Acts 2:4.¹⁵ Given the usage of the term, γλώσσαῖς, elsewhere in the New Testament, particularly when it is associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit, this suggestion is entirely plausible. Luke certainly had other options before him: he could have referred to languages in other ways, as the usage of διάλεκτος in Acts 2:6-8 indicates. However, in Acts 2:4 he chooses to use the term γλώσσαῖς, which reappears in similar contexts in Acts 10:46 and 19:6.

Second, it may well be that the phrase τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέτῳ (“in his own language”) modifies the verbs of hearing in Acts 2:6 and in Acts 2:8. This is certainly the case in Acts 2:8: “How is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?” Everts notes that, if we read Acts 2:6 in a similar way, “these two verses would imply that each

¹³ See Everts, “Tongues or Languages? Contextual Consistency in the Translation of Acts 2,” *JPT* 4 (1994), p. 74, n. 9 and the works she cites, the most recent being J.L. Sherrill, *They Speak with Other Tongues* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 105-106.

¹⁴ Everts, “Tongues,” 74-75. I am largely dependent on Everts for the points that follow.

¹⁵ Everts, “Tongues,” 75.

individual heard the entire group of disciples speaking the individual's native language."¹⁶ All of this indicates that Luke may not be using γλώσσαίς (Acts 2:4, 11) and διάλεκτος (Acts 2:6, 8) simply as synonyms.

Third, the major objection to this interpretation is the fact that in Acts 2:11 γλώσσαίς is used as a synonym for διάλεκτος: "we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues" (γλώσσαίς). However, it should be noticed that in Acts 2:1-13 Luke may be intentionally playing on the multiple meanings of γλῶσσα (tongue). In Acts 2:3 the term refers to the shape of a tongue ("tongues of fire"). In Acts 2:11 it refers to a person's mother-tongue or native language. Given the term's usage elsewhere in the New Testament, is it not likely that Luke intended his readers to understand his use of the term in Acts 2:4 as a reference to unintelligible speech inspired by the Holy Spirit (glossolalia)?

Fourth, this reading of the text offers a coherent reason for the reaction of the bystanders who thought that the disciples were drunk. While it is hard to imagine the crowd reacting this way if the disciples are simply speaking in foreign languages; the crowd's reaction is entirely understandable if the disciples are speaking in tongues (glossolalia).

In short, the evidence suggests that Luke's references to speaking in tongues (λαλέω γλώσσαίς) in Acts 10:46, 19:6, and quite possibly (but less certain) 2:4, designate unintelligible utterances inspired by the Spirit rather than the speaking of human languages previously not learned. The crucial point to note here is that in Acts 2:4 γλώσσαίς may mean something quite different from that which is suggested by the translation, "languages." The translation "tongues" on the other hand, with its broader range of meaning, not only captures well the nuances of both possible interpretations noted above; it also retains the verbal connection Luke intended between Acts 2:4, Acts 10:46, and Acts 19:6. Everts' conclusion is thus compelling: "There is really little question that in Acts 2:4 'to speak in other tongues' is a more responsible translation of λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαίς than 'to speak in other languages'."¹⁷

The logical corollary of this conclusion for Chinese Christians is that there is a better way to translate the λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαίς of Acts 2:4 into Chinese than the "*shuo qi bie quo de hua*"¹⁸ offered by

¹⁶ Everts, "Tongues," 75.

¹⁷ Everts, "Tongues," 75.

¹⁸ 说起别国的话。

the Chinese *Union Version*. Probably the best approach would be to translate this key expression in Acts 2:4 with the phrase, *shuo qi bie zhong de fang yan*,¹⁹ which can refer to speaking in different kinds of tongues (glossolalia), different regional dialects, or different languages. This would also preserve the connection with the *shuo fang yan* of Acts 10:46 and 19:6.

Another alternative is found in *The Today's Chinese Version* (*xian dai zhong wen yi ben*),²⁰ which translates the phrase in Acts 2:4 as “*shuo qi bie zhong yu yan*.”²¹ Although this translation has a more narrow range of meaning and refers specifically “to speaking in other languages,” it does retain a verbal connection to Acts 10:46 and 19:6 by translating λαλέω γλώσσαις in these texts with the phrase, *ling yu* (spiritual language).²² This translation is thus better than that found in the Chinese *Union Version*, but perhaps not as good as our suggested translation above.

2. Luke-Acts and the Role of Tongues in the Church

The importance of retaining the verbal connections between the γλώσσαις (tongues) of Acts 2:4, Acts 10:46, and Acts 19:6 should not be missed. This becomes apparent when we examine Luke's understanding of the role of tongues in the life of the church.

2.1 Tongues as a Type of Prophecy

A close reading of Luke's narrative reveals that he views speaking in tongues as a special type of prophetic speech. Speaking in tongues is associated with prophecy in each of the three passages which describe this phenomenon in Acts. In Acts 2:17-18 (cf. Acts 2:4) speaking in tongues is specifically described as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that in the last days all of God's people will prophesy. The strange sounds of the disciples' tongues-speech, Peter declares, are in fact not the ramblings of drunkards; rather, they represent prophetic utterances issued by God's end-time messengers (Acts 2:13, 15-17). In Acts 19:6 the connection between prophecy and speaking in tongues is again explicitly stated. When Paul laid hands on the Ephesian

¹⁹ 说起别种的方言。

²⁰ 现代中文译本。

²¹ 说起别种语言。

²² 灵语。

disciples, the Holy Spirit “came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

Finally, the association is made again in Acts 10:42-48. In the midst of Peter’s sermon to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit “came on all those who heard the message” (Acts 10:44). Peter’s colleagues “were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God” (Acts 10: 45-46). It is instructive to note that the Holy Spirit interrupts Peter at the moment he has declared, “*All the prophets testify about him [Jesus] that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name*” (Acts 10: 43).²³ In view of Luke’s emphasis on prophetic inspiration throughout his two-volume work and, more specifically, his description of speaking in tongues as prophetic speech in Acts 2:17-18, it can hardly be coincidental that the Holy Spirit breaks in and inspires glossolalia precisely at this point in Peter’s sermon. Indeed, as the context makes clear, Peter’s colleagues are astonished at what transpires because it testifies to the fact that God has accepted uncircumcised Gentiles. Again, the connection between speaking in tongues and prophecy is crucial for Luke’s narrative. In Acts 2:17-18 we are informed that reception of the Spirit of prophecy (i.e., the Pentecostal gift) is the exclusive privilege of “the servants” of God and that it typically results in miraculous and audible speech.²⁴ Speaking in tongues is presented as one manifestation of this miraculous, Spirit-inspired speech (Acts 2:4, 17-18). So, when Cornelius and his household burst forth in tongues, this act provides demonstrative proof that they are in fact part of the end-time prophetic band of which Joel prophesied. They too are connected to the prophets that “testify” about Jesus (Acts 10:43). This astonishes Peter’s colleagues, because they recognize the clear implications that flow from this dramatic event: since Cornelius and his household are prophets, they must also be “servants” of the Lord (that is, members of the people of God). How, then, can Peter and the others withhold baptism from them? (Acts 10:47-48).

The importance of this connection in the narrative is highlighted further in Acts 11:15-18. Here, as Peter recounts the events

²³ Italics mine.

²⁴ Of the eight instances where Luke describes the initial reception of the Spirit by a person or group, five specifically allude to some form of inspired speech as an immediate result (Luke 1:41; 1:67; Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6) and one implies the occurrence of such activity (Acts 8:15, 18). In the remaining two instances, although inspired speech is absent from Luke’s account (Luke 3:22; Acts 9:17), it is a prominent feature in the pericopes that follow (Luke 4:14, 18f.; Acts 9:20).

associated with the conversion of Cornelius and his household, he emphasizes that “the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15) and then declares, “God gave them the same gift as he gave us...” (Acts 11:17). The fact that Jewish disciples at Pentecost and Gentile believers at Caesarea all spoke in tongues is not incidental to Luke’s purposes; rather, it represents a significant theme in his story of the movement of the gospel from Jews in Jerusalem to Gentiles in Rome and beyond.

2.2 Salvation History and Tongues in Luke-Acts

Some might be tempted to suggest at this point that the special role that speaking in tongues plays as a sign in Acts 2 and Acts 10 indicates that, in Luke’s view, this phenomenon was limited to these historically significant events in the early days of the founding of the church. This, however, would be to misread Luke’s narrative. Luke states the point with particular clarity in Acts 2:17-21:

[v. 17] *In the last days, God says,* [Joel: ‘after these things’]
 I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
 Your sons and daughters will prophesy
Your young men will see visions, [Joel: these lines are inverted]
Your old men will dream dreams.
 [v. 18] *Even on my servants, both men and women,* [additions to Joel]
 I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
And they will prophesy.
 [v. 19] I will show wonders in the heaven *above*
 And *signs* on the earth *below,*
 Blood and fire and billows of smoke.
 [v. 20] The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood
 Before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
 [v. 21] And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
 (Acts 2:17-21; modification of Joel 2:28-32 italicized).

It is important to note that here Luke carefully shapes this quotation from the LXX in order to highlight important theological themes and truths. Three modifications are particularly striking:

First, in v. 17 Luke alters the order of the two lines that refer to young men having visions and old men dreaming dreams. In Joel, the old men dreaming dreams comes first. But Luke reverses the order: “Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams”

(Acts 2: 17). Luke gives the reference to “visions” pride of place in order to highlight a theme that he sees as vitally important and which recurs throughout his narrative. Although words associated with “dreams” are rare in Luke-Acts,²⁵ Luke loves to recount stories in which God directs his church through visions.²⁶ The visions of Paul and Ananias (Acts 9:10-11), of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:3, 17), Paul’s Macedonian vision (Acts 16:9-10), and his vision at Corinth (Acts 18:9-10) are but a few. Luke is not fixated on visions; rather, he seeks to encourage his readers to embrace an important truth: God delights to lead us, his end-time prophets, in very personal and special ways, including visions, angelic visitations, and the prompting of the Spirit, so that we might fulfill our calling to take the gospel to “the ends of the earth.”

Secondly, Luke inserts the phrase, “And they will prophesy,” into the quotation in v. 18. It is as if Luke is saying, “whatever you do, don’t miss this!” In these last days the servants of God will be anointed by the Spirit to proclaim his good news and declare his praises. They will prophesy! This is what is now taking place. The speaking in tongues that you hear, declares Peter, is a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. This special form of Spirit-inspired prophetic speech serves as a unique sign that “the last days” have arrived (cf. Acts 2:33-36; 10:45-46). Of course, this theme of Spirit-inspired witness runs throughout the narrative of Acts.²⁷

Thirdly, with the addition of a few words in v. 19, Luke transforms Joel’s text to read: “I will show wonders in the heaven *above*, and *signs* on the earth *below*.” The significance of these insertions, which form a collocation of “wonders” and “signs,” becomes apparent when we look at the larger context of Acts. The first verse that follows the Joel citation declares, “Jesus...was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, *wonders and signs*” (Acts 2:22). And throughout the book of Acts we read of the followers of Jesus working “wonders and signs.” In this way, Luke links the miraculous events associated with Jesus

²⁵ The term translated ‘shall dream’ is a future passive of ἐνυπνιάζω. This verb occurs only in Acts 2:17 and in Jude 8 in the entire New Testament. The noun, ἐνυπνιον (‘dream’), is found nowhere else in Acts or the rest of the New Testament.

²⁶ The noun translated ‘visions’ in v. 17, ὄρασις, occurs four times in the New Testament and only here in Acts. The other three occurrences are all found in Revelation. However, Luke uses another term, a close cousin to ὄρασις, the neuter noun, ὄραμα, often and at decisive points in his narrative to refer to ‘visions’. The noun ὄραμα occurs 12 times in the New Testament and 11 of these occurrences are found in the book of Acts (Acts 7:31; 9:10, 12; 10: 3, 17, 19; 11:5; 12:9; 16:9, 10; 18:9; and then also in Mt. 17:9).

²⁷ See especially Acts 4:13, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 9:31; 13:9, 52.

(Acts 2:22) and his disciples (e.g. Acts 2:43) together with the cosmic portents listed by Joel (see Acts 2:19b-20) as “signs and wonders” that mark the era of fulfillment, “the last days.” For Luke, “these last days” – that period inaugurated with Jesus’ birth and leading up to the Day of the Lord – represents an epoch marked by “signs and wonders.” Luke is conscious of the significant role that these phenomena have played in the growth of the early church. According to Luke, then, visions, prophecy, and miracles – all of these should continue to characterize the life of the church in these “last days.”

This text also demonstrates that for Luke, the salvation history presented in his narrative cannot be rigidly segmented into discrete periods. The Kingdom of God (or the new age when God’s covenant promises begin to find fulfillment) is inaugurated with the miraculous birth of Jesus (or, at the very latest, with Jesus’ public ministry, which was marked by miracles). The Kingdom continues to be progressively realized until his second coming and the consummation of God’s redemptive plan. Acts 2:17-22 thus offers an important insight into Luke’s view of salvation history. Pentecost is indeed a significant eschatological event, but it does not represent the disciples’ entrance into the new age;²⁸ rather, Pentecost is the fulfillment of Moses’ wish that “all the Lord’s people were prophets” (Num. 11:29; cf. Joel 2:28-29/Acts 2:17-18) and, as such, represents an equipping of the church for its divinely appointed mission. In short, in this crucial passage Luke stresses the continuity that unites the story of Jesus and the story of the early church. Luke’s two-volume work represents the “one history of Jesus Christ,”²⁹ a fact that is implied by the opening words of Acts: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach...” (Acts 1:1).³⁰

One significant implication that flows from this insight is that the birthday of the church cannot be dated to Pentecost. Indeed, in his stimulating monograph, Graham Twelftree argues that, for Luke, the beginning of the church must be traced back to Jesus’ selection of the Twelve. Twelftree declares, “Luke would not call Pentecost the birth of the Church. For him the origins of the Church [are] in the call and community of followers of Jesus during his ministry.”³¹ Furthermore,

²⁸ Only by reading Luke-Acts through the lens of Pauline theology can Pentecost be construed as the moment when the disciples enter into the new age.

²⁹ Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1979), 59.

³⁰ Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke’s View of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 30.

³¹ Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 28.

Twelftree asserts that “the ministry of the Church is not seen as distinct from but continues the ministry of Jesus...”³² These conclusions, drawn largely from Luke’s portrait of the apostles, are supported by Luke’s citation of Joel’s prophecy.

All of this has a direct bearing on the question at hand, on how we should view tongues today. As a manifestation of prophecy, Luke suggests that tongues have an ongoing role to play in the life of the church. Remember, a characteristic of “the last days” – that era of fulfillment that begins with the birth of Jesus and ends with his second coming – is that all of God’s people will prophesy (Acts 2:17-18). The fact that Luke recounts various instances of the fulfillment of this prophecy that feature speaking in tongues encourages the reader to understand that, like “signs and wonders” and bold, Spirit-inspired witness for Jesus, speaking in tongues will characterize the life of the church in these last days. To suggest otherwise runs counter to Luke’s explicitly stated message, not to mention that of Paul (1 Corinthians 14:39).

2.3 Jesus Our Model

Luke not only views speaking in tongues as a special type of prophetic speech that has an ongoing role in the life of the church, there are also indications that he sees this form of exuberant, inspired speech modeled in the life of Jesus. Apart from the general parallels between Jesus and his disciples with reference to Spirit-inspired prophetic speech (e.g., Luke 4:18-19; Acts 2:17-18), Luke provides a specific, unique parallel in Luke 10:21: “At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth...’”

This joyful outburst of thanksgiving is a response given within an interesting context – the return of the Seventy from their mission. As we shall see, the sending of the Seventy (Luke 10:1, 17) echoes the prophetic anointing of the seventy elders in Numbers 11.³³ Some scholars, such as Gordon Wenham, describe the prophesying narrated in Numbers 11:24-30 as an instance of “unintelligible ecstatic utterance, what the New Testament terms speaking in tongues.”³⁴

³² Twelftree, *People of the Spirit*, 28.

³³ See also Robert P. Menzies, “The Sending of the Seventy and Luke’s Purpose,” in Paul Alexander, Jordan D. May, and Robert Reid, eds., *Trajectories in the Book of Acts: Essays in Honor of John Wesley Wykoff* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 87-113.

³⁴ Gordon Wenham, *Numbers* (Tyndale OT Commentary Series), 109. I am indebted to my good friend, Grant Hochman, for pointing me to this reference.

On the heels of this passage, Luke describes Jesus' inspired exultation. Particularly important for our discussion is the manner in which Luke introduces Jesus' words of praise: "he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said" (ἠγαλλιάσατο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ εἶπεν; Luke 10:21).³⁵ The verb, ἀγαλλιάω (rejoice), employed here by Luke is used frequently in the LXX. It is usually found in the Psalms and the poetic portions of the Prophets, and it denotes spiritual exultation that issues forth in praise to God for his mighty acts.³⁶ The subject of the verb is not simply ushered into a state of sacred rapture; he also "declares the acts of God."³⁷ In the New Testament the verb is used in a similar manner. The linkage between ἀγαλλιάω and the declaration of the mighty acts of God is particularly striking in Luke-Acts.³⁸ The verb describes the joyful praise of Mary (Luke 1:47), Jesus (Luke 10:21), and David (Acts 2:26) in response to God's salvific activity in Jesus. In Luke 1:47 and 10:21 the verb is specifically linked to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and in Acts 2:25-30 David is described as a prophet. This verb, then, was for Luke a particularly appropriate way of describing prophetic activity.

The reference in Acts 2:26 is especially interesting; for here, the verb ἀγαλλιάω is associated with the word γλῶσσα (tongue). In a quotation from Psalm 16:9 (Psalm 15:9, LXX), Peter cites David as saying, "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices (καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο ἡ γλῶσσά μου)..." This association of ἀγαλλιάω with γλῶσσα should not surprise us, for five of the eight references to γλῶσσα in Luke-Acts describe experiences of spiritual exultation that result in praise.³⁹ All of this indicates that, for Luke, ἀγαλλιάω and γλῶσσα, when associated with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are terms that describe special instances of prophetic inspiration, instances in which a person or group experiences spiritual exultation and, as a result, bursts forth in praise.

We conclude that Luke 10:21 describes Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving in terms reminiscent of speaking in tongues: inspired by the Spirit, Jesus bursts forth in exuberant and joyful praise. Although it is unlikely that Luke's readers would have understood this outburst of

³⁵ I am following the American Standard Version here for the English translation.

³⁶ R. Bultmann, "ἀγαλλιάομαι," TDNT, I, 19; W.G. Morrice, *Joy in the New Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984), 20.

³⁷ R. Bultmann, "ἀγαλλιάομαι," 20.

³⁸ The linkage is made explicit in three out of four occurrences of the verb (Luke 1:47; 10:21; Acts 2:26). The only exception is Acts 16:34.

³⁹ These five include: Luke 1:64, Acts 2:4, 2:26, 10:46, 19:6. The other three references to γλῶσσα are found in Luke 16:24; Acts 2:3, 11.

inspired praise to include unintelligible utterances (i.e., glossolalia), the account does describe a relatively similar experience of spiritual rapture that produces joyful praise. What is abundantly clear is that Luke presents Jesus' Spirit-inspired prophetic ministry, including his bold proclamation and exultant praise, as a model for his readers,⁴⁰ living as they do, in these "last days."

We may summarize our argument to this point as follows:

- 1) Glossolalia was well known and widely practiced in the early church. Luke's references to speaking in tongues (λαλέω γλώσσαις) in Acts 10:46, 19:6, and quite possibly (but less certain) 2:4, designate unintelligible utterances inspired by the Spirit rather than the speaking of human languages previously not learned. However we interpret this latter text (Acts 2:4), the importance of the verbal connections between the λαλέω γλώσσαις (to speak in tongues) of Acts 2:4, Acts 10:46, and Acts 19:6 should not be missed.
- 2) Luke's narrative reveals that he views speaking in tongues as a special type of prophetic speech. Speaking in tongues is associated with prophecy in each of the three passages which describe this phenomenon in Acts (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6).
- 3) As a special manifestation of prophecy, Luke indicates that glossolalia has an ongoing role to play in the life of the church. This is evident from Luke's modification of Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:17-21. Here, we see that tongues serve as a sign of the arrival of the last days (Acts 2:17-21) and also of Jesus' resurrection and Lordship (Acts 2:33-36). Tongues, it should be noted, continue to serve as a demonstrable sign of reception of the prophetic gift throughout Luke's narrative (Acts 10:44-48; 19:6-7). This text (Acts 2:17-21), particularly as it is seen in the larger context of Luke-Acts, also establishes that, in Luke's perspective, speaking in tongues will continue to characterize the life of the church in these last days (that is, until Jesus returns).
- 4) Luke presents Jesus' experience of the Spirit and his life of prayer as important models for his readers. Luke 10:21, which describes Jesus, in language reminiscent of speaking in

⁴⁰ Luke's emphasis on prayer, and particularly the prayers and prayer-life of Jesus, is widely recognized by contemporary scholars. Luke also associates prayer with the Holy Spirit in a unique way (e.g. Luke 3:21-22; 11:13; Acts 4:31).

tongues, bursting forth with Spirit-inspired, exuberant and joyful praise, is no exception.

All of this adds up to quite a resume for tongues in Luke-Acts. However, an important question still remains unanswered: Does Luke envision every believer actively engaging in glossolalia? Put another way, according to Luke, is speaking in tongues available to all? In my previous writings, I suggested that Luke does not consciously address this question. I went on to argue, however, that Paul does; and that he does so in the affirmative.⁴¹ Nevertheless, I now believe that my judgment concerning Luke was a bit hasty. There are several texts in Luke's gospel, all unique to Luke or uniquely shaped by him, that reveal a clear intent to encourage his readers to pray for prophetic anointings, experiences that will inevitably produce bold witness and joyful praise. Luke's narrative calls for his readers to recognize that these pneumatic anointings, these experiences of spiritual rapture which issue forth in praise, are indeed available to every disciple of Jesus and that they will routinely take the form of glossolalia. To these key texts we now turn.

3. Luke's Challenge for the Individual Believer

The first text we shall consider is Luke's account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44), a story found in various forms in all four gospels.

3.1 Luke 19:39-40

It is widely recognized that Luke closely follows Mark's account (Mark 11:1-10), but with one significant exception. Luke 19:39-40 is found only in Luke's gospel: "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out' (Luke 19:39-40).

At first glance the inclusion of this material in this story may not appear striking. However, when viewed in light of Luke's emphasis on Spirit-inspired praise and witness throughout Luke-Acts, it takes on special meaning. Luke's narrative is filled with the praises of God's people, all of whom declare the mighty deeds of God. The

⁴¹ See Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 121-144.

chorus of praise begins in the infancy narratives with Elizabeth's Blessing (Luke 1:42-45), Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), Zechariah's Song (Luke 1:67-79), and Simeon's Prophecy (Luke 2:29-32). Angels join in as well (Luke 2:13-14). The sound of Spirit-inspired praise continues with Jesus' joyful outburst (Luke 10:21-24). The angelic praise of Luke 2:13-14 is then echoed by the crowd of disciples as they welcome Jesus as he enters into Jerusalem (Luke 19:37-38). Of course in Luke 19:39-40 Luke uniquely highlights the significance of this praise. The chorus is again picked up on the day of Pentecost with the dramatic declaration of God's mighty deeds by those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13). It continues throughout Luke's narrative in the form of bold, Spirit-inspired witness to Jesus.⁴² Irruptions of prophecy and praise are again associated with the Spirit and glossolalia in Acts 10:46 and Acts 19:6.

These texts, collectively, constitute a motif that is clearly close to Luke's heart. In these last days, Luke declares, the Spirit will inspire his end-time prophets to declare God's mighty deeds, chief of which is the resurrection of Jesus. Indeed, if the disciples remain silent, "the stones will cry out!" The message to Luke's church, a church facing opposition and persecution,⁴³ could hardly be missed. Praise and bold witness go hand in hand, they are both the necessary and inevitable consequence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

3.2 Luke 10:1-16

Let us now turn to another text unique to Luke's gospel, Luke's account of the Sending of the Seventy (Luke 10:1-16). All three synoptic gospels record Jesus' words of instruction to the Twelve as he sends them out on their mission. However, only Luke records a second, larger sending of disciples (Luke 10:1-16). In Luke 10:1 we read, "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two [some mss. read, 'seventy'] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go." A series of detailed instructions follow. Finally, Jesus reminds them of their authority, "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." (10:16).

⁴² See, for example, Acts 4:13, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 9:31; 13:9, 52.

⁴³ On Luke's church as a community facing persecution, see Robert Menzies, "The Persecuted Prophets: A Mirror-Image of Luke's Spirit-Inspired Church," in I. Howard Marshall, Volker Rabens, and Cornelis Bennema, eds., *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament & Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), pp. 52-70.

A central question centers on the number of disciples that Jesus sent out and its significance. The manuscript evidence is, at this point, divided. Some manuscripts read “seventy,” while others list the number as “seventy–two.” Bruce Metzger, in his article on this question, noted that the external manuscript evidence is evenly divided and internal considerations are also inconclusive. Metzger thus concluded that the number “cannot be determined with confidence.”⁴⁴ More recent scholarship has largely agreed with Metzger, with a majority opting cautiously for the authenticity of “seventy–two” as the more difficult reading.⁴⁵ Although we cannot determine the number with confidence, it will be important to keep the divided nature of the manuscript evidence in mind as we wrestle with the significance of this text.

Most scholars agree that the number (for convenience, we will call it “seventy”) has symbolic significance. Certainly Jesus’ selection of twelve disciples was no accident. The number twelve clearly symbolizes the reconstitution of Israel (Gen. 35:23-26), the people of God. This suggests that the number seventy is rooted in the OT narrative and has symbolic significance as well. A number of proposals have been put forward,⁴⁶ but I would argue that the background for the reference to the “seventy” is to be found in Numbers 11:24–30. This passage describes how the Lord “took of the Spirit that was on [Moses] and put the Spirit on the seventy elders” (Num. 11:25). This resulted in the seventy elders, who had gathered around the Tent, prophesying for a short duration. However, two other elders, Eldad and Medad, did not go to the Tent; rather, they remained in the camp. But the Spirit also fell on them and they too began to prophesy and continued to do so. Joshua, hearing this news, rushed to

⁴⁴ Bruce Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-Two Disciples?,” NTS 5 (1959), 299-306 (quote, 306). See also the response of Sidney Jellicoe, “St Luke and the ‘Seventy (-Two),” NTS 6 (1960), 319-21.

⁴⁵ All of the following scholars favor the “seventy-two” reading as original: Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9.51-24.53* (Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 994; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGCT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 415; Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 409; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation, Volume 1: The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 233; Craig Evans, *Luke* (New International Biblical Commentary; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990), 172. One exception to this general rule is John Nolland, who favors the “seventy” reading (Nolland, *Luke 9.21-18.34* [Word Biblical Commentary 35B; Dallas, TX: Word, 1993], 546.).

⁴⁶ For the various options see Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-Two Disciples,” 303-4 and Bock, *Luke 9.51-24.53*, 1015.

Moses and urged him to stop them. Moses replied, “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!” (Num. 11:29).

The Numbers 11 proposal has a number of significant advantages over other explanations: (1) it accounts for the two textual traditions underlying Luke 10:1 (How many actually prophesied in Numbers 11?); (2) it finds explicit fulfillment in the narrative of Acts; (3) it ties into one of the great themes of Luke–Acts, the work of the Holy Spirit; and (4) numerous allusions to Moses and his actions in Luke’s travel narrative support our suggestion that the symbolism for Luke’s reference to the Seventy should be found in Numbers 11.⁴⁷

With this background in mind, the significance of the symbolism is found in the expansion of the number of disciples “sent out” into mission from the Twelve to the Seventy. The reference to the Seventy evokes memories of Moses’ wish that “all the Lord’s people were prophets,” and, in this way, points ahead to Pentecost (Acts 2), where this wish is initially and dramatically fulfilled. This wish continues to be fulfilled throughout Acts as Luke describes the coming of the empowering Spirit of prophecy to other new centers of missionary activity, such as those gathered together in Samaria (Acts 8:14–17), Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:44–48), and Ephesus (Acts 19:1–7). The reference to the Seventy, then, does not simply anticipate the mission of the church to the Gentiles; rather, it foreshadows the outpouring of the Spirit on all the servants of the Lord and their universal participation in the mission of God (Acts 2:17–18; cf. 4:31).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ For more detailed support of this position, see Robert P. Menziez, *The Language of the Spirit: Interpreting and Translating Charismatic Terms* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 73–82.

⁴⁸ Keith F. Nickle, *Preaching the Gospel of Luke: Proclaiming God’s Royal Rule* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), p. 117: “The ‘Seventy’ is the church in its entirety, including Luke’s own community, announcing the in-breaking of God’s royal rule throughout the Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 409; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation, Volume 1: The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 233; Craig Evans, *Luke* (New International Biblical Commentary; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990), 172. One exception to this general rule is John Nolland, who favors the “seventy” reading (Nolland, *Luke 9.21–18.34* [Word Biblical Commentary 35B; Dallas, TX: Word, 1993], 546.).

⁴⁸ For the various options see Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-Two Disciples,” pp. 303–4 and Bock, *Luke 9.51–24.53*, 1015.

⁴⁸ For more detailed support of this position, see Robert P. Menziez, *The Language of the Spirit: Interpreting and Translating Charismatic Terms* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 73–82.

In Luke's view, every member of the church is called (Luke 24:45–49; Acts 1:4–8/Isa. 49:6) and empowered (Acts 2:17–21; cf. 4:31) to be a prophet. Luke 10:1 anticipates the fulfillment of this reality.

It is important to note that the ecstatic speech of the elders in Numbers 11 constitutes the backdrop against which Luke interprets the Pentecostal and subsequent outpourings of the Spirit.⁴⁹ It would appear that Luke views every believer as (at least potentially) an end-time prophet, and that he anticipates that they too will issue forth in Spirit-inspired ecstatic speech.⁵⁰ This is the clear implication of his narrative, which includes repetitive fulfillments of Moses' wish that reference glossolalia.

Of the four instances in the book of Acts where Luke actually describes the initial coming of the Spirit, three explicitly cite glossolalia as the immediate result (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6) and the other one (Acts 8:14-19) strongly implies it.⁵¹ This is the case even though Luke could have easily used other language, particularly in Acts 2, to describe what had transpired. The Acts 8 passage has various purposes. However, when it is viewed in the context of Luke's larger narrative, there can be little doubt in the reader's mind concerning the cause of Simon's ill-fated attempt to purchase the ability to dispense the Spirit. The motif is transparent; Luke's point is made: the Pentecostal gift, as a fulfillment of Moses' wish (Num. 11:29) and Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32), is a prophetic anointing that enables its recipient to bear bold witness for Jesus *and, this being the case, it is marked by the ecstatic speech characteristic of prophets* (i.e. glossolalia).

This explains why Luke considered tongues to be a sign of the reception of the Pentecostal gift. Certainly Luke does present tongues as evidence of the Spirit's coming. On the day of Pentecost Peter declares that the tongues of the disciples served as a sign. Their tongues not only established the fact that they, the disciples of Jesus, were the end-time prophets of which Joel prophesied; their tongues also

⁴⁸ Keith F. Nickle, *Preaching the Gospel of Luke: Proclaiming God's Royal Rule* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 117: "The 'Seventy' is the church in its entirety, length and breadth of God's creation."

⁴⁹ As we have noted, Gordon Wenham describes the prophesying narrated in Numbers 11:24-30 as an instance of "unintelligible ecstatic utterance, what the New Testament terms speaking in tongues" (Wenham, *Numbers*, 109).

⁵⁰ With the term, "ecstatic," I mean "pertaining to or flowing from an experience of intense joy." I do not wish to imply a loss of control with this term. While glossolalia transcends our reasoning faculties, the experience does not render them useless (cf. 1 Cor. 14:28, 32-33).

⁵¹ Paul's experience of the Spirit is not actually described (Acts 9:17-19); rather, it is implied.

marked the arrival of the last days (Acts 2:17-21) and served to establish the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead and is Lord (Acts 2:33-36). In Acts 10:44-48 “speaking in tongues” is again “depicted as proof positive and sufficient to convince Peter’s companions” that the Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles.⁵² In Acts 19:6 tongues and prophecy are cited as the immediate results of the coming of the Spirit, the incontrovertible evidence of an affirmative answer to Paul’s question posed earlier in the narrative: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

It is interesting to note that Luke does not share the angst of many modern Christians concerning the possibility of false tongues. Luke does not offer guidelines for discerning whether tongues are genuine or fake, from God or from some other source.⁵³ Rather, Luke assumes that the Christian community will know and experience that which is needed and good. This observation leads us to our next text.

3.3 Luke 11:9-13

Another text that reflects Luke’s desire to encourage his church to experience the prophetic inspiration of the Spirit and all that entails (i.e. joyful praise, glossolalia, and bold witness) is found in Luke 11:13. This verse, which forms the climax to Jesus’ teaching on prayer, again testifies to the fact that Luke views the work of the Holy Spirit described in Acts as relevant for the life of his church. Luke is not writing wistfully about an era of charismatic activity in the distant past.⁵⁴ Luke 11:13 reads, “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” It is instructive to note that the parallel passage in Matthew’s gospel contains slightly different phrasing: “how much more will your Father in heaven give *good gifts* to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11).⁵⁵ It is virtually certain that Luke has interpreted the “good gifts” in his source material

⁵² James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 189.

⁵³ This sort of lacuna led James Dunn, over thirty years ago, to describe Luke’s perspective as “lop-sided” (Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 191, 195). Given the dramatic rise of the Pentecostal movement and the sad state of many traditional churches, one wonders if Professor Dunn might now be more sympathetic to Luke’s enthusiastic approach. Perhaps by listening more carefully to Luke the church can regain its balance.

⁵⁴ Contra the judgment of Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987 [German original, 1963]), 15, 159-60.

⁵⁵ Italics are mine.

with a reference to the “Holy Spirit.”⁵⁶ Luke, then, provides us with a Spirit-inspired, authoritative commentary on this saying of Jesus. Three important implications follow:

First, Luke’s alteration of the Matthean (or Q) form of the saying anticipates the post-resurrection experience of the church.⁵⁷ This is evident from the fact that the promise that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask begins to be realized only at Pentecost. By contemporizing the text in this way, Luke stresses the relevance of the saying for the post-Pentecostal community to which he writes. It would seem that for Luke there is no neat line of separation dividing the apostolic church from his church or ours. Quite the contrary, Luke calls his readers to follow in their footsteps.

Second, the context indicates that the promise is made to disciples (Luke 11:1). Thus, Luke’s contemporized version of the saying is clearly directed to the members of the Christian community.⁵⁸ Since it is addressed to Christians, the promise cannot refer to an initiatory or soteriological gift.⁵⁹ This judgment finds confirmation in the repetitive character of the exhortations to pray in Luke 11:9:⁶⁰ prayer for the Spirit (and, in light of the promise, we may presume this includes the reception of the Spirit) is to be an ongoing practice. The gift of the Holy Spirit to which Luke refers neither initiates one into the new age, nor is it to be received only once;⁶¹ rather, this pneumatic gift is given to disciples and it is to be experienced on an ongoing basis.

Third, Luke’s usage elsewhere indicates that he viewed the gift of the Holy Spirit in 11:13 as a prophetic enabling. On two

⁵⁶ Reasons for this conclusion include: (1) the fact that the reference to the Holy Spirit breaks the parallelism of the “good gifts” given by earthly fathers and “the good gifts” given by our heavenly Father; (2) Luke often inserts references to the Holy Spirit into his source material; (3) Matthew never omits or adds references to the Holy Spirit in his sources.

⁵⁷ J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke, Vol. 2* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 916; E.E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (NCB; London: Oliphants, Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1974), 164; R. Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1984), 46.

⁵⁸ The scholarly consensus affirms that Luke-Acts was addressed primarily to Christians.

⁵⁹ G.T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 259-60.

⁶⁰ Note the repetitive or continuous action implicit in the verbs in 11:9: αἰτεῖτε (ask), ζητεῖτε (seek), κρούετε (knock).

⁶¹ F. Büchsel notes the repetitive character of the exhortation (*Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* [Gütersloh: C. Bertlesmann, 1926], pp. 189-90). So also Montague, *Spirit*, 259-260.

occasions in Luke-Acts the Spirit is given to those praying;⁶² in both the Spirit is portrayed as the source of prophetic activity. Luke's account of Jesus' baptism indicates that Jesus received the Spirit after his baptism while praying (Luke 3:21). This gift of the Spirit, portrayed principally as the source of prophetic power (Luke 4:18-19), equipped Jesus for his messianic task. Later, in Acts 4:31 the disciples, after having prayed, "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." Again the Spirit given in response to prayer is the impetus for prophetic activity.

What sort of prophetic activity did Luke anticipate would accompany this bestowal of the Spirit? Certainly a reading of Luke's narrative would suggest a wide range of possibilities: joyful praise, glossolalia, visions, bold witness in the face of persecution, to name a few. However, several aspects of Luke's narrative suggest that glossolalia was one of the expected outcomes in Luke's mind and in the minds of his readers.

First, as we noted, Luke's narrative suggests that glossolalia typically accompanies the initial reception of the Spirit. Furthermore, Luke highlights the fact that glossolalia serves as an external sign of the prophetic gift. These elements of Luke's account would undoubtedly encourage readers in Luke's church, like they have with contemporary readers, to seek the prophetic gift, *complete with its accompanying external sign*. In short, in Luke 11:13 Luke encourages his church to pray for an experience of spiritual rapture that will produce power and praise in their lives, an experience similar to those modeled by Jesus (Luke 3:21-22; 10:21) and the early church (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). The reader would naturally assume glossolalia to be a normal, frequent, and expected part of this experience.

Secondly, in view of the emphasis in this passage on asking (vs. 9) and the Father's willingness to respond (vs. 13), it would seem natural for Luke readers to ask a question that again is often asked by contemporary Christians, how will we know when we have received this gift? Here we hear echoes of Paul's question in Acts 19:6. Of course, Luke has provided a clear answer. The arrival of prophetic

⁶² Acts 8:15, 17 represents the only instance in Luke-Acts, apart from the two texts discussed above, where reception of the Spirit is explicitly associated with prayer. However here the Spirit is bestowed on the Samaritans in response to the prayer of Peter and John. While the situation in Acts 8:15, 17 is not a true parallel to Luke 11:13, in Acts 8:15, 17 the Spirit is also portrayed in prophetic terms. Prayer is implicitly associated with the reception of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:14; 2:4). Here also the gift of the Spirit is presented as a prophetic endowment. So also Acts 9:17, though here the actual reception of the Spirit is not described.

power has a visible, external sign: glossolalia. This is not to say that there are not other ways in which the Spirit's power and presence are made known to us. This is simply to affirm that Luke's narrative indicates that a visible, external sign does exist and that he and his readers would naturally expect to manifest this sign.

I would add that this sign must have been tremendously encouraging for Luke's church as it is for countless contemporary Christians. It signified their connection with the apostolic church and confirmed their identity as end-time prophets. I find it interesting that so many believers from traditional churches today react negatively to the notion of glossolalia as a visible sign. They often ask, should we really emphasize a visible sign like tongues? Yet these same Christians participate in a liturgical form of worship that is filled with sacraments and imagery; a form of worship that emphasizes visible signs. Signs are valuable when they point to something significant. Luke and his church clearly understood this.

Finally, the question should be asked, why would Luke need to encourage his readers not to be afraid of receiving a bad or harmful gift (note the snake and scorpion of vs. 11-12)? Why would he need to encourage his church to pursue this gift of the Spirit? If the gift is quiet, internal, and ethereal, why the concern? However, if the gift includes glossolalia, which is noisy, unintelligible, and has many pagan counterparts,⁶³ then the concerns make sense.⁶⁴ Luke's response is designed to quell any fears. The Father gives good gifts. We need not fret or fear.

In short, through his skillful editing of this saying of Jesus (Luke 11:13), Luke encourages post-Pentecostal disciples to pray for a prophetic anointing, an experience of spiritual rapture that will produce power and praise in their lives, an experience similar to those modeled by Jesus (Luke 3:21-22; 10:21) and the early church (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). The reader would naturally expect glossolalia to be a normal, frequent, and expected part of this experience. The fact that Luke viewed glossolalia as a significant component of this bestowal of the Spirit is suggested by both the larger and more immediate contexts. The

⁶³ For Jewish and pagan examples of ecstasy and inspired utterances see Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 304-5.

⁶⁴ Note that the Beelzebul controversy immediately follows (Luke 11:14-28). Some accused Jesus of being demon-possessed (Luke 11:15). The early Christians were undoubtedly confronted with similar charges. It is thus not surprising that Luke "takes pains to show [that] Christianity [is] both different from and superior to magic" (Richard Vinson, *Luke* [Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2008], 380; cf. Acts 8:9-24; 16:16-18; 19:11-20).

larger context of Luke-Acts portrays tongues as an external sign of the Spirit's coming. The immediate context indicates Luke's encouragement to pray for the Holy Spirit is a response to the fears of some within his community. This text, then, indicates that Luke viewed tongues as positive and available to every disciple of Jesus.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that, according to Luke, tongues played a significant role in the life of the apostolic church. Furthermore, Luke expected that tongues would continue to play a positive role in his church and ours, both of which exist within the period of "these last days." In Luke's view, every believer can manifest this spiritual gift. So, Luke encourages every believer to pray for prophetic anointings (Luke 11:13), experiences of Spirit-inspired exultation from which power and praise flow; experiences similar to those modeled by Jesus (Luke 3:21-22; 10:21) and the early church (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). Luke believed that these experiences would typically include glossolalia, which he considered a special form of prophetic speech and a sign that the Pentecostal gift had been received.

These conclusions are based on a number of interrelated arguments that might be summarized as follows:

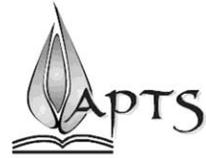
- 1) Glossolalia was well known and widely practiced in the early church.
- 2) Luke's narrative reveals that he views speaking in tongues as a special type of prophetic speech.
- 3) Luke indicates that glossolalia, as a special type of prophetic speech, has an ongoing role to play in the life of the church.
- 4) Luke presents Jesus' experience of the Spirit and his life of prayer, including a significant moment of spiritual rapture in which he bursts forth with joyful praise (Luke 10:21), as important models for his readers.
- 5) Luke highlights in a unique way the importance and necessity of Spirit-inspired praise: praise and bold witness go hand in hand, they are both the necessary and inevitable consequence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 6) Luke views the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit as a fulfillment of Moses' wish (Num. 11:29) and Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32). Thus, it is a prophetic anointing that is marked

by the ecstatic speech characteristic of prophets (i.e. glossolalia).

- 7) According to Luke, the gift of tongues is available to every disciple of Jesus; thus, Luke encourages believers to pray for a prophetic anointing, which he envisions will include glossolalia.

These conclusions suggest that Luke presents a challenge to the contemporary church – a church that has all too often lost sight of its apostolic calling and charismatic roots. Glossolalia, in a unique way, symbolizes this challenge. It reminds us of our calling and our need of divine enabling. This was true of Luke’s church and it is equally true of ours. Put another way, tongues remind us of our true identity: we are to be a community of prophets, called and empowered to bear bold witness for Jesus and to declare his mighty deeds.

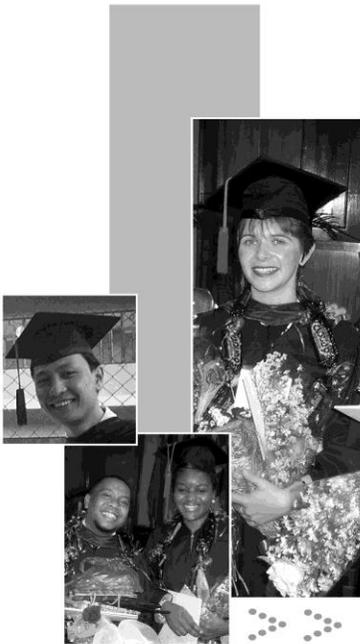
It should not surprise us, then, that the gift of tongues serves as an important symbol for modern Pentecostals. Just as this experience connected Luke’s church with its apostolic roots; so also tongues serves a similar purpose for Pentecostals today. It symbolizes and validates our approach to the book of Acts: its stories become “our” stories. This in turn encourages us to reconsider our apostolic calling and our charismatic heritage. In short, for Pentecostals tongues serve as a sign that the calling and power of the apostolic church is valid for believers today.



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Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA

Contributors: Hwa Yung, Allan Anderson, Young-gi Hong, Hyeon-sung Bae, Simon Chan, David S. Lim, William Menzies, Chris Sugden, Young-hoon Lee, Sam-hwan Kim, Myung Soo Park, Wonsuk Ma, and Chang-soo Kang

Dr. Wonsuk Ma is the Executive Director (designate) of Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in Oxford, U.K. Formerly he was Vice-President for Academic Services of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio Philippines.

Dr. William W. Menzies is Chancellor of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines.

Dr. Hyeon-sung Bae is Dean of Graduate Schools, Hansei University, Goonpo, Korea.

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PENTECOSTAL GRACE: FROM A FORENSIC NOTION TO A
PNEUMATOLOGICAL REALITY

Jean-Daniel Plüss

Introduction

Some years ago, Walter Hollenweger, the famous Pentecostal missiologist, remarked in a private conversation that Pentecostals rarely preach on the topic of grace. That statement made me think. Do not the roots of this movement go back to the Reformation and its famous “sola gratia”? We certainly believe that salvation is by grace alone. Why is it, however, that to a large extent we seem to delegate God’s grace to the moment of conversion or to the last judgement? If we appeal to God’s grace it is often when we are in a difficult situation. Overburdened with the work situation or family matters one can hear the minister say, “Oh, by the grace of God it is O.K.” Or we may hear a reading at a funeral service of a wayward pastor’s son who died of a drug overdose: “You have found grace in my sight, I know you by name” (Ex. 33:17).

Another evidence of misunderstanding grace appears when Christians focus on their insufficiency, saying things like, “I can’t live up to the standard God requests. I have disappointed God.” In such instances God’s grace is left out of the equation. Instead, sometimes even under the guise of sanctification, there is a legalism that tries to justify itself. Satisfaction in the face of failure is the only concern; as if God’s love and care is dependent on some action or achievement of ours.

Classical Pentecostals, especially those from the global north, are influenced by a crisis-theology. They emphasize the Cross Event and from there they proclaim the need for a turn-around, a new beginning. Now, do not get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with this fundamental gospel message. But as a consequence, grace is perceived

as something affecting the believer mainly because of his or her past; or because of his or her sin.

In the same vein, we can look at the *Global Dictionary of Theology*¹, which has been co-edited by Pentecostals. If you look for the term “grace” you find the remark: “See Salvation.” Naturally, the heritage from the Reformation has brought an emphasis on justification by faith and therefore a focus on God’s grace through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. But the question remains, do we understand God’s grace as believers mainly in relation to our sinful past, or is there a present and forward-looking reality of grace? What does the Bible tell us and what can Pentecostals contribute to an understanding of grace that is informed by an ongoing experience of God’s indwelling Spirit?

In order to make my argument I invite you to look back, first at the history of theological development and secondly at biblical foundations of God’s grace. Then, I would like to sketch a few suggestions towards a Pentecostal pneumatology of grace.

The Historical Context of the Reformer’s Emphasis on Grace

We might begin with St. Augustine, the North-African born theologian and bishop who lived in the late 4th and early 5th century AD. Before he became a Christian, Augustine seriously sought wisdom and fulfilment in life by studying diverse philosophical issues and adhering to various religious practices. He also enjoyed the physical aspects of life, including various relationships with women. Since he had not yet been baptized, he believed he could permit himself all kinds of adventures that he knew were below the Christian standard. According to the belief of the time, the sacrament of baptism would cancel all former sins.

In his early 30s when he finally turned to Christ, he could not explain God’s great mercy toward him through all the years of his immoral and selfish behaviour. Augustine attributed it to God’s infinite love, wisdom and foreknowledge.² God could be gracious because he knew that Augustine would eventually turn to Jesus Christ. God’s grace was therefore closely linked to God’s love which reached a spiritually bankrupt sinner, regardless of his sin and selfishness. It simply was to be. As a human being there was nothing that he could

¹ William A. Dryness and Veli Matti Kärkkäinen eds. *Global Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008).

² This is repeatedly stated in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*.

have presented as an argument or achievement on behalf of himself. It was all due to God's grace.

This biographical element helps us to understand why Augustine's anthropology is so different from his contemporary Pelagius, an ascetic monk and fine theologian as well as skilled orator from the British Isles. He believed that every human being had a God-given ability to choose to do right and live a God-pleasing life.³ He argued that humans were created in the image of God and could therefore do more than behave like dimwits. However, Pelagius was soon to be condemned as a heretic, because his teachings were understood to favour the ability of human beings and, consequently, diminish God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ and the necessary atonement of the Son of Man on the cross.

A thousand years later, the same challenge to grace resurfaced. The church in the Holy Roman Empire was focussing heavily on the actions and duties of human beings to please God. The mortification of the body, a strict exercise of spiritual practices and perilous pilgrimages to holy places encouraged the idea that one could contribute to one's salvation. Extravagant building plans, such as the construction of St. Peter's basilica in Rome, with the financial outlay such projects entailed, encouraged yet another possible avenue to diminish eternal torment for sin. Prior to the Reformation, the donation of money for holy causes through the sale of indulgencies became highly popular in Europe.

At the same time, the rise of the Renaissance period led to a rediscovery of human achievements in literature, the sciences and the arts. Erasmus of Rotterdam exalted God's creation of human beings, saying that he created them with a free will. A Christian humanism arose that emphasized the positive aspects of creation.

It is in this context that we have to interpret the Reformation theology of grace. Salvation could not be realized through the offices of any church, nor through the abilities of human beings. It could only be accomplished through God's grace demonstrated through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. There simply was, as Paul said, no one that did good - not even one (Rom. 3:12). It does not surprise us then that the Reformers emphasized Augustine's point of view. Eternal life is a gift of God's grace for the world to be reconciled with God through Christ (2 Cor. 5:19).

³ From what we know about the life of Pelagius, we can ascertain that his theology was also developed by his personal experiences, especially his ascetic upbringing and in reaction to the decadence he witnessed when he came to Rome.

As a result of this strong emphasis on God's action, reformation theologians argued that human beings had no free will at all. Our communion with God depends on God's grace alone. For Martin Luther this was the case because otherwise the work of Jesus Christ on the cross would have been in vain. The Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli argued that if man had the ability to decide, God would no longer be sovereign. And John Calvin, the former lawyer, reasoned in Geneva that if God was really God, he had to be omniscient and therefore by necessity, predestined those who would belong to the ones saved by his grace and by implication knew who did not.

Consequently, the emphases on God's sovereign work of grace and the inability of every human to do anything about his salvation lead to a very forensic notion of grace.⁴ This highly rationalistic explanation stated that man's sin required punishment and that Jesus took it upon himself to satisfy God's wrath. In this way every human being was at least legally reconciled with God. We are acquainted with this style of reasoning that has been emphasized in various ways over the years, more recently by the Princeton School at the beginning of the 20th century. As a result God's grace was mainly delegated to the work of salvation. Therefore, many churches of the Reformation taught grace at the expense of the message of salvation, and the free churches taught the message of salvation at the expense of grace.

However, the humanist influence on the Reformation could not be suppressed. It was not long before moderate views emerged that tried to harmonize the human predicament with God's sovereignty. Philipp Melancthon, the collaborator of Martin Luther, suggested that there was something like a synergy between God's Word, the work of the Holy Spirit and the human will. And the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius opposed the strict Calvinist teaching on predestination by arguing that God has given prevenient grace by the power of the Holy Spirit so that everyone can decide for or against receiving salvation. A generation later John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, made the Arminian point of view popular. Especially during the great revivals of the 19th century there has been an "Arminianisation" of the Protestant churches in North America.

Today our evangelistic and missionary efforts would be unthinkable without the firm belief that every human being is created with a free will and can consequently decide for or against the offer of God in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the question remains, is our

⁴ Anselm of Canterbury (satisfaction and atonement), Peter Abelard (emphasis on Aristotelian logic) and scholasticism cemented this understanding.

understanding of God's grace mainly limited to the offer of salvation or is there more, much more? To be fair, Calvin would have answered, "Of course there is much more!" for he understood God's grace to be a double grace. The one grace was evident in the justification of the sinner as the work of the Son and the other grace was seen in the sanctification of the believer by the work of the Spirit.

Christ was given to us by God's generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life"⁵

This teaching on a double grace resonates as "double cure" in the 18th century hymn *Rock of Ages* where we sing:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
save from wrath and make me pure.⁶

At this point then we have established that there is saving grace and that there is sanctifying grace. In either case is it something that God does. It is a gift from above. I am eternally grateful for the two, but allow me to ask, "Is grace only something that is done? Or is grace also a reality that lives inside, something that is?" With that in mind, let us look at the Bible.

A Plea for a Biblical Understanding of Grace

Beginning with the Old Testament, we can look at the creation account and hear God say, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Assuming that God is love in a triune relationship, we can then interpret this verse as an invitation to humankind to have fellowship with God. Just as God is not love by

⁵ John Calvin, John T. McNeil, ed., *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960) III.xi.1, 725.

⁶ <http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh361.sht>, accessed December 29, 2011.

himself, but love in a relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so is man created not to live by himself, but to live in a relationship with others and with God.

This divine intention present in the essence of creation can be seen in that God calls a people to himself in loving relationship. The covenants, the exodus, the testimony of the prophets are all a testimony to God's desire to dwell among his people because he is "a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness" (Ex. 34:6). The Old Testament presents us with a notion of grace that is expressed in God's love and faithfulness. God desires to be with his people. We can say that the Old Testament translates God's grace as being lovingly present.

If we look at the New Testament, the former teaching of God's loving presence is carried over. Jesus is to be called, Immanuel, which means God is with us (Mt.1:23). We learn that God wishes to abide in us. In John 15:9 we read, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love." The context emphasizes it more than once; to remain in God is to abide in his presence and love. As disciples of God, we have been called to fellowship with him.

From the divine perspective, God also intends to abide in us as we learn from Romans 5:5 "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

What we see here is a notion of grace that is not only forensic, nor solely a means for sanctification, but an expression of love manifested in the presence of God in the lives of his people. Along the same vein we can appreciate the various texts that speak about *koinonia*, the fellowship of God. In 1 Cor. 1:4-9 we are told that God's grace has been given to us in Jesus Christ. In him we have been enriched and do not lack any spiritual gift. God's faithfulness is demonstrated in the fellowship we have in Christ.

We can give yet another illustration of this theology of grace. It flows from the triune nature of God, which is relational and loving. In the benediction we hear, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2. Cor. 13:14). God's intention which has been actualized in Christ is being communicated by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us to enable us to know and experience the indwelling presence of God and the power of his kingdom.⁷ Whereas the

⁷ This is basically the formulation of grace by the Roman Catholic Church, who through the ages maintained the biblical understanding of divine grace as the loving presence of

Reformers have mainly focused on the work of Jesus Christ in explaining the theology of grace, we see that the biblical witness gives an important role to the Holy Spirit in communicating the gift of God to us. I invite you therefore to reflect on a Pentecostal theology of grace that focuses on God's living presence in our lives, actualized through the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

A Pneumatology of Grace

Let us begin then with a focus on the nature and work of the Holy Spirit in us before we move on to provide more general examples of a Pentecostal theology of grace.

The Comforter

In Johannine theology we see a strong connection to the Old Testament teaching on the presence of God. In the opening paragraph of the Gospel according to John we read that God has manifested his presence through the abundance of his grace in Jesus (John 1:16-18).

As the ministry of Jesus draws to a climax, there is a promise that this fullness is not to end, for God does not want to leave us as orphans. On the contrary, the disciples are promised the presence of the Comforter, who has the same spirit of truth⁸ for those who abide in God's love (John 14:15-21). The evangelist must have clearly understood that the Holy Spirit is to be the main actor in conveying God's presence to and within the Church.

The Inner Witness

A similar example is found in Pauline theology. Not only is there an inner witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that we are children of

God. "Grace is a participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an "adopted son" he can henceforth call God "Father," in union with the only Son. He receives the life of the Spirit who breathes charity into him and who forms the Church." Roman Catholic Catechism paragraph 1997; <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/p3slc3a2.htm#1997>, accessed December 28, 2011.

⁸ The notion of truth in a Johannine context should not be mistaken to be an Aristotelian category that looks at truth in terms of definitions and logical arguments, but rather in the Semitic sense of trustworthiness, reliability and faithfulness, thus closely connected with the understanding of grace in the Old Testament.

God, the context shows us that through God's Spirit we are made participants in the nature of God. We are heirs, sharing in Christ's suffering and his glory, for the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is also raising us to eternal communion with God (Rom. 8:11-17).

The Divine Power Within Us

The favourite Pentecostal theologian is of course Luke. He made sure that we would remember that God's gift to his people does not simply reside in propositional truths that should be believed. But God's gift to us is his presence, manifested in the power of the Spirit that lives within us (Acts 1:8). Whereas some Protestants argued that it is enough to live by the promises of the Word of God, others have argued that the Bible teaches us that we do not need to go through life as if we had to be religious agnostics.⁹ There are indeed visible signs of God's grace in our lives. We read in Acts 14:3, "So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders." This is probably one of the core teachings that Pentecostals can share with discouraged Christians of other churches, namely that God loves us so much that he enjoys communicating with us, not only through his Word, not only through the celebration of sacraments, but in our worship and through manifestations of his presence and power. Therefore, we can testify to the fact that God is doing great things; even today.

Praying in the Spirit

Allow me to give you one more pneumatological example of God's graceful presence in the believer's life. In Romans 8 we are encouraged to be hopeful in view of the future glory and allow the Holy Spirit to pray within us, especially for that which we are not able to express in our own words. It does not matter whether you are a charismatic person believing that God has given you an unknown prayer language by which you communicate with God, or if you are a more contemplative kind of Christian that meditates in silence before God; the fundamental truth is the same. God, through the Holy Spirit, is sharing his presence and good will with you. This is grace in the here and now.

⁹ Peter Hocken, *Revival and Renewal*, (in JEPT A Vol. XVIII), 1998, 49-63.

These four pneumatological examples (comforter, inner witness, power and presence in prayer) should encourage us to work towards a Pentecostal theology of grace).

Towards a Pentecostal Understanding of Grace

Many critics of Christianity in general and of Pentecostalism in particular see the charismatic element as promoting a very individualistic life style. These critics point to obvious examples: the individual nature of salvation, the personal decision to be baptized, the subjective experience of Spirit Baptism, personal testimony and the often private nature of prophetic utterances. How are we as Pentecostals to answer this challenge? Well, we certainly can uphold our conviction that the God spoken of in the Bible is often presented as a very personal and personable God. We do not need to be ashamed of desiring to deepen our personal relationship with God. On the other hand, our understanding of grace as a relational reality in which the Holy Spirit plays an essential role could lead us to a new appreciation of Pentecost as an event that has a wider focus than the individual.

Relevant Applications from a Pentecostal Perspective

There are a number of ways that we can apply what we have learned. We can begin in the book of Acts.

Acts 2 in the Light of Grace and Encounter

We tend to read the first two chapters in the Book of Acts in terms of the empowerment that Jesus promised to his disciples. Indeed, empowerment is a prominent feature in Lukan pneumatology. We can also read in Acts how God shares his nature with his people through the present work of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian context is clearly evident in the first nine verses of the book and resonates the theme of God abiding with his people.

The second chapter has a strong communitarian emphasis. They all came together in one place, the sound of the blowing wind filled the whole house, the tongues of fire rested on each of them, and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. This inclusiveness, however, is not limited to the recipients of God's Spirit. It extends to the attracted

crowds. They all heard them speak in their own native languages, they all received the invitation to repent and turn to God. Then we read that the apostles and new converts were fellowshiping with one another, shared in worship and had everything in common. They opened their homes for the breaking of bread and ate together with gladness. What the early Christians did was favourably reported by all people.

In the light of a theology of grace we see that God's presence through the power of the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father in Jesus Christ that transforms people, enabling them to encounter each other in love. As the early church grows, it displays its ministry of hospitality¹⁰, just as Jesus did on so many occasions during his earthly ministry. It is a hospitality that extends to the stranger, to the Samaritans as well as to the barbarians, to men and women, to masters and slaves, to the able-bodied as well as to those with disabilities. This hospitality does not treat others as a target audience, but shares in their needs and joys, just as God is not only gracious so that we might find eternal life, but loves us and enjoys being in communion with us. The Kingdom of God that has begun to grow among us is a peaceable kingdom where relationships are re-ordered and we experience God's loving embrace.¹¹ Looking back at the initial statement of this section we can say that an individualistic attitude to faith does not echo the Trinitarian nature of God, and God's good will towards all. It does not echo the message of the early church in the book of Acts. And it does not echo the witness of early events in the Pentecostal revival. The famous statement by Frank Bartemann, that the color line was washed away by the blood (of Jesus)¹² is not just a single statement that has been given mythic status. The breaking of social, racial and gender barriers has been well documented at the Azusa Street revival and in other places. Take for example the report of the Sunderland Conference in England in 1909. There we read:

¹⁰ Amos Yong, *Hospitality and The Other. Pentecost, Christian Practices and The Neighbor* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 100-108.

¹¹ *Experience In Christian Faith And Life: Worship, Discipleship, Discernment, Community, and Justice*. The Report of the International Dialogue between Representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders 2001-2011, paragraph 148. <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/index.html> accessed January, 21, 2012.

¹² Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street The Roots of Modern-day Pentecost* (Gainesville, Fla.: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1980), 61, 54, 55. See also his: *Azusa Street*. S. Plainfield, N.J.: Bridge Publishing, 1980; originally published in 1925 as *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*.

The Peace of Pentecost. Wondrous harmony! “They were all of one accord.” The Holy Spirit is the great Unifier. He is calling out and preparing the “body” of Christ, inspiring it with a common fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is manifest that these people are baptized into one body; they have drunk of one Spirit, and have one mind – the mind of Christ.

No racial antipathies here! Without there may be war-scares, but here perfect brotherhood amongst all the different tongues and kindred. Those beloved German brethren! Our hearts went out in extra yearnings of love toward them. No denominationalism! Anglicans, Lutherans, and every kind of Nonconformists, all assented in a common “Yea and Amen” to the Bible faith which has been once for all delivered unto the saints. Here is the witness to the world, that Pentecost is of God. Its perfect peace and concord stamp it with the hall-mark of heaven. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”. Nothing has ever so united the children of God scattered abroad, as this blessed experience.¹³

In a more recent example, a Pentecostal pastor from the Ukraine came to visit a Pentecostal church in Zurich that is known for its strong cell group ministry. He was amazed when he visited a small group meeting in a private home. There he witnessed a university professor, an immigrant accused of drug smuggling, a CFO of a financial institution, a nurse, an apprentice and others worshipping God together, studying Scripture, embracing each other and enjoying fellowship. The Ukrainian pastor was deeply touched when he realized that status, nationality and gender were insignificant in that group. This was indeed the spirit of Pentecost, when Christ’s grace reached out to everyone.

The Charisms as Gifts of Grace

Furthermore, we can pursue the communal dimension of grace when we look at the gifts the Holy Spirit gives to the Body of Christ. The text in 1 Cor. 12 makes it clear that each manifestation is given for the common good (verse 7), that the Spirit of God is at work in the Body as a unit, for we have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body (verse 13).

Taking our definition of grace as a starting point, namely that God desires to be present in his love among his creation, we then see that

¹³ *Confidence*, June 1909, 128. Similar statements could probably be found among early Asian Pentecostals and in other parts of the world. The statement about the “beloved German brethren” at a conference held in England reflects the ever growing economic tensions and political rivalry between Great Britain and Germany at the time.

God is indeed present in the charismatic gifting of the church, not just in a hidden way but to the obvious benefit of the church. We also recognize that the way of love stands above any manifestation, because God is the way of love in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. The gifts are God-given graces to the church intended to transform the church into God's image.

In the first issue of the English magazine *Confidence* Smith Wigglesworth the well-known English evangelist describes the situation as follows, "I hold much fellowship with those that speak and sing with new Tongues. All have one story to tell, viz., that the blessing and joy is beyond describing. Why stop at the barren field of justification, when there are waters of God's love to swim in? Why live in the experience of Romans 7 when there is Romans 8 full of life in the Spirit without condemnation?"¹⁴

A Pentecostal doctrine of grace would emphasize the divine reality in the church and in the world and focus less on individual gifts and benefits. And if we look at the revelatory dimension in the charism of prophecy, Veli Matti Kärkkäinen is correct in emphasizing that revelation is fundamentally God's self-communication through his Spirit and not the disclosure of divinely privileged information about God.¹⁵ God's self-revelation would call the church to be an extension of the triune nature of God, a prophetic voice yes, but more fundamentally a serving, caring and salvific community, the incarnation of Christ in our midst. This is the challenge that we face in the 21st century, to turn away from our Western individualism and rekindle the light of grace that shines upon the community as a whole. Maybe that is where Asian Pentecostals can encourage Western Pentecostals to mend their ways and be more attentive to the community. 1 Peter 4:10 brings it to a point: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Becoming Ambassadors of Reconciliation

In 2 Corinthians 5 we read that Christians long for the heavenly dwelling which brings them into union with God, the believer has received God's Spirit as a deposit or guarantee to this divine promise.

¹⁴ *Confidence*, April 1908, 7.

¹⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 77.

When this promise will become reality, God's grace towards us will no longer be necessary, because we will fully share in the nature of God (2 Peter 1:4). In the meantime it is our goal to please God and serve humankind.

As people touched by God's grace we no longer regard people from a worldly point of view, but through the lens of Jesus Christ who brought us the ministry of reconciliation. Touched by God's grace we reach out to others.¹⁶ As Christ's ambassadors we share God's grace as witnesses of his loving presence, pleading "Be reconciled with God!" Our mission then goes beyond the conversion of the sinner. Our mission is to become God's relationship to others. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we can become Immanuel so that others may gratefully exclaim, "God is indeed with us."

Conclusion

Much more could be said about a Pentecostal theology of grace. One could for instance relate the gifts of the Spirit more strongly with the fruit of the Spirit and the kingdom teaching (Gal 5:16-26). One thing is for sure, God's grace as revealed at Calvary and on Pentecost is not so much appropriated as an intellectual notion, but rather it is an attitude of the heart. And in that sense we can recall St. Augustine's exclamation at the beginning of his *Confessions*: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

¹⁶ Chapter 5 does not mention the word grace as such, but the text is embedded by a teaching on grace. 2 Cor. 4:15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 2 Cor. 6:1 As God's fellow-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.

Luke Wesley

The Church in China

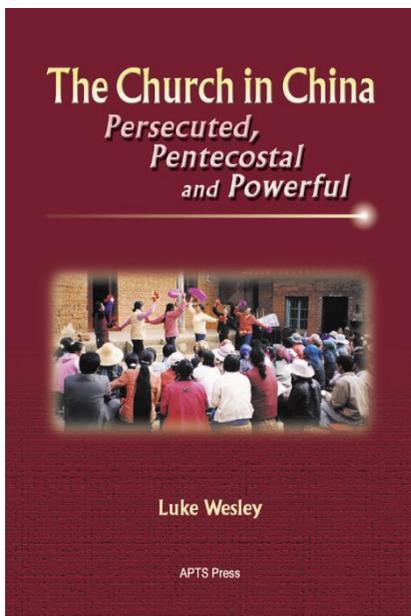
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Walter J. Hollenweger, Ph.D.
Former Professor of Mission
University of Birmingham

Luke Wesley (a pen name) is a missionary who has lived and served in China for most of the past decade, and is the Field Director of the China Training Network.

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REVERSING A DOWNWARD SPIRAL: STRENGTHENING THE
CHURCH'S COMMUNITY, HOLINESS AND UNITY THROUGH
INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Stephen A. Hong

Introduction

The church has a problem: disunity. The body of Christ has been divided and subdivided ad nauseum. Division, in fact, has become an acceptable part of the culture of the church. There are many reasons for this culture of division in the church. Some are reasonable: geography, language, culture, etc, which force the church to meet and organize in separate groups. Other reasons are not reasonable because they are not worthy of the gospel of Christ: pride, racism, prejudice, quarrels, foolish arguments, etc.

Not only is there a multitude of divisions among the disciples of Christ, for whom Jesus himself prayed "that all of them may be one,"¹ but these divisions have been justified and defended by some Christians as normal or even beneficial. Even Christians who do not justify their divisiveness and denominationalism, though, continue to participate in them, even those who see it as wrong. This author must agree with Volt, who has written, "All of us are poor Christians if we live divided."² Niebuhr said it first and more strongly: "Denominationalism thus represents the moral failure of Christianity."³ Denominationalism is out of control. By one estimate, there may be as many as 38,000 Christian denominations in the world at this time.⁴

¹ John 17:21.

² Miroslav Volt, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1998), 19.

³ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: World Publishing, 1972), 6.

⁴ Mary Fairchild, "Christianity Today - General Statistics and Facts of Christianity," About.com Guide, available from:

Pentecostals share much of the blame for this disintegration. At the turn of the 21st century, Pentecostalism accounted for nearly two-thirds of all denominations in the world.⁵ By perpetuating a church culture where denominationalism is acceptable, it is inevitable that the dividing of the body of Christ will continue.

The church cannot return to its beginning when there was only one Christian denomination; these divisions are here to stay, at least for a while. Also, despite the wrongness of division, no one should condemn those who are part of a denomination. However, the church should also not wink at denominations and accept them as a necessary evil because denominations are divisions, which are disallowed by Scripture. I propose, therefore, that even as the church continues in its denominating existence, its attitude about division needs to change. More Christians need to be teaching, preaching, and writing against division if only to slow the rampant fragmentation of the church and return to the biblical attitude that division is wrong.

There are countless reasons for division among Christians, but at the core of all of them is a theological flaw. Somehow, the church has ended up with an understanding of the church that allows it to divide and denominate itself without guilt. I envision a downward spiral that has led the body of Christ further and further down the path of division. As shown in *Figure 1*, the increase of individualism in the body of Christ has resulted in a decrease in sanctification. Unsanctified, individualistic attitudes and actions then resulted in more disunity in

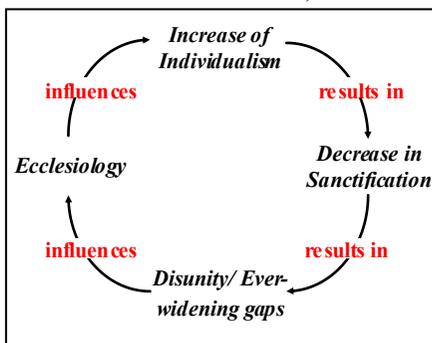


Figure 1
The Downward Spiral of the Church

<http://christianity.about.com/od/denominations/p/christiantoday.htm>, accessed September 20, 2009.

⁵ Barrett reports that in the year 2000 there were more than 33,800 Christian denominations. Of that total, 21,080 were within the Pentecostal/Charismatic/Neoevangelical Renewal. David B. Barrett, et. al., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 20.

the body of Christ as it split into more and more denominations. The reality of this disunity has influenced the church's ecclesiology, which has been modified to justify divisiveness. Then, because of these theological modifications, individualism has been enabled even more and the downward spiral has continued. This paper will briefly examine each aspect of this downward spiral and offer a solution that may be helpful in reversing this trend.

For the purposes of this paper, I offer the following definitions:

Individualism is the "philosophy which holds supreme the right of an individual to act as he or she wishes as long as his or her actions do not impinge upon the freedoms of other individuals."⁶ "Individualism" is a cultural marker on a collectivism-individualism scale and is, of itself, not good or bad. Hyper-individualism is the attitude among Christians that people are saved as individuals into a private relationship with God, neglecting the idea that they have been added to the community of the church and that their relationship with God is meant to take place from within that community. This attitude usually includes the idea that the church exists primarily to provide services to establish and encourage each member's private faith.

Sanctification is a two-part process. First, there is the sanctification that takes place at conversion when a believer is justified and made holy before God by means of the cleansing blood of Christ. Second, there follows a lifetime of growing in holiness through ongoing discipleship, demonstrated by an increasingly sanctified worldview and lifestyle.

Division refers to the splitting of the church into subgroups with distinct names, organizational structures and human leadership. This includes most Christian sects and all denominations.

⁶ John Scott, "What is Individualism," Individualism.com, <http://www.individualism.com/?p=5> (accessed August 31, 2010).

Hyper-Individualism in the Church⁷

Many Christians today view their faith as a private matter—something between the individual and God. People are often invited to receive Jesus as their “*personal* Lord and Savior,” starting them immediately on a road that will possibly lead to a hyper-individualistic Christian existence. As one person said, “It’s not religion or the church that’s going to save you. Rather it is your ‘personal relationship’ with God. Christ will ‘come into your heart’ if you ask, without any church at all.”⁸ As Christians focus excessively on “personal growth,” they develop an attitude that the church exists to help “me” live out “my” personal relationship with my Lord. Even the practices of the church that must be done corporately, such as congregational worship, end up being, tragically, “A thousand individual experiences of worship”⁹ rather than the communal experiences they were meant to be.

It is a symptom of the widespread nature of hyper-individualism in the church that Christians take biblical concepts, relationships, and terms such as prayer, prophecy, Lord, Savior, Pentecost, etc. and add the word “personal” to it when the Bible does not. Likewise, Christians are encouraged to have “personal revivals,”¹⁰ and “personal mission statements”¹¹ and to go on “personal retreats”¹²

⁷ This paper represents a condensed version of the Literature Review chapter of my doctor of ministry project. Due to a lack of time and space, the biblical/theological portion of my argument has been almost totally omitted from this presentation.

⁸ Robert Bellah, et. al., eds. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 234.

⁹ Gordon Fee, in Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 14.

¹⁰ Mains, David, *The Bible for Personal Revival* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1998); Nancy Leigh DeMoss and Tim Grissom, *Seeking Him: Experiencing the Joy of Personal Revival* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2009).

¹¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts: What They Don’t Teach Pastors in Seminary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2009). Malphurs has an peculiar understanding about personal missions. He believes that, although the church as a whole has its mission, each individual Christian also has his or her own mission—their “personal mission.” Especially important to Malphurs is that “people must know that their pastor’s personal mission may be different than their church’s mission,” 71-72.

¹² Ben Campbell Johnson and Paul H. Lang, *Time Away: A Guide for Personal Retreat* (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 2010); Jan Johnson, *Learning to Hear God: A Personal Retreat Guide* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009).

for one's "personal development."¹³ It may be said that many modern Christians are nearly obsessed with their own personal religions.

This sort of hyper-individualism is damaging to the mission and existence of the church. Religious sociologist Robert Wuthnow, in describing the pluralistic tendencies of postmodern people, coined the term "patchwork religion,"¹⁴ which describes a type of personal religion where people piece together whatever spiritual elements they like and form their own personal form of Christianity. Often, it is the unpleasant or disliked doctrines and practices that are removed and the enjoyable, pleasurable, satisfying doctrines and practices that are emphasized so that "increasingly you find individuals who put together their own particular religious profile."¹⁵ This phenomenon is directly related to the rise of hyper-individualism in the church because this "quest for 'spirituality' is a quest of individuals disconnected from traditional communities and institutions."¹⁶ As the individual is overemphasized, the community is inevitably deemphasized and the results can be seen in the fragmentation of the church that has taken place since the time of the Reformation and, more recently, the Enlightenment.

The Contribution of the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was that period in the history of Western culture, roughly the eighteenth century, in which people were relatively free for the first time in centuries to think about and openly discuss life, the universe, and everything without fear of condemnation or punishment. The Enlightenment was, according to Kant, one of its best-known philosophers, "man's release from his self-incurred immaturity" through the use of reason and without guidance from

¹³Alexander, *Christian Spirituality*, 186; Doug Addison, *Personal Development God's Way* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2010).

¹⁴Peter Berger, "Religion in a Globalizing World," *Pew Research Center* (Dec. 4, 2006), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/404/religion-in-a-globalizing-world> (accessed November 25, 2011).

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Mary Collins, "Liturgical Spirituality: Communal and Ethical." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 26. No. 4 (Aug. 1999): 270-282, 271. http://content.ebscohost.com/pdf/19_22/pdf/ddd/rfh/n00982113/atla0000988319.pdf?T=P&P=AN&K=ATLA0000988319&S=R&D=rfh&EbscoContent=dGJyMNL80Sepq840dvuOLCmr0m eprBSr6e4SrSWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMOzprki3qbROuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA (accessed September 1, 2011).

others.”¹⁷ That “immaturity” was the result of centuries of philosophical oppression, in which the church controlled, regulated, and policed intellectual thought and expression.

The Enlightenment had many good effects for the kingdom of God, such as human rights, self esteem, opposition to slavery, and exploration, which opened up new lands for missionary work. One of the effects of the Enlightenment on the church, however, was not as positive. Before the Enlightenment, people were seen not so much as individuals, but as parts of a greater social group. In the centuries preceding the Enlightenment, individual people had significance as individuals, but only as far as their eternal soul was concerned.¹⁸ In other areas of social life, individuals had value mostly as a contributor to a group.¹⁹ Ironically, in order to “rescue” God from the assaults of the rationalists, theologians began to describe Christianity in terms that distinguished it from the rest of the natural world. “God was not an object to be verified like other objects. He was sensible only to the individual psyche.”²⁰ This began a movement in Christian thought toward individuals as recipients of God’s work apart from the community of the church. Yung says that the Enlightenment “gave rise to the ethnocentrism of the Western world” and points out that because of it, “unlike the first few centuries (of the church) when the emphasis was on the evangelization of communities, increasingly, and especially in the modern period, the focus was on the salvation of individuals.”²¹ Therefore, since the time of the Enlightenment, “redemption has been

¹⁷Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 2nd ed., William Beik and T.C.W. Blanning, eds., *New Approaches to European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1.

¹⁸Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediæval Philosophy*, trans. by A.H.C. Downes (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1936), 203.

¹⁹Some medieval philosophers, for example, believed that, while individual people obviously had their own intellects, there was also a common intellect that was shared by all people. Robert Pasnau, “Human Nature,” A.S. McGrade, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 218-219. In fact, this medieval idea that individuals had little value as such came by way of the Greek philosophers, who were influential in the thinking of Medieval philosophers. “Neither Plato nor Aristotle...ever had a sufficiently high idea of the worth of the individual as such...In a doctrine like Plato’s it is not at all this (individual, such as) Socrates, however highly extolled he may be, that matters: it is Man...(In a doctrine like Aristotle’s), the individual exists for the sake of the species.” Gilson, 190, 202.

²⁰Chris Sugden, *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997), 210-211.

²¹Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997), 76.

individualized and social issues as far as they are related to God are viewed through that category.”²²

The American Contribution

A few years ago, “*Time* magazine’s person of the year was a mirror: Behold YOU. Yourself. You can do it. You did it. Be all you can be. YouTube. You are the star. It is a proclamation of pure, absolute narcissism. The world ends at my face. Me. My space. My autonomy. I rule my world.”²³ Individualism is much a part of American culture. It pervades every aspect of American life, even in such a strongly communal organization as the church. In fact, “for many Americans, individualism is a kind of secular religion influencing the way they live more than the religious traditions some of them espouse.”²⁴ Sociologically, it is interesting to see this individualism play itself out in a powerful nation. Ecclesiolegically, it is alarming to see it play itself out in the Kingdom of God.

The development of Christianity in the European colonies of North America and, later, in the United States of America was largely responsible for the later growth of hyper-individualism that allowed and encouraged the rampant division that characterized the church in the twentieth century. “Individualism is a distinctively American ideology...more than anywhere else, individualism took on distinctive meaning and central importance in America.”²⁵

America’s individualism comes, in part, from the circumstances of its birth: dissent against totalitarianism, rebellion against the suppression of individual rights, fighting for independence, and the rugged individualism needed to survive in a harsh new land. In addition to these circumstances, many of the “Founding Fathers” of the United States of America, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, were educated during the mid-eighteenth century, so it is no surprise to find that they were strongly influenced by the philosophy of

²²Sugden, 210.

²³John F. Kavanaugh, “Autonomous Individualism,” *America* 196, issue 2 (2007): 8 [journal online]; available from: <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=5&hid=5&sid=deff5653-fd57-416f-90f8-46724d03bdf8@sessionmgr11>; Internet; accessed September 19, 2009.

²⁴Mount, “American Individualism reconsidered,” 362.

²⁵Eric C. Mount Jr., “American Individualism reconsidered,” *Review of Religious Research* 22, Issue 4 (June 1981): 362-377, 362-363 [journal online]; available at: <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=5&hid=5&sid=deff5653-fd57-416f-90f8-46724d03bdf8@sessionmgr11>; Internet; accessed Sept. 19, 2009.

the Enlightenment. “The (American) Declaration of Independence of 4 July, 1776, and in particular its commitment to ‘Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness’, were the fulfillment of Enlightenment programmes.”²⁶ All of these early influences have ultimately resulted in a culture today that is strongly individualistic.

In American Society today, the unquestioned assumption is that the individual takes precedence over the group. Freedom means individual independence. Civil rights means the individual’s right to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’...The concept of organic community has been heavily eroded by technology, urbanization, political ideology and legal definition. Even marriage and family are increasingly accepted as matters of individual contract and convenience. The group has become for us a collection of individuals created by individuals for their own individual advantages.²⁷

All things considered, it comes as no surprise that a recent study of 76 countries by Dutch anthropologist Geert Hofstede, found that America was the most individualistic nation in the world on a scale measuring individualism versus collectivism.²⁸

Never before in church history has such an individualistic society had so much influence on the trajectory of the body of Christ. Due mostly to America’s strong missionary effort, and the influence of American theologians, scholars, seminaries, and publishers, the progress of the global church at this time is tightly bound to American culture and the church has little choice but to accept the individualism inevitably comes along with an American presentation of the gospel.

²⁶Outram, 3-4.

²⁷C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit: How the Church is in the World* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 31-32.

²⁸Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), 95. This interesting survey, which places nations on a scale of 1 (collectivism) to 100 (individualism), shows that Western nations dominate the higher ranks of the survey. The United States is ranked first with an index of 91. Other high-ranking individualistic nations were Australia (90), Great Britain (89), Canada (80), and the Netherlands (80). In fact, the highest ranked non-European nation is South Africa, ranked 20th with an index of 65. The opposite end of the scale, collectivism, is dominated by Latin American nations. Guatemala was the most collectivist nation, ranked 76th with an index of 6. The other highly collectivist nations were Ecuador (8), Panama (11), Venezuela (12), and Columbia (13). The Philippines is ranked 47th with an index of 32.

As a result of the western church exporting its theological methodology with its missionary endeavors, it has given spiritual birth to children who have followed this individualistic road. Tragically, we have often displaced cultures where corporateness naturally existed and which would have given the new believers a valuable insight into the New Testament, with our western, Hellenized, individualistic, mindset.²⁹

Individualism in Philippine Culture and Christianity

Whereas American culture emphasizes an individual's autonomy within society, Philippine culture has a much more Asian understanding of an individual's place in society. A Western worldview "presupposes the priority of the individual over the group"³⁰ and assumes that individuals have the right to make decisions apart from the groups to which they belong. Conversely, in most Asian cultures, an individual rarely has the freedom to make decisions of any significance, including the decision to belong to a certain religion. That sort of decision is a family matter, not to be made individually.

While a "Filipino looks at himself as a self...as a 'person,' conscious of his freedom, proud of his dignity and sensitive to the violation of these two,"³¹ it is not in the same way that Americans look at themselves.

Individualism and its expression in the United States may be the most profound value gap separating Americans from...the people of the Philippines...Filipinos consider themselves individuals, but within a group. They are defined by, and linked to, the identity of the groups of which they are members.³²

Nevertheless, because of the Western values firmly attached to Christianity in the Philippines, Filipino believers have tended to have more of a Western attitude about their faith, which they see as something personal, not for community participation or evaluation.

²⁹Holland, Tom. "Individualism and the People of God," *Evangel* 23, Issue 3 (Autumn 2005): 86-91. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=6&hid=5&sid=deff5653-fd57-416f-90f8-46724d03bdf8@sessionmgr11>; (accessed September 19, 2009).

³⁰Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997), 83.

³¹Leonardo N. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Theology* (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1976), 50.

³²Theodore Gochenour, *Considering Filipinos* (Yamouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1990), 15.

“The personal reality of salvation is emphasized, but it is also distorted by being understood in a fragmentary and individualistic fashion.”³³ It is somewhat inconsistent in this communal culture that “among Christian Filipinos, image changes once certain religious rites are performed...each of our identities as individuals is specified and separated from other identities.”³⁴ Filipinos easily live with this dissonance because five hundred years of colonialism taught them to tolerate the ambiguity of having one set of values for their family and societal culture and a separate set of values for their religion. Thus, despite the indigenous culture, which is communal, and despite the fact that biblical Christianity is communal, Christianity in the Philippines is egocentric and hyper-individualistic in a Western way.

The result of this learned hyper-individualism has had the same effect in the Philippines as in Western nations. It has led to a lack of sanctification in the Philippine church and has ultimately resulted in the same kind of division that the Western church has experienced. Division has become the norm in the Philippine church. According to Barrett, in 2000 there were 598 Philippine denominations³⁵ and uncountable church and organizational splits. Occasionally, Filipino leaders such as Enrique Sobrepeña³⁶ have called the Philippine church toward unity, but in the past fifty years, any progress toward unity has been overpowered by widespread division among Filipino Christians. Thus, in terms of hyper-individualism in the church leading to a church culture where division is acceptable, Filipino Christians are in the same situation as Western Christians.

How Hyper-Individualism Has Led to a Decrease of Sanctification

The church is the proverbial frog in the pot: the water is getting more and more individualistic but Christians aren't noticing the gradual change. When Christians “live and breathe a culture which values individualism to the point of obsession...in which individualism

³³Emerito P. Nacpil, “A Gospel for the New Filipino,” 118.

³⁴F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino World View* (Manila, Philippines: Punlad Research House, Inc., 2001), 7.

³⁵David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of churches and Religions in the Modern World*, Vol. 1: The World by Countries: Religionists, Churches, Ministries, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 600.

³⁶See Enrique C. Sobrepeña, *That They May Be One* (Manila, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines), 1964.

has run riot,³⁷ they have to be less and less sanctified in order to stand out. The consequences in the church are disturbing. In a hyper-individualistic Christian culture, the church becomes a place to meet each believer's individual spiritual needs, but "discipleship offered in a consumer package targeted at individual needs isn't sufficient to form people into the image of Christ."³⁸ The assumption is that the church is responsible for the spiritual growth of its members. So if members' lives are characterized by worldliness, it is the church's fault. The Christian divorce rate in America, denominationalism, church splits, theological quarrels,³⁹ etc., warn that the church is on a trajectory that will allow God to observe once again, "every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes."⁴⁰

Many Christians "tend to think that their testimonies to their private experiences are self-authenticating and so settle all ultimate questions."⁴¹ When spirituality is a private matter, no one else can be involved, even in a positive way. In a study of young children, it was found that by the age of ten they were inhibited in discussing spiritual matters. The children became shy and embarrassed by their own spiritual awareness. Hay sees this as the result of the "privatization" of spirituality and has also shown that "once adult life is reached this prohibition is extremely widespread."⁴² It is inevitable, then, that such Christians will not only avoid seeking help with their spiritual development, but they will also tend to resent and resist help coming

³⁷John McIndoe, "The Individualist," *Expository Times* 115, no. 6 (March 2004): 199-200.

³⁸Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 296.

³⁹See Robeck, "Pentecostals and Christian Unity," 315-318.

⁴⁰Judges 21:25 (NIV). In a recent news article, a former member walked into a Florida church and shot two pastors with a handgun. The man had previously left the church and "started his own church" in his home. Apparently frustrated with the lack of success of his own church, he lashed out in anger at the church he had quit. Though this is an isolated incident and certainly not common, it illustrates that the condition of the church is such that disgruntled members feel free to start their own church. Associated Press, "Man accused of killing wife, wounding 2 pastors in Lakeland, Fla." *Heraldbulletin.com*, September 18, 2011, http://heraldbulletin.com/news_tab3/x1700250297/Sister-Gunman-killed-wife-before-church-shoot-in-Lakeland-Fla (accessed September 28, 2011).

⁴¹Gordon R. Lewis, "The Church and the New Spirituality," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36, no. 4 (December, 1993): 433-444, 439.

⁴²David Hay, "Spirituality versus Individualism: why we should nurture relational consciousness," *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 5, Issue 1 (June 2000): 37-48, 40, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=4&hid=46724d03bdf8@sessionmgr11> (accessed September 18, 2009).

from someone else. Additionally, when Christians see spirituality as a private matter, they feel that they have no right to address anyone else's spiritual condition. All of this excessive privacy in matters of spirituality results in a lack of confrontation, a lack of discipline, a lack of concern about spiritual matters and inevitably leads to a general decrease in sanctification in the church.

Whatever theological view one adheres to in regard to sanctification, it is difficult to deny that people develop their sanctification in identifiable stages. Wesleyan theologians, for example, see a parallel between human emotional development and Christian spiritual development: "The twofold structure of sanctification arises out of, and is implicit in, a twofold structure which is inherent in normal personality development... the first toward self-interest and the second toward other-interest."⁴³ If spiritual lives develop in similar ways, then immature Christians are naturally going to focus on their own spiritual growth, but as they mature, they will gradually focus more and more on the spiritual growth of others. In a situation where sanctification is decreasing, however, fewer and fewer Christians will reach the level of maturity where their focus is on others. When this takes place in an atmosphere of hyper-individualism, many Christians will be left on their own to grow or not grow spiritually, depending upon their own convictions.

Pentecostal Contradiction

Pentecostal scholars point out a contradiction that for most Pentecostals, their relationship with God is first and their relationship with others is secondary. But no real communion with Christ is possible until you are part of his body.⁴⁴ Thus, hyper-individualism stunts the spiritual growth of Christians in many different ways because sanctification "is perfected in communion with others, never apart from it."⁴⁵ The challenge of sanctification has always been to overcome our natural egotism with the character of Christ. Johns and White observe that "contemporary Christianity has too often opted for an individualism which, like the dominant society, makes the moral life a

⁴³Rob L. Staples, "Sanctification and Selfhood: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Wesleyan Message" (*Wesleyan Theological Journal* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 3-16, 8-9.

⁴⁴Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 99.

⁴⁵Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 102.

private affair of the individual. Consequently, persons may attend a church and never be challenged regarding their lifestyles.”⁴⁶ Where hyper-individualism reigns in the church and faith is a private matter, sanctification is always the loser.

Among Pentecostals, a unique problem has arisen. Although baptism in the Holy Spirit properly understood is “to actualize our communal life and fellowship in Christ,”⁴⁷ Spirit baptism in reality is seen as something private—an individual event, a personal experience.⁴⁸ A private view of baptism in the Holy Spirit results in a decrease of sanctification in two possible ways. First, some people see baptism in the Holy Spirit as “the goal of their spirituality...their membership card into (the) Pentecostal club.”⁴⁹ If this is the case, then once people have experienced it, there will naturally be a sense that they are “finished;” their spirituality is complete and further growth is unnecessary. Second, there is a “tendency to seek the Baptism in the Holy Spirit *in order* to speak in tongues rather than to be influenced by the Spirit in one’s life and behavior.”⁵⁰ Thus, the myriad of other roles that the Holy Spirit desires to fulfill in a believer’s life, including sanctification and empowerment for service, are neglected or ignored as they are overshadowed by the desire to experience speaking in tongues. There is an “ongoing need to challenge Pentecostals that whether or not they have been baptized in the Spirit, they are to develop their walk with God.”⁵¹

Sanctification has always been central to the Christian faith. “Alien and archaic as the idea may seem, the task of the church is not to make men and women happy; it is to make them holy.”⁵² When the church is holy because it is seeking sanctification, it is strong and effective.⁵³ It follows then, that when sanctification is not being sought

⁴⁶Cheryl B. Johns and Vardaman W. White, “The Ethics of Being: Character, Community, Praxis,” in Michael D. Palmer, ed., and Stanley M. Horton, gen. ed., *Elements of a Christian Worldview* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2002), 298.

⁴⁷Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 99.

⁴⁸Ibid., 98. See also Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 129-130.

⁴⁹Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London, T & T Clark, 2008), 125.

⁵⁰Ibid., 127. Emphasis added.

⁵¹Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 125.

⁵²Chuck Colson, *The Body: Being Light in Darkness* (Dallas: Word Publishing, Inc., 1992), 46.

⁵³E.g., The Methodist Revival, the American Frontier Revivalism of the 19th century, and the Pentecostal Movement in the early 20th century were all characterized by a deliberate seeking of holiness and they were also accompanied by great effectiveness in evangelism.

and decreases as a value of the church, the church will be weak and ineffective. This appears to be the case in the church today. Lowe observes that there is an “underestimation of the need for sanctification (that is) characteristic of much of contemporary evangelicalism.”⁵⁴ When the church does not understand the need for sanctification and, as a result, does not seek it, a decrease in the overall sanctification of the body of Christ is inevitable.

Regardless of whether one agrees with Wesley’s idea of “Initial Sanctification” and “Entire Sanctification,” the theology is excellent in one aspect that is crucial to increasing the value of sanctification in the church: it creates an *expectation* of growth in holiness. In the absence of such an expectation, the tendency is to see spiritual growth as an endless path to a vague, unattainable objective. Instead of Wesley’s terms, it might be better to think of it as “Initial Sanctification” and “Ongoing Sanctification” in the same way that Gelpi describes “Initial Conversion” and “Ongoing Conversion.”⁵⁵ Whether God’s people agree with Wesley’s idea of “Entire Sanctification” or not, they desperately need an expectation of sanctification to motivate them and lead them to an ever-holier lifestyle. Otherwise, the lack of motivation will inevitably lead to a lack of growth and a worldly church which, in turn, will further encourage hyper-individualism and lead to more division within the body of Christ.

The church’s widespread hyper-individualism and resulting loss of communalism is both causing and caused by a lack of sanctification. In Figure 1 (above),

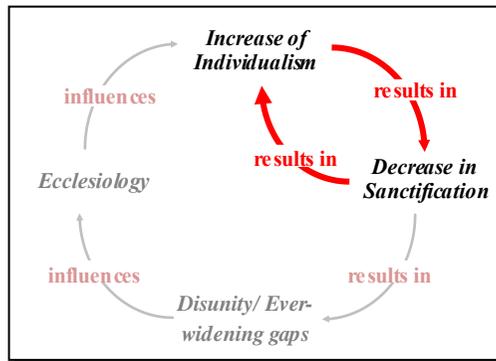


Figure 2

The Sanctification/Individualism Sub-Spiral

⁵⁴Chuck Lowe, “‘There is No Condemnation’ (Romans 8:1): But Why Not?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42, no. 2 (June 1999): 231-250, 249.

⁵⁵Donald L. Gelpi, *The Conversion Experience: A Reflective Process for RCIA Participants and Others* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press 1998), 101-109.

there is a downward spiral when the increase of individualism leads to a decrease of sanctification which results in division, which then influences our ecclesiology. But there is also, amidst the bigger spiral, a loop that forms between individualism and sanctification which is illustrated in *Figure 2*. So while it is true that individualism can lead to a lack of sanctification, it is also true that a decrease in sanctification contributes to the increase of individualism. Christians who lack personal sanctification are less mature and therefore less likely to have overcome the natural self-centeredness that characterizes most people throughout their infancy, childhood, and especially adolescence.⁵⁶ When those immature Christians also live in a secular culture so strongly characterized by individualism, they are ill-equipped to overcome that self-centeredness. This naturally makes them more individualistic in their worldviews. This individualism is then encouraged by their secular culture and sometimes by their Christian culture so that the person's motivation to grow in sanctification is severely hindered. So within the larger downward spiral, there is this sub-loop that feeds itself on both weaknesses in the church.

Sanctification and Pentecostalism

The Pentecostal Movement finds its roots in the Holiness movement of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ This movement was committed to leading Christians to experience “entire sanctification” in their lives—the point where they would be “liberated from the flaw in (their) moral nature that caused (them) to sin.”⁵⁸ Because of these roots, the Pentecostal Movement was initially seen as an outpouring of holiness on the church and it quickly spread among the Holiness churches. As the movement flourished and grew throughout the twentieth century, the Pentecostal understanding of sanctification was debated: “Were

⁵⁶Jean Piaget, “Adolescence: Thought and its Operation; the Affectivity of the Personality in the Social World of Adults,” in Zita M. Cantwell and Pergrouhi N. Svajian, *Adolescence: Studies in Development* (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1974), 44-51. Piaget describes human psychological development as stages of egocentricity. Each new stage of development (infancy, childhood, adolescence, etc.) begins with an egocentric understanding of one's place in the world. “Only later does it attain equilibrium through a compensating accommodation to reality” (46). In fact, Piaget defines adulthood (maturity) as the time when people have reached this accommodation to reality and have come to realistic terms with their egocentrism.

⁵⁷Vinson Synan, *In the Latter Days: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1984), 37-38.

⁵⁸Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), s.v., “Holiness Movement, American,” 517.

there three steps in the process of salvation: conversion, a subsequent moment of entire sanctification, and then a baptism in the Holy Spirit? Or were there two, conversion and sanctification essentially constituting a single experience followed by baptism in the Holy Ghost?”⁵⁹ This debate resulted in emergence of “Non-Holiness” Pentecostal groups, such as the Assemblies of God, who taught “sanctification as a progressive work following conversion with baptism in the Holy Spirit following as the second blessing.”⁶⁰

For Pentecostals, regardless of their theological stance on the nature of sanctification, holy living was an extremely important tenet of their movement. At first, holy living was gauged by external evidence such as drinking, watching movies, wearing jewelry, etc. Then, throughout the twentieth century, as the Pentecostal Movement expanded and influenced the Charismatic and Third Wave movements, “the precise definition of the holy life to accompany the Pentecostal outpouring (was) left to the individuals and groups themselves.”⁶¹ Thus, Christians were expected to determine their own version of holiness, tailored to their personal convictions.

The decrease in sanctification in Pentecostalism today has roots that go back to the beginning of the movement. Land points out that “with the emergence of the Finished Work⁶² view, the fivefold gospel was effectively reduced to fourfold again, leaving out the distinctive emphasis on sanctification; victory replaced sanctification.”⁶³ Speaking in the first decades of the Pentecostal Movement, one of the first Assemblies of God General Superintendents said: “I feel that the weakness in our movement when it comes to preaching sanctification, is that the doctrine is taught so vaguely that many fail to get sight of something definite which they may have in

⁵⁹James H. Moorhead, “The Quest for Holiness in American Protestantism,” *Interpretation* 53, no. 4 (Oct. 1999): 365-379, 367.

⁶⁰Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), s.v., “Pentecostalism,” 837.

⁶¹Moorhead, 377.

⁶²The “Finished Work” controversy was a major debate in the early Pentecostal Movement over whether sanctification is a second definite work of grace. It resulted in a significant split within Pentecostalism. See R.M. Riss, “Finished Work Controversy,” in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Revised and Expanded Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 638.

⁶³Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, John C. Thomas, Rick D. Moore, and Steven J. Land, eds., *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series*, no. 1 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 210.

their own lives.”⁶⁴ This weakness of early Pentecostalism has grown into a major problem in the twenty-first century as the value of pursuing holiness has decreased in believers’ lives.

This decrease in sanctification in Pentecostalism is reflected in the concern of McGee: “Over the years the word *sanctified* (depicting a believer’s holiness) has lost its prominence in our vocabulary.”⁶⁵ Warrington lists several reasons why standards of and teaching about sanctification (holiness) is declining among Pentecostals. First, pastors are afraid of being accused of being hypercritical. Second, there has been a strong emphasis on the charismata and a corresponding lack of emphasis on holy living. Third, instances where immoral leaders were working supernaturally until the moment they were caught may have reinforced the feeling that holiness is not really necessary. There is also, fourth, a fear of being legalistic and, fifth, a fear of doing harm in reaction to the perceived excesses of the Shepherding Movement.⁶⁶

In a book *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, theologians take turns explaining their particular understanding of sanctification. The Lutheran, Reformed, Wesleyan, Pentecostal and Contemplative views are given. Each scholar also comments on each of the other chapters. All of them described their perspective well, except for the Pentecostal, Russell Spittler.⁶⁷ The Contemplative scholar, in his response to the Pentecostal chapter commented that there was little said “about spiritual growth and development, or sanctification (and asked), is that due to the fact that Pentecostalism values this concept less than it does other elements of spirituality?”⁶⁸

Perhaps this neglect by Pentecostals comes from the early conflicts over the issue of sanctification. The division caused by this conflict, which led to the distinction between the “Four-Fold Gospel” and the “Five-Fold Gospel” (which adds “Christ the Sanctifier”) is conspicuous. Considering that the Wesleyan Holiness movement, with its emphasis on sanctification, was the “cradle” of Pentecostalism,⁶⁹ it

⁶⁴E.S. Williams, General Superintendent of the A/G(1929-1949) in Dennis Leggett, “The Assemblies of God Statement on Sanctification” (*Paraclete* 25, no. 2 (Spring 1991), 19-27, 19.

⁶⁵G.B. McGee, “The Quest for Holiness,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (August 2, 1987): 6.

⁶⁶Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 211-213.

⁶⁷In a similar book, *Five Views on Sanctification*, Stanley Horton gives the Pentecostal perspective and does a fine job of explaining the Pentecostal view of sanctification.

⁶⁸Alexander, *Christian Spirituality*, 168.

⁶⁹Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 186.

is surprising that any group of Pentecostals would exclude sanctification from their gospel even if they disagreed with holiness groups regarding the nature of “Entire Sanctification.” And yet, if this lack of emphasis on sanctification has been carried out over nearly a century, it is not surprising that Pentecostal churches today are having a problem with a deficiency of holiness in their members.⁷⁰

It is reasonable to assume that the general trend of decreasing sanctification in the church is at least partially caused by a lack of desire for sanctification. This realization is cause for great concern because “the desire for holiness or sanctification is at heart a desire for God himself, to be like Christ in love.”⁷¹ A weakness in sanctification then, indicates a lack of desire for God himself, an attitude that demonstrates worldliness at its worst in the body of Christ.

Division as the Result of Unsanctified and Hyper-Individualistic Attitudes

Unity is clearly the desire of God for the church. It is extremely difficult to justify disunity among Christians, regardless of any circumstances. Even necessary divisions of convenience for reasons such as lingual or geographical distances can be done in a spirit of unity. Unfortunately, “the Western world does not place a high premium on unity. Wherever individualism reigns supreme, community is easily sacrificed for personal preferences.”⁷² Moreover, where “individualism reigns supreme” in a church environment also lacking in sanctification, the result of conflict or disagreement will frequently be division. All this is not to say that the desire for unity should result in an attitude where harmony is sought at any cost, but the church today is characterized not so much by a desire for harmony as a desire to be “right,” or doctrinally flawless, or methodologically correct. This was not the case in the early church, where the desire for unity was so great

⁷⁰Ron Auch, *Pentecostals in Crisis* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1988), 14-23. Ron Auch is a Pentecostal pastor who writes of his concern for the lack of spiritual maturity and commitment from the “wishy-washy” third generation of Pentecostals.

⁷¹Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 144.

⁷²Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 25.

that “conflict led to the consolidation of the Church”⁷³ rather than to its fragmentation as is so often the case today.

There is no denying that denominationalism has become the “organizational form which (Christians) have accepted and assumed.”⁷⁴ While the church must accept denominationalism as a reality and try to work as well as it can within an atmosphere of division, it should also make an effort to not divide the body of Christ any more than it already is. Unfortunately, denominationalism and other forms of division in the church have become common and even acceptable, which is unsurprising in a Christian culture dominated by hyper-individualism and characterized by a deficiency of sanctification.

The Development of Denominationalism

Beginning with the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century⁷⁵ and the sudden absence of the authoritarian Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Christians found that they suddenly had the freedom to divide the church, and divide they did. Four hundred years later, at the end of the nineteenth century, there were 1,900 Christian denominations,⁷⁶ but that was only the beginning. During the twentieth century, there was an unrestrained outbreak of division, so that by the end of the century there were more than 33,000 Christian denominations worldwide.⁷⁷

⁷³Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Vol. 1, 1517-1948* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2004), 7.

⁷⁴Sidney E. Mead, “Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America,” *Church History* 23, no 4 (Dec. 1954): 291-320 [journal online]; available from: <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=8&hid=104&sid=adaf3416-7a0b-4a72-a52c-9b0690b7b3f7@sessionmgr11>; Internet; accessed September 20, 2009.

⁷⁵A thorough study of the development of denominationalism would begin with the New Testament Christians and division that occurred therein, e.g., the division between the “Circumcision Group” and their adversaries. A scrupulous historical study would also discuss such divisions as the Arian controversy, the East-West division that created the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox denominations, and many more significant divisions which have occurred throughout church history. This study, however, is mostly concerned with the rampant division and denominationalism that has occurred since the time of the Protestant Reformation, and especially since the 20th century and will limit its historical survey to that period.

⁷⁶David B. Barrett, et. al., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 20.

After the Reformation, there was a certain amount of division in the new Protestant churches, often along national lines.⁷⁸ This was a manifestation of the reality of European state churches. “The Reformation, whatever else it did or did not do, subjected the Church to the State...(and made) the leaders in the Church dependent upon the King.”⁷⁹ Thus, European Christians were not free to start a new denomination because, in general, each nation established a national church that everyone would join; often the Head of State was also the Head of the national church. In addition to this, few people would have wanted to start a new denomination because they needed the protection of a nation—political and sometimes even military protection—from the estranged Roman Catholic Church and the receding Holy Roman Empire.⁸⁰ The Anabaptists were the first significant group to test these murky waters. They established a group that was not a state church and taught that Christianity was not a political entity, but existed beyond national boundaries.⁸¹ Unfortunately, their courage and convictions resulted in little more than persecution for many years.⁸² Eventually, though, more and more Christian groups began identifying themselves as distinct from their national churches—the Mennonites, Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, and Methodists in England alone. Despite these small steps toward division, it was in America that denominationalism achieved its greatest success.⁸³

⁷⁸A cursory glance at a list of denominations reveals the national and racial roots of many of them. E.g., Armenian Apostolic Church, Dutch Reformed, Evangelical Union of Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran National, the Moravian Church, German Reformed, Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association, Norwegian Lutheran, Polish National Catholic Church, Swedish Evangelical Free Churches, Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant, United Danish Evangelical Lutheran, etc.

⁷⁹C. Silvester Horne, *A Popular History of the Free Churches* (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales Memorial Hall, E.C., 1926), 6-7. Europe had, until recently, been ruled by the Holy Roman Empire, which was both the church and the state, but that Empire was fragmenting rapidly. In its wake, each European nation established its own state church. Thus, it was difficult to tell the difference between political, religious, and cultural philosophies, beliefs, and practices.

⁸⁰David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 275.

⁸¹Dieumeme Noelliste, “European Denominational Plurality and Christianity,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 27, no. 3 (July 2003): 234-246, 237.

⁸²This persecution was at times so heinous that Niebuhr called it “the Protestant Inquisition,” which also serves to demonstrate the strength resolve of the state churches. Niebuhr, 39.

⁸³Kevin Giles, *What on Earth is the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 200.

With the discovery and colonization of the New World, there began to be the idea of a “free church” which was “free” in the sense that it was not a state church and individual Christians were given the right to choose which form of Christianity they would follow.⁸⁴ Because of this new freedom, “the Christianity which developed in the United States...was unique. It displayed features which marked it as distinct from previous Christianity in any other land.”⁸⁵ As various groups suddenly found themselves competing alongside one another and, with the state no longer controlling any church by coercive means, the colonial Christians discovered that they were not only free to exist, but they could divide and denominate freely with few serious repercussions.⁸⁶ They also found that dividing was a lot easier than resolving difficult doctrinal, political, or social conflicts. The freedom of the free churches ended up being the freedom to divide at will. Thus, “America was a denominational society before it became a nation.”⁸⁷

Denominationalism and Division

Niebuhr declared that “denominationalism thus represents the moral failure of Christianity”⁸⁸ and that “denominationalism in the Christian church is...an unacknowledged hypocrisy.”⁸⁹ Pannenberg wrote that “denominations...are outmoded remnants of a hopelessly backward phase of Christian history.”⁹⁰ These strong statements were prompted by the church’s blatant disobedience of God’s commands. God’s desire *for* unity and *against* division are clear in the New Testament. Denominationalism is division and therefore, disobedience.

Sometimes denominational Christians point out that “there are many good things that churches accomplish by participating in

⁸⁴Latourette sees the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which granted freedom of religion, as a significant part of this development because, for the first time, a national government allowed its citizens to practice any religion they chose. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 1045.

⁸⁵Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol. 4* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1941), 424; in Mead, “Denominationalism,” 291.

⁸⁶Niebuhr, 201.

⁸⁷Andrew M. Greeley, *The Denominational Society* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1972), 104.

⁸⁸H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: World Publishing, 1972), 6.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁰Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Church*, translated by Keith Crim (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 70.

denominations⁹¹ and will typically list schools, mission agencies, benevolent organizations, etc. Others explain that denominationalism is not really sinful because it “does not necessarily violate the *spiritual* unity of the body of Christ.”⁹² These proponents of denominationalism emphatically say “that the body of Christ is not broken.”⁹³ Some others emphasize that “It is union with God that creates the unity of God’s people.”⁹⁴ This is all true. The unity of the church, can and should be “conceived as a unity of spirit and purpose, of devotion to a common Master, of voluntary co-operation in carrying on His work, and of free fellowship among all His disciples.”⁹⁵ But this argument is also a rhetorical evasion of the reality of divisions and reveals a characteristic of human nature. That is, “the human tendency to develop theoretical views that accommodate or make sense of our own personal experience.”⁹⁶ There certainly is a great deal of friendship, fellowship, cooperation, and collaboration between Christians of different denominations, but that does not excuse the reality of the divisions that initiate and maintain those denominations. Furthermore, none of the so-called benefits of a denomination (schools, missions, etc.) are activities that a united church could not also provide.

Some will correctly point out that the church must sometimes be divided for practical reasons. Obviously, all of the Christians in the world cannot meet together in one place. Even within a single city it may be impractical for all of God’s people to meet together in one location. Of course they must meet separately. The problem is not that they congregate in separate locations, the problem is that they emphasize their separateness—doctrinally, theologically, racially, etc.—from other groups of Christians.

⁹¹Ra McLaughlin, “Denominationalism,” Third Millennium Q & A Knowledge Base, <http://www.thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/99853.qna/category/pt/page/questions/site/iim>, accessed September 19, 2009.

⁹²D.O. Moberg, “Denominationalism,” in Daniel G. Reid, ed., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 352.

⁹³Erwin Lutzer, *The Doctrines that Divide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998), 16.

⁹⁴Edmund P. Clowney, The Church, Gerald Bray, ed., *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 79.

⁹⁵W.E. Garrison, “Disciples of Christ,” in R. Newton Flew, ed., *The Nature of the Church: Papers Presented to the Theological Commission Appointed by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1952), 284.

⁹⁶Steven Porter, “On the Renewal of Interest in the Doctrine of Sanctification: A Methodological Reminder,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45, no. 3 (Sept. 2002): 415-426, 415.

Sometimes the accomplishments of denominations is held up as proof of their legitimacy, but the fact that God uses denominations to accomplish his will does not give legitimacy to their creation. The achievements of denominations merely illustrates the amazing grace of God—that he uses denominations despite the divisions that initiate and perpetuate them. “Christendom has often achieved apparent success by ignoring the precepts of its founder...Denominationalism in the Christian Church is such an unacknowledged hypocrisy. It is a compromise, made far too lightly, between Christianity and the world. Yet it often regards itself as a Christian achievement.”⁹⁷ Kik, for example, argues for the benefits of denominationalism based on the fact that “some denominations were formed with deep conviction of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with a price of suffering and blood.”⁹⁸ Certainly, the conviction of godly Christians to leave one group and start another should not be judged by those who do not know or understand their circumstances, but to claim the guidance of the Holy Spirit when establishing a denomination which, by definition⁹⁹ is a division within the body of Christ, is presumptuous. The Holy Spirit has already given his guidance to God’s people: “Let there be no divisions among you.”¹⁰⁰ Also, to claim that the establishment of a new denomination is legitimate because the founders “suffered and bled” proves nothing.¹⁰¹ Kik’s own denomination, the Presbyterian Church, has split again and again into multiple groups, mostly as the result of quarrels.¹⁰² It may be that some of these divisions were accomplished

⁹⁷H. Richard Niebuhr, “The Social Sources of Denominationalism,” in Robert Bellah, et. al., eds. *Individualism & Commitment in American Life*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1987, 368.

⁹⁸J. Marcellus Kik, *Ecumenism and the Evangelical* (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1958), 20.

⁹⁹Denominationalism is “the system and ideology founded on the *division* of the religious population into numerous ecclesiastical bodies, each stressing particular values or traditions and each competing with the other in the same community...” Emphasis added. Jerald C. Brauer, *The Westminster Dictionary of Church History* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1971), s.v., “Denominationalism,” 262-263.

¹⁰⁰1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV).

¹⁰¹E.g., The founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Joseph Smith, suffered and bled, but that does not give legitimacy to the sect he was forming. Ed Decker and Dave Hunt, *The God Makers* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1984), 173.

¹⁰²E.g., Presbyterians in the United States have split over marriage, abortion, humanism, slavery, missionary programs, political controversies, racial issues, Armenianism versus Calvinism, and Fundamentalism versus Modernism. Daniel G. Reid, Ed., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), s.v. “Presbyterian Church in America,” 929-932.

through bloodshed and suffering, but that does not legitimize them as Kik asserts. Furthermore, “the purpose of the Gospel is to bring people into the church of Jesus Christ—his body. But if that body is split into many different sects and denominations, then it represents, at best, only a portion of the will of God...The proclamation of the Gospel, apart from the unity of the church, is a theological absurdity.”¹⁰³

Once denominations are formed, it is true that they can accomplish much good and, after a time of consolidation, they usually see themselves not as the only Christians, but as one group within the body of Christ, accepting believers in different denominations as Christian brothers and sisters. However, the creation of a new denomination, especially if it is the result of conflict, is disobedient to the clear biblical commands not to divide. Then, once they are established, most denominations remain divisions within the body of Christ, even those who do their best to recognize “their responsibility for the whole of society...(expecting) to cooperate in freedom and mutual respect with other denominations.”¹⁰⁴ A denomination, then, is a group of Christians who have given themselves a distinct name for the purpose of differentiating themselves from all other Christians and submitting to no ecclesial authority beyond their own organizational hierarchy. Regardless of the clever use of euphemisms and sanguine descriptions, denominations are, in fact, divisions within the body of Christ.

The twentieth century could be called the “Century of Denominationalism” in the church, but the twenty-first century may see Christians choosing a different path. The church statistician, David Barrett, reports that the biggest shift in Christianity since 1983 “is the emergence of the 386 million ‘independents’ as the second biggest category, after the 1 billion Roman Catholics...The independents are forming networks somewhat like traditional denominations but style themselves as ‘post-denominational.’”¹⁰⁵ If Christians are beginning to realize that they can exist as local congregations who cooperate

¹⁰³Jamie Buckingham, “Introduction,” in Juan Carlos Ortiz, *Call to Discipleship*, as told to Jamie Buckingham (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975), xiii.

¹⁰⁴Winthrop S. Hudson, “Denominationalism as a Basis for Ecumenicity,” in Russell E. Richey, ed., *Denominationalism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1977), 22. This author thinks that this attitude is not as common as Mr. Hudson asserts.

¹⁰⁵Richard N. Ostling, “Researcher Tabulates World’s Believers,” Associated Press, 19 May 2001, <http://christianity.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=christianity&cdn=religion&tm=36&f=10&tt=11&bt=0&bt=0&st=31&zu=http%3A//www.w.adherent.com/misc/WCE.html> (accessed September 1, 2011).

together in regional collaboration without the necessity of a denominational structure, it may be that denominations will lose their dominance and non-denominational Christianity will become the norm. If this is the case, then the church must also rid itself of the hyper-individualism that has accompanied denominationalism. If the church moves beyond denominationalism, it must do so in an attitude of being a community in a biblical sense, rejecting hyper-individualism to be what the Lord desires in his bride: unity as a body, a family, a nation and a community. The way out of denominationalism is not “privatized,” or “patchwork” pluralistic Christianity. The way out of denominationalism is true, biblical community—the church as it was meant to be.

Division and Pentecostalism

The tendency to divide the body of Christ has reached an embarrassing level in the twenty-first century, and while nearly all of Christendom is to blame in some way, Pentecostals have contributed much to the present condition of the church. This is tragic because the Pentecostal movement began and has been defined as a movement that, by its nature, ought to bring unity to the church, not division.¹⁰⁶ In fact, “the earliest expectations for the Pentecostal revival were that it had been sent to bring unity to Christians around the world.”¹⁰⁷ Seymour, one of the founders of the modern Pentecostal Movement, “in the first issue of his periodical *Apostolic Faith* stated that the movement stood for ‘Christian unity everywhere.’”¹⁰⁸ The expectation that Pentecostals would bring unity to the church makes sense even insofar as Luke, the New Testament spokesman for Pentecostalism, saw the unity of the church as one of its most central and basic keystones.¹⁰⁹ Certainly, for

¹⁰⁶See Allan Anderson, “Diversity in the Definition of ‘Pentecostal/Charismatic,’” a paper presented at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Lakeland, Florida, March 14-16, 2002, 731-747.

¹⁰⁷Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “Name and Glory: the Ecumenical Challenge,” in Harold D. Hunter, ed., *Pastoral Problems in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement* (Cleveland, TN: The Society for Pentecostal Studies, manuscripts distributed at the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, n.d.), 10.

¹⁰⁸Allan Anderson, “Pentecostals, Healing and Ecumenism,” *International Review of Mission* 93, nos. 370-371 (July/Oct., 2004): 486-496, 488.

¹⁰⁹Paul J. Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament Church: A Study in Paul and Acts* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 75-78.

the first Pentecostals, “forming new denominations...was the last thing on their minds.”¹¹⁰

Despite this commendable attitude at its inception, in the past century Pentecostals have not only divided repeatedly, their “missionary programs have perpetuated (those) divisions and spread them worldwide.”¹¹¹ It would be appropriate, therefore, if the Pentecostals not only worked to stop the out-of-control division within the church, but would actually return to one of their original tenets, becoming an agency for unity in the body of Christ. Unfortunately the early expectation of the Pentecostal founders has gradually given way to a situation where “most Pentecostal leaders have a limited vision for the potential benefits that engagement with the larger church might bring to them.”¹¹² This attitude is extremely disappointing because it indicates a lack of desire to restore unity even in places where it might be possible.¹¹³

Dissension, disunity and the resulting division appears to be part of human nature. C.S. Lewis understood our contentious nature: “When two Christians of different denominations start arguing, it is usually not long before one asks whether such-and-such a point ‘really matters’ and the other replies: ‘Matter? Why, it’s absolutely essential.’”¹¹⁴ Pentecostals are not exempt from such attitudes and the division they inevitably cause. In fact, according to Robeck, they excel at it:

The Pentecostal movement has managed, in just less than a century, to contribute to nearly as many different divisions as it took the rest of the church a millennium to produce. By ignoring lessons which could have been learned from the historic churches, the Pentecostal movement has not lived up to its potential, nor has it achieved the

¹¹⁰Gary B. McGee, “‘More than Evangelical:’ The Challenge of the Evolving Theological Identity of the Assemblies of God,” *Pneuma* 25, no. 2 (Fall, 2003): 289-300, 290.

¹¹¹Robeck, “Pentecostals and Christian Unity,” 309.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 319.

¹¹³E.g., early in the history of the Pentecostal Movement, the Pentecostal Church of God split from the newly-formed Assemblies of God over the issue of whether the denomination should have a statement of faith. The Pentecostal Church of God thought that such statements were unbiblical and the Assemblies of God thought they were undesirable but necessary. Later, when the Pentecostal Church of God denomination decided that they actually *did* need a statement of faith, they did not reconcile with the Assemblies of God, but remained a separate denomination. Vinson Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal 1901-2001* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 138-139.

¹¹⁴C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 8.

hopes and dreams of its pioneers. Like the Christians it often criticizes, it has contributed to the fragmentation and pluralization of the Christian portion of the contemporary global context.¹¹⁵

Part of this problem is that the century that Robeck is describing—the twentieth—was a century of unrestrained division in the entire worldwide church. Pentecostalism, being a product of the twentieth century, could not help but be influenced by the pandemic of division in the church. This does not excuse the division, but perhaps it shows that no matter how well-intentioned a group of Christians are at their beginning, human sinful nature will almost always find a way to cause discord, conflict and division.

The Church's Affected Ecclesiology

It is difficult to discuss *the* ecclesiology of the church, as if there were only one. In fact, there are many ecclesiologies since each difference of interpretation or opinion could be classified as a separate ecclesiology. Obviously, there are different ecclesiologies among Christians from differing theological backgrounds, so each sect or denomination has an ecclesiology that is somewhat different than the others. But even within these divisions, there are different ecclesiologies—not only differing opinions on theology,¹¹⁶ but there is also often a gap between theology and practice, between what the academicians are writing and what the local pastors and members are teaching and doing. Therefore, when discussing ecclesiology, one can discuss it in terms of either theology or praxis, but frequently these two cannot be discussed as the same.

In considering the effect of division on ecclesiology, it is important to note that rarely has any “official” ecclesiology been affected. Throughout the twentieth century and before, theologians and writers from various denominations have been decrying division and denominationalism. It is at the local level that the church's ecclesiology has been affected. The evidence for this is more than 38,000

¹¹⁵Robeck, “*Pentecostals and Ecumenism*,” 340-341.

¹¹⁶E.g., Macchia discusses the experience of global Pentecostalism and the existence, theologically, of “separate Pentecostals” because even the most basic characteristics of Pentecostalism differ in understanding and importance in different parts of the world and between different Pentecostal denominations. Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 33-38.

denominations that exist in the body of Christ today.¹¹⁷ Obviously, regardless of the pleas of theologians and biblical scholars for unity, Christians in local churches and denominations feel free to divide the body of Christ.

Hyper-individualism in the church contributed to a decrease in sanctification in the church which, in turn, led to rampant division. That division was opposed to existing ecclesologies within the body of Christ and led some Christians to work diligently to halt division and restore unity.¹¹⁸ Conversely, it also led many Christians to modify their ecclesiology, allowing for divisiveness and justifying it in books and literature.¹¹⁹

God's people are well aware of biblical commands against division, which creates a problem. Christians must either admit their guilt in dividing the body of Christ and be reconciled to those they have

¹¹⁷ Mary Fairchild, "Christianity Today - General Statistics and Facts of Christianity," About.com Guide, <http://christianity.about.com/od/denominations/p/christiantoday.htm>, accessed September 20, 2009.

¹¹⁸The Ecumenical Movement is one such movement, but its efficacy is weakened by the fact that it is mainly a "bureaucratic and scholarly rather than a grass-roots movement" and the average Christian does not seem to have much interest in it. Andrew M. Greeley, *The Denominational Society* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1972), 247. Another unity movement was the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement, whose founder Alexander Campbell proclaimed, "We have pledged ourselves to union." Alexander Campbell, "Signs of the Times," *Millennial Harbinger* 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1861): 42. Unfortunately, this movement has not only been relatively unsuccessful in bringing unity to the body of Christ, it has experienced several significant divisions within itself. Douglas A. Foster, et. al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 755.

¹¹⁹In addition to published justifications in favor of denominationalism cited earlier, Greeley epitomizes them by arguing that denominationalism gives people a valuable sense of identity and meaning for their lives. He also argues that the existence of denominations gives stability to a society and vitality to Christianity. Andrew M. Greeley, *The Denominational Society* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1972), 251-254; See also John M. Buchanan, "Staying Together," *Christian Century* 128, issue 12 (June 2011): 3, 3, in which someone tried to convince Buchanan that denominations were a sign of "energy and diversity" in the body of Christ; Russell E. Richey, ed. *Denominationalism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1977), 19-21, 70-73; Ross P. Scherer, *American Denominational Organization* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1980); J. Marcellus Kik, *Ecumenism and the Evangelical* (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1958), 20-25; Nancy T. Ammerman, "New Life for Denominationalism," *Christian Century* 117, issue 9 (March 2000): 302-307; Ra McLaughlin, "Denominationalism," *Third Millennium Q & A Knowledge Base*. <http://www.thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/99853.qna/category/pt/page/questions/site/iiim> (accessed September 19, 2009); Sidney E. Mead, "Denominationalism: the Shape of Protestantism in America," *Church History* 23, no. 4 (Dec. 1954): 291-320. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=8&hid=104&sid=adaf3416-7a0b-4a72-a52c-9b0690b7b3f7@sessionmgr11> (accessed September 20, 2009).

separated from, or find some justification or spiritual explanation for their divisions. It can be assumed that there are several subgroups within the body of Christ in regard to this issue. There are, no doubt, many Christians who believe that division is wrong. Within that group, there are those who are actively working for unity and those who are not. There are also many Christians who have worked faithfully to reconcile split churches and reunite divided denominations. Unfortunately, there is also a category of believers who are willing to divide the body of Christ for reasons they consider justified. In order to find justification for division, their ecclesiology must be modified so that it is more important to escape from or expel the perceived wrong than to remain united.

Regardless of the calls of scholars and theologians to stop dividing the body of Christ, the rest of the church obviously believes that division is an acceptable way to resolve conflict. In fact, division is not only acceptable but has been a common method of resolving conflict since the Reformation.¹²⁰ When Christians see conflict as “a contest or a chance to assert their rights, to control others, or to take advantage of their situation,”¹²¹ many church and denominational divisions will naturally occur because both parties are trying to “win.” Similar divisions will occur when Christians walk away from a conflict rather than try to resolve it. Many of those Christians who lose the fight

¹²⁰In addition to countless church and organizational splits since the Reformation, many denominations were born out of conflict, including the Primitive Baptists, Southern Baptists, American Baptist Association, Independent Baptists, Bible Presbyterian Church, Brethren in Christ, Reformed Episcopal Church, African Orthodox Church, Disciples of Christ, Church of God (Anderson), Church of God of Prophecy, Church of God in Christ, Pentecostal Church of God, Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches, Freewill Baptists, Grace Brethren Churches, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, Apostolic Lutheran Church, Church of the Lutheran Brethren, Church of the Lutheran Confession, (Old) Mennonite Church, (New) Mennonite Church, Southern Methodist Church, Free Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Particular Baptists, Presbyterian Church in America, Bible Presbyterian Church, Christian Reformed Church, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, etc. This list comes from a cursory survey of Daniel G. Reid, ed., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990). In fairness, there are also many denominations which were formed by the *merger* of two or more previously separated denominations, including the United Presbyterian Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, United Methodist Church, etc. Additionally, some denominations, such as the Assemblies of God, arose spontaneously out of a sense of camaraderie and solidarity. Although they were marginalized by other believers, the Assemblies of God denomination was not created in response to any specific conflict.

¹²¹Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, Revised and Updated (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 24.

or leave for some other reason will naturally start something new—a new church, a new organization, a new denomination—justifying the division as the result of circumstances. Despite the fact that it has become a common method of resolving conflict, few people recognize that division is not a manner of resolving conflict, it is a manner of avoiding conflict.¹²² In hindsight, it is easy to see that as denominationalism grew more and more familiar, it perpetuated itself by creating an environment that “encouraged Christians to resolve conflicts by division rather than (by) compromise.”¹²³

This paper has now come full-circle in describing the downward spiral that the church is experiencing: The church’s hyper-individualism has led to a decrease of sanctification, which has resulted in disunity and division. That division influenced the church’s ecclesiology and encouraged Christians to develop a view of the church that further sanctions hyper-individualism, which further erodes sanctification and results in more division. For more than a century, the body of Christ has been spiraling downward through this cycle, but there is a way out. It is possible for the church to reverse this descent, through the intentional discipleship of believers.

Reversing the Downward Spiral Through Intentional Discipleship

The downward spiral of hyper-individualism, worldliness, and division is just one of many problems that the church faces today, but it is a significant one. Fortunately, it is not an insurmountable problem. In fact, there is a simple solution—a way to reverse the downward spiral. Followers of Christ have been “called out of our narrow individualism and our small private world . . . (We must) allow ourselves to be ‘turned around’ by the allurements of God and to live for him, as Jesus did.”¹²⁴ In other words, the way to reverse this downward spiral is simple, though difficult. The reversal will only occur through the intentional discipleship of God’s people, teaching and training them to live for Christ, to correct their faulty ecclesiologies and to have a biblical attitude about unity, holiness and community.

Christian discipleship is ongoing training in christlikeness, which occurs after the new birth and results in spiritual maturity as

¹²²Ibid., 23.

¹²³William H. Gentz, ed., *The Dictionary of the Bible and Religion* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1986), s.v., “Denominationalism,” 263.

¹²⁴Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words*, in Kauffman, “Discipleship,” 57.

Christians grow in sanctification and in their relationship with Christ. Due in large part to the prominence of a hyper-individualistic attitude among Christians and the private faith that it encourages, the church today is not adequately discipling its members. The consequences of this neglect are seen in the downward spiral described in this paper.

The inattention to discipleship has been widely observed by church leaders. Hull, for example says that discipleship such as the early church practiced is today “uncommon” at best, but in reality is “unknown” and that the church’s neglect of the “art of making disciples” is the reason why “the kingdom of God is not advancing as planned.”¹²⁵ Compounding this problem is a concern that even where churches *are* practicing discipleship in some form, those programs are often characterized by a lack of intentionality in their implementation.¹²⁶ Recognizing this situation, Wilson gives a long and detailed evaluation of the church today and warns that “the conditions that caused the demise of disciple building and lay ministry in (the early church) are recurring in the modern church and pose the same threats.”¹²⁷

Willard expresses the importance of *intentionality* in discipleship: it should be “consciously implemented, to bring others to the point where they are daily learning from Jesus how to live their actual lives as he would live them if he were they.”¹²⁸ Hadidian’s model of Christian discipleship is a good example of intentional discipleship.¹²⁹ He compares spiritual development with biological parenting and argues that, just as a mother and father nurture their new baby, mature Christians must deliberately disciple new believers. Basler agrees: “If we want to be disciplemakers, then we must follow Jesus’ example and intentionally seek out those who are waiting to grow...we need to be as intentional as mountain climbers are about reaching the summit.”¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 69.

¹²⁶ David Watson, *Discipleship* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1983), 67-69.

¹²⁷ Carl Wilson, *With Christ in the School of Disciple Building* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 19.

¹²⁸ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 302.

¹²⁹ Allen Hadidian, *Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 12-20. See also Dean Merrill and Marshall Shelley, eds., *Fresh ideas for Discipleship and Nurture* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc., 1984), 13-14;

¹³⁰ J. Michael Basler, et. al., *Disciplenaker's Handbook*, Alice Fryling, ed (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 25.

Intentional discipleship has the potential to reverse the downward spiral by countering the errant attitudes and beliefs that led the church downward in the first place. Willard believes that simple obedience to the command to Christ's command to make disciples would "soon transform everything among professing Christians as we know them."¹³¹ Intentional discipleship, rooted in biblical teaching, will lead believers to attitudes and behaviors such as love,¹³² obedience,¹³³ humility,¹³⁴ *koinonia*,¹³⁵ community,¹³⁶ unity,¹³⁷ holiness,¹³⁸ etc., all of which are values and characteristics of a spiritually mature believer. As these elements of a disciple's character are developed, the downward spiral will naturally be reversed in his or her life. If the whole church would grow and perfect these characteristics in their lives, the downward spiral would cease completely. People who claim to be disciples of Christ but whose lives do not demonstrate these characteristics in increasing measure are fooling themselves. Disciples of Christ cannot have an attitude of hyper-individualism when the Christian life is supposed to be characterized by love, *koinonia*, and humility. Disciples should be those who are growing in sanctification throughout their lifetimes. Division should *never* be an option for disciples who are obeying God's commands and whose lives are dedicated to the unity of Christ's body. The problem, therefore, is not the nature of the church or the nature of a disciple. The downward spiral has been perpetuated by nothing more than a lack of intentional discipleship and it can be reversed by nothing less.

¹³¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 302.

¹³² Carl Wilson, *With Christ in the School of Disciple Building* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 187-188.

¹³³ Bill Bright, *Handbook for Christian Maturity* (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1992), 221 ff.

¹³⁴ Floyd McClung, *Basic Discipleship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 139 ff.

¹³⁵ Ortiz, 99ff.

¹³⁶ Hull, 188ff.

¹³⁷ David Watson, *Discipleship* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1983), 39ff.

¹³⁸ Vandenberg quotes Radner's assertion that "the doctrine of the incarnation as addressed by such figures as Clement of Alexandria and Athanasius made clear that 'the coming of the word in the flesh of Jesus took place precisely in order to transform human beings into vessels of righteousness and holiness, whose image conforms to that of God himself,'" (emphasis added). Ephraim Radner, *The Rule of Faith: Scripture, Canon, and Creed in a Critical Age* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1998), 16, in Vandenberg, Mary. "Bonhoeffer's Discipleship: Theology for the Purpose of Christian Formation." *Calvin Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (Nov. 2009): 333-349.

Effectively Discipling Christians

“Luther borrowed from St. Bernard of Clairvaux the dictum that a Christian is always a beginner.”¹³⁹ Thomas Merton spoke of spiritual growth similarly: “We do not want to be beginners. but let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners all our life.”¹⁴⁰ While understanding their hyperbole, this author disagrees. The New Testament unmistakably anticipates spiritual growth for a Christian and, in fact, chastises the Christian who is still a beginner after many years of being a disciple.¹⁴¹ John clearly identifies stages of development as a Christian grows spiritually and uses language that expects spiritual maturity beyond the level of a “beginner.”¹⁴² Yancey correctly distinguishes between the “childlike faith” that Jesus desires of his followers and a “childish faith” that is nothing more than immaturity.¹⁴³ Despite all this, St. Bernard and Merton express the attitude that discourages many Christians from exerting the effort required to progress in their faith: “If I am always going to be a ‘beginner’ no matter how hard I try, then what motivation do I have to strive toward maturity?” It is difficult and discouraging to work toward any goal that is perceived as unattainable. Salvation is a clearly delineated event for most Christians. They can recall the progress they made that led to the moment when they received Christ and became his disciple. But spiritual growth following conversion has no distinct goal in this lifetime.¹⁴⁴ New believers are encouraged by word and example to “run the race”¹⁴⁵ and even to “finish the race”¹⁴⁶ and “win the prize,”¹⁴⁷ but when the finish line is in the next world, any progress at all can be said to be acceptable.

¹³⁹David C. Steinmetz, “Growing in Grace,” *Christian Century* (October 30, 2007): 10-11, 10, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=27399998&site=ehost-live> (accessed September 23, 2009).

¹⁴⁰Thomas Merton in Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 2.

¹⁴¹E.g., Hebrews 5:11-14, 1 Corinthians 3:2, 1 Peter 2:2.

¹⁴²1 John 2:12-14.

¹⁴³Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 209-221.

¹⁴⁴At least for those who do not believe in the doctrine of Entire Sanctification. As discussed above, one significant benefit of adhering to a Wesleyan theology is that there is a clear goal within this lifetime: Entire Sanctification.

¹⁴⁵Hebrews 12:1.

¹⁴⁶2 Timothy 4:7.

¹⁴⁷Philippians 3:14.

A significant part of the problem is that growth is encouraged through church discipleship programs, but the stated goals of such programs are ambiguous because spiritual maturity is so difficult to assess. Adsit says that “growth, whether physical or spiritual, is dynamic.”¹⁴⁸ He then describes a biblical evaluation system for gauging spiritual development and notes that “by knowing what should characterize a disciple at each level of growth, we get a better idea of how we can help that disciple...to ward maturity.”¹⁴⁹

This situation should come as no surprise in our hyper-individualistic Christian world where believers arbitrarily determine their own spiritual finish line and individuals gauge their own progress toward maturity based on their own personal standards and goals. “Plenty of people in the church...have made up a ‘Jesus’ for themselves and have found that this invented character makes few real demands on them. He makes them feel happy from time to time but doesn’t challenge them.”¹⁵⁰ In other words, when the church is characterized by privatized Christianity, if individual believers set their goals low and remain relatively immature, that is their business alone. If other believers set their goals high and gain great spiritual maturity, good for them, but it has nothing to do with a believer who is not particularly interested in spiritual growth. This is the result when progress is encouraged by the church but not really expected. “The reason disciple-making often fails is that we don’t expect it to reproduce.”¹⁵¹ Progress is not expected because there are no consequences for a member who has been saved for many years but is still spiritually immature.¹⁵² In fact, many such people hold positions of leadership in the church.¹⁵³ Despite these significant difficulties, the church is finding that there is “a renewal of interest in ‘Christian

¹⁴⁸Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciplemaking* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, Inc., 1989), 61.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰N.T. Wright, *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), ix.

¹⁵¹Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 71.

¹⁵²E.g., Williamson discusses the mistake the church makes when it focuses on a person’s “intellectual understanding of the gospel without giving due attention to how he or she is living” Peter S. Williamson, “Radical Commitment to Christ” in John C. Blattner, ed., *Leading Christians to Maturity* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987), 59.

¹⁵³Kenneth Prior, *Perils of Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 11-26

spirituality' amongst Christian believers."¹⁵⁴ This interest creates an opportunity for the church to begin discipling its members in earnest.¹⁵⁵

Most Christians would agree that "sanctification is both a completed action in Christ and an ongoing action of God in the life of believers."¹⁵⁶ If we think of it as "Initial Sanctification" and "Ongoing Sanctification," the "ongoing" part is what is lacking in the church today. Christians are too easily satisfied by a secular form of spirituality, sometimes called "counterfeit spirituality."¹⁵⁷ They have allowed as "acceptable" the development of a segregated Christian life in which spiritual life is separate from "normal" life. This is what Bulatao calls "split-level Christianity,"¹⁵⁸ in which Christianity and secularism co-exist within the same person as "two or more thought-and-behavior systems which are inconsistent with each other."¹⁵⁹ For example, the church frequently teaches people to begin their day with a time of "personal devotion," but neglects to train them to live *all* of their day in interaction with God. The implication, then, is that as long as they begin their day with a devotion, the rest of the day can be lived in a relatively worldly manner and the disciple will likely feel that he is doing pretty well spiritually. Only after years of split-level living might they ask, "Why am I not growing in my spiritual life?"

Split-Level Christianity is widespread in the church today due to our neglect of the ministry of sanctification and the resulting inattention to the discipleship of our members. Our spiritual development is not merely one segment of our lives to be developed in isolation from other parts such as our physical, emotional, social, educational, or moral development. Rather, our spirituality should

¹⁵⁴Steven L. Porter, "On the Renewal of Interest in the Doctrine of Sanctification: A Methodological Reminder," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45, no. 3 (Sept. 2002): 415-426, 415.

¹⁵⁵The phrase "discipling its members" is, itself, indicative of a problem in the church. Juan Carlos Ortiz describes his search for the idea of church *membership* in the book of Acts: "I didn't even find the word 'member.' But reading the Acts I found another word that really revolutionized my life and the life of our church. The world was disciples." Juan Carlos Ortiz, *Call to Discipleship*, as told to Jamie Buckingham (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975), 67. Even the common understanding of Christians as "members," when the New Testament understands them as "disciples" shows a misunderstanding and neglect of the ministry of discipleship.

¹⁵⁶Leggett, "The Assemblies of God Statement on Sanctification," 23.

¹⁵⁷Timothy R. Phillips and Donald G. Bloesch, "Counterfeit Spirituality," in Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 60-73.

¹⁵⁸Jaime Bulatao, *Split-Level Christianity* (Manila, Philippines: Ateneo University Press, 1969), 2.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*

affect all of our life development, so that *as* we develop physically and emotionally as students, workers, spouses, senior citizens, etc., it is all done in an integrated way with our spiritual development.

The neglect of Israel in discipling their children during the period of the Judges resulted in a nation where the chosen people of God were all but completely secular in their worldview. A similar chain of events is taking place in the church today as the church neglects the responsibility of guiding new Christians through their experience of ongoing sanctification. Christians are not adequately discipling new believers and are neglecting to train even their own children. The Barna Group, in a 2009 survey, found that although America has “the world’s largest infrastructure for nurturing human spirituality, complete with hundreds of thousands of houses of worship, thousands of parachurch organizations and schools, and seemingly unlimited products, resources and experts...A new study [shows] there is little progress in helping people develop spiritually.”¹⁶⁰ This is a regrettable situation for the church, but again, it is a situation that can easily be reversed. The church is already well prepared to offer discipleship programs. Most local congregations have teachers, classroom space, even discipleship materials. All that is necessary is for the discipleship to begin.

Conclusion

Any scenario in which individualism reaches an extreme in society will inevitably result in anarchy. As the people of God, we have a clear warning of this in the book of Judges. In Judges 17:6 and 21:25 we are told that the reason for the problems they were facing as a nation was that “*eman* did that which was right in his own eyes.” When they entered the Promised Land, they were truly sanctified as a nation as seen in their commitment: “We will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:21). As their individualism grew, however, their sanctification declined. As a result, they stopped serving God and fell into idolatry and debauchery. Eventually, this resulted in disunity among the people of God and the tribes went to war with each other.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰N/a, “Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity,” The Barna Group (May 2009). <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/264-many-churchgoers-and-faith-leaders-struggle-to-define-spiritual-maturity?q=spiritual+immaturity> (accessed Oct. 1, 2011).

¹⁶¹ E.g., Judges 12:1-7, chapters 20 and 21.

We would be foolish to ignore the parallel that exists today with the same cycle of increasing individualism resulting in a decrease of sanctification, which has in turn resulted in division and disunity. The Israelites never found their way out of this downward spiral which eventually led to their exile from the land that was promised. We shake our heads at the Israelites and their foolishness, but why can't we see that we are also trapped in the same downward spiral? Modifying our ecclesiology to justify our divisions will only lead us further down the spiral. The grease on the downward spiral is the lack of discipleship—for the Israelites and for us—and intentional discipleship is the way back to sanctification and unity. The Israelites never found their way back. Will we?

Ultimately, “The mission of the church on earth is not just to preach the gospel but to be the living expression of the gospel.”¹⁶² I believe that the Church is on the brink of a movement of unity that will heal many wounds and break down many walls. Pentecostals are poised to be one of the main catalysts for that movement. But something must be done quickly before our individualistic form of Christianity weakens the body of Christ any further. Somehow, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, the division must stop because it goes against the desire of God and the nature of the church.

The Body of Christ is nothing other than a fellowship of persons. It is ‘the fellowship of Jesus Christ’ or ‘fellowship of the Holy Ghost’ where fellowship or *koinonia* signifies a common participation, a togetherness, a community life. The faithful are bound to each other through their common sharing in Christ and in the Holy Ghost, but that which they have in common is precisely no ‘thing,’ no ‘it,’ but a ‘he,’ Christ and His Holy Spirit.¹⁶³

We have, therefore, an unlimited resource to defeat individualism, to turn around our apathy for sanctification, to stop the division, and to correct our ecclesiology—the Holy Spirit—and his will is clear: that we live as a unified community, that we strive for holiness, and that we make as many disciples as possible until Christ returns.

¹⁶² Chan, “Mother Church,” 208.

¹⁶³ Emil Brunner in Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “The Church as the Fellowship of Persons,” 1.

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephen HONG (baguiohongs@gmail.com) is a doctoral candidate at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary. He has worked as a missionary in the Philippines since 1990, mostly in church planting and Bible college education. In 2012, he moved to Manila with his family and now teaches high school at Faith Academy, a school for missionary kids.

Glen MENZIES, Ph.D., (gwmenzie@northcentral.edu) is Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity and Dean of the Institute for Biblical and Theological Studies at North Central University in Minneapolis, MN. Although his primary interests are the New Testament and early Christianity, he has spent considerable time exploring Pentecostal history and theology and has organized the Pentecostal Issues Seminar (1998-2006) and The Laboratory (2008-Present), a forum for discussion of church issues by pastors and professors.

Robert MENZIES, Ph.D (menzies@mail2go.net) has authored several books on the work of the Spirit, including *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Zondervan, 2000), which he co-authored with his father. Dr. Menzies is an adjunct professor at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in the Philippines and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, MO. For most of the past 18 years, he and his family have lived and served in China. He is currently the Director of Synergy, an organization that seeks to enable rural village people in Southwest China to live productive and fruitful lives.

Jean-Daniel PLÜSS, Ph.D (jdpluss@gmail.com) is chair of the European Pentecostal Charismatic Research Association, lecturer and writer on Pentecostal history and theology, ecumenical relations and ethics. He resides in Switzerland.

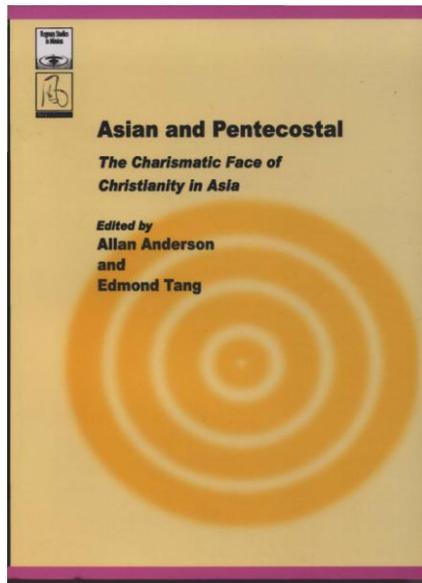
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Fuller Theological Seminary,
CA, USA



Contributors include Walter J. Hollenweger, H-S Bae, Michael Bergunder, Simon Chan, DengZhaoming, Roger Hedlund, Hwa Yung, Jeong C-H, Jeong J-Y, Lee Y-H, Julie Ma, Wonsuk Ma, David Martin, Gotthard Oblau, Paulson Pulikottil, Mark Robinson, Paul Shew, Joseph Suico, Tan Jin Huat, Gani Wiyono, Lode Wostyn, Amos Yong and the editors.

Allan Anderson is Reader in Pentecostal Studies, University of Birmingham, UK

Edmond Tang directs the Centre for East Asian Christian Studies, University of Birmingham, UK

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