

APOSTOLIC

PENTECOSTAL
THEOLOGY



NATHANIEL J. WILSON, Ed.D

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*Dedicated
to
my wife,
Mary Ruth Wilson,
in whom I find the
attributes of beauty:
love, spirituality, loyalty, steadfastness,
resolve, conviction, grace.*

*Dedicated
also
to men and women everywhere
who have become addicted to
the quest for God,
the desire to be effective,
and the determination to be a
world-class
Leader.*

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*A
Note
to
Apostolic Pentecostal
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Dealing in issues divine leaves keen awareness of the author's limited grasp of language as well as the limitations of language in general. The immensities of the subject are far greater than the medium. The most lucid mind struggles to grasp the magnitudes and remote horizons of eternal, cosmic expanse. Nevertheless, the shapes of time and space, and (to some degree) eternity are fixed in language. Thus, the health of a language, as well as the linguistic well-being of the user of that language, is vital in attempting contemplation of these subjects.

Use of language is also challenging for other reasons. For example, every abstraction cannot be perfectly articulated. There are spiritual mysteries which can only be set down then gestured toward, usually by use of symbols. To become further curious is to trespass and is at best, error, at worst, blasphemy.

Further lament of the writer is that words carelessly used jostle together in daily chatter, becoming worn smooth. They are spent and drained, making sharpness of expression difficult, like cutting with blunt stones. Edges of meaning become dully defined and the abundant nuances which gesture toward the high and holy go unnoticed. The numinous power of rich, full language, filled with potent nuance and subtle light, has become lost in environments that presume a knowing before reading. From being blessed in other areas of life (socially, sartorially, financially ...), an unwarranted confidence presumes ability to transfer these kinds of "knowing" to much deeper spiritual and theological themes. But such transfer is not of "likes" and thus doesn't

interface. Instead, a kind of testy, impatient frustration occurs, which leads to temptation to criticize rather than learn. Meanwhile, critical deeper meanings remain hidden and concealed, submerged beneath a rising Pentecostal sediment of ever-shallower comprehensions.

This is not a small or imagined problem. Mass media, the Internet, radio, and television, in an attempt to gain credibility, have created a world of chattering voices that apply weighty words to un-weighty subjects, thus diluting and ruining their value, doing violence to meaning—flattening, destroying. The very “publicity” of language is exhausting. “Ballast is lacking.”¹ Who has not felt frustration at the disparity between one’s own deep experiences and the availability of words usable for the expression thereof? Cherished expression has been invaded by the rough, the crude, and the loud, with the result of loss of hearing the full timbre of what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 2:7).

At the highest level, theology must be experienced as a living entity. For a Spirit-filled person, this should be self evident. The tendency to revert to a non-Pentecostal approach is to lose the possibility of seeing the dynamic reality of the scriptural message.

However, to develop broadened understanding, there must first be some existing areas of knowledge, of understanding of idiom, and of underlying strata of meaning. Some things must be mastered before the message can be adequately conveyed and embraced. A sobering question among apostolic Pentecostals is, where is this happening? Are we willing and capable of looking closer, seeing deeper, embracing dynamic revelation undiscovered outside of the Holy Spirit? This is entailed in authentic discipleship.

A decision to read the whole book at one time from front to back is probably not a good idea. The content of each chapter is thick and compressed and will, for most, require high degree of focused and concentrated thought. Hopefully, the reader will remember that the goal is not finishing the book as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, like most books, this book is written in sequence, moving from first subject to last with some degree of logical flow from front to back.

At the same time, any one section can be selected and studied without

1 George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 183.

reading any other section. Each stands alone and does not require the reading of others.

However, to gain the deepest purposes of the book, the first section, which is titled “BEING,” must be understood. This is a relatively short section, but is the basis for full understanding of the whole.

Not only is this section the first section, but is, for many, more dense, and, therefore, a bit more difficult. Upon discovering that the reading is challenging, the reader is encouraged to not “give up easy,” but to slow down and re-read as many times as necessary until understanding comes. Everyone is capable of grasping the content.

Oftentimes, there is lack of awareness of different levels of thinking. The writing of the first section (“BEING”) penetrates more deeply into such thinking than does everyday reading. Such reading can take time, and demands a resolute commitment and persistence. Caution is advised in regards to the oft-repeated mistake of assuming that one has experienced every kind of reading, and will therefore, at first flush, automatically grasp everything. The value of a strong understanding of this first section will become evident as one continues to read.

Realizing there is much more than what is included in this one volume, the hope is that a glimpse is here provided into the treasure trove of possibilities of Pentecostal theology—a theology uniquely informed through Pentecostal Spirit-infilling. The hope is that this provides stimulus to continue the quest for the full scope of such world-changing possibilities of effective action. For in a Pentecostal theology, where there is no action, there is no theology.

Acknowledgments

A book of this kind may appear to be written over a relatively short amount of time. It also may appear to simply be the work of the author of record. However, neither assumption is true. Thousands of conversations, classroom discussions, studies, and theological and spiritual explorations all make their contribution. There are also thoughts that result from hundreds of interactions with colleagues, students, parishioners, and brethren. Other streams include prayer meetings, meditations, and deep sessions of both private and communal worship. Lessons from experience of pain, of failed efforts, and of frustration also add to the whole. Learning experiences all, these join with the exhilarating experiences of joy, of successes, of triumphs, and of victories. Such theology is a Pentecostal theology, a theology of life and of action and is not the result of mere scholarship. The contributing factors are as wide as life.

Then there are those individuals without which the project would not be completed. For the many, many hours that my wife, Mary, and my family have sacrificed to finish the endeavor, I say thank you. Your sacrifices are not only acknowledged but deeply appreciated.

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A special thank you again to colleagues everywhere who have, over the years, in myriad ways, contributed to understandings which have led to this time and place.

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*A theology sanitized of affectivity
and reserved only to reason
is a fundamentally flawed theology
and can never lead to a genuine
understanding of Christianity.*

Preface

Pentecostalism is presently sweeping the world. Nothing anywhere—Christian or otherwise—religious, secular or sociological—is experiencing anything near this global growth. Identified as a “mix of Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Evangelicals, now 707 million people who are increasing by 8% a year,” these are overwhelmingly Pentecostal. Meanwhile, world population rates are growing at 1.2% a year. Per year, Buddhism is growing .09%, Hinduism, 1.1%, and Islam, 1.8%.² Rutz emphasizes the size of the phenomenon by pointing out that at the current growth rate, there would be more of these Christians in the world than there are people by 2032!³

Rutz is speaking of a Pentecostal phenomenon. By Pentecostal, we mean people who have repented of their sins and upon whom the Holy Spirit has fallen, evidenced generally by personal transformation and specifically by speaking in tongues, in the apostle’s words “as on us at the beginning” (Acts 11:14, 2:1-4). The rate of growth continues unabated. In approximately 100 years, some ten percent of the entire presently living population of the world has become not simply “Christian” but, to one degree or another, “Pentecostal.” Literally whole nations, and even continents, are becoming heavily Pentecostal.

Just one example is China, where Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry reports that the growth of Christianity has been astonishing. At this point, it’s no longer a question of if China will become a Christian nation, but when. The ramifications of this religious shift are massive, and will shake China’s culture and economy to its cores. Since 1979, Protestant Christianity has been growing in China at a compound annual growth rate of more than 10 percent. There were 3 million Christians in China in 1980, compared to 58 million in 2010, according to Fenggyang Yang, director of the Center of Religion

2 James H. Rutz, *MegaShift: Igniting Spiritual Power* (Colorado Springs, CO: Empowerment Press, 2005), 14-15.

3 Of course, he is not predicting such, explaining that “... straight line projections are a fool’s game because life never goes in a straight line” *Ibid.*, 15.

and Chinese Society at Purdue University. By 2025, that number could swell to 250 to 300 million.⁴ Much of this growth is being led by Pentecostals. What is true of China is true of much of Africa, of Central and South America, and of many other nations.

Pentecostal as used herein does not signify a denomination but rather is Christianity which finds its dynamic self-identity and empowerment in Spirit-infilling. The title “Pentecostal” is derivative of the fact that this initially occurred, in 33 A.D., on the Day during the Jewish holy time identified as Pentecost. Pentecostals assert that believers can, and do, receive the Holy Spirit as a dynamic infilling today, just as was the case with the disciples as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. They further assert that this experience was the norm of the New Testament church and was, and is, intended for each and every individual. A primary reason for this book is that the sheer size and scope of this revival militates for efforts toward development of, first, a more robust theology of Biblical leadership, and secondly, hermeneutical approaches to scripture which come from, and through, the lens of these transforming, apostolic, scripture-fulfilling realities.

Theories abound as to why this sweeping revival is occurring. The straightforward answer is that there is, in the world, deep hunger for spiritual fulfillment and wholeness. Being Spirit-filled connects one both vertically and horizontally in a way nothing else can and thereby uniquely creates an acute awareness of belonging. The divine Spirit abides within, and bonds with, the individual in a manner unfound elsewhere. With liberating mental, emotional, physical, and sociological benefits, this infilling is a unique and distinct gift from God. This infilling also provides universal connectivity otherwise impossible. The result is that, in spite of a century of stigmatization from the secular world and old line Christian denominations and evangelicals, Pentecostalism continues to race forward until the sheer weight of its evidence of sustainability and its power for individual transformation has transitioned the movement from pilloried child to authoritative church voice in matters of dynamic Christianity and mission.

Embedded deeply in the 500 year history of the Reformation and Restoration movements of Protestantism is the idea that the Church today should be, in dynamics and doctrine, the same as (that is, that

⁴ Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry, “Can Christianity save China?” July 14, 2016, accessed July 16, 2016, <http://www.theweek.com/articles/635668/christianity-save-china>.

which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, the real, genuinely true), the New Testament church. After all, if the New Testament is not the intended model, where can such be found? To the degree that the present Church attains this lofty goal, to that degree it is authentic.

From its earliest days, the Reformation moved forward with efforts to discern and embrace this return. History reveals the road has not been easy. Each occasion, in which new understanding of old truths emerged, the reigning paradigm of the time became challenged. In every case, some steadfastly refused to move forward from the established paradigm to embrace further truth. Stopping at particular revelations, this became the foundations from which specific “denominations” were formed. A denomination is a group which re-discovered a biblical truth, and binding together, embraced it wholly. However, in doing so, the unspoken assumption was often that their particular revelation was the “final” step in the restoration of the Christian church to its original dynamics and doctrine. Locked into that particular insight, these often looked with suspicion—and criticism—on those who continued further in the pursuit of complete restoration of both dynamics and doctrine of the first Church. Others, however, knew they saw more and continued to pursue God and truth. Thus, the Reformation moved inexorably forward as group after group generally embraced what was previously discovered and built upon it with further revelation and understanding.

With little difficulty, a sequence of spiritual and biblical discovery can be traced through these successive groups from the 1500s, each enlarging on previously revealed truths.

The power of the preached Word to effect change is evident in every period. Thundering into a spiritually parched world of Reformation beginnings, such preaching resounded like the boom of cannons, breaking centuries old strongholds of institutional paralysis and false doctrine. Those presently living can hardly appreciate the milieu of this world past. Each succeeding forward movement of the Reformation crashed mightily against existing spiritual strongholds and fortifications which bound men and women in spiritual darkness, thus bringing stunning new freedoms not only to individuals but to the world.

The power of such preaching and expanding revelation eventually led to the Pentecostal outpouring at the turn of the twentieth century

which, in turn, created upheaval that continues its transforming work in the present world.

That each step forward is difficult is repeatedly exemplified. For example, though the Pentecostal outpouring has continued to sweep the world anew for well over 100 years, it is only in June 2015 that the Southern Baptist Convention accepts deployment of Baptist missionaries who acknowledge having received a Pentecostal infilling of the Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues.⁵ Vehemently vilified by some, who claim that such is the babbling of emotionally unstable people or even demonic activity, the power of this outpouring continues to simply roll past all such misunderstanding and continues to reach “whosoever will.” Over time, however, the fruit of the Spirit has generally validated itself to all but the most vehement clingers-on of the past.

With this revival, has come realization that theology and hermeneutics are also being fundamentally impacted. Attempting to put new wine of twenty-first century, Spirit-filled Christianity in bottles designed for sixteenth century emergence is, at best, challenging. In addition, it seems evident that theology in the twentieth century—a theology which was primarily uninformed by, and resistant to, Pentecostal Spirit-baptism such as is found in Acts 2—omits understandings which become evident when viewed from within this dynamic locus. For the last century, evangelical theology generally presented Christian thought through a lens clouded with a modernity which left little room for the supernatural. The Pentecostal vantage point reveals such efforts as falling short in attempting to explicate dynamic truths of a Spirit-filled life. This is not random criticism but rather is an objective look at the existing reality.

In general, adherents of each new progression in the Reformation correctly saw their fresh understandings as contributions to a return to original New Testament doctrine and practice. From Luther’s understanding of individual faith to full awareness of the need for individual salvation was a long journey. Following Luther was awakening of need of individual holiness, which, in turn, led on to new understandings of personal spiritual formation, prayer, worship, sanctification, and anointed preaching. This, in turn, eventually led to Presbyterian, Methodist, Nazarene, Baptist, and other camp meetings in which

5 Jordan Hall, “Southern Baptists, Often Called ‘Tongueless Charismatics,’ Drop the Adjective,” *Pulpit Pen*, May 14, 2015, <http://pulpitandpen.org/2015/05/14/southern-baptists-often-called-tongueless-charismatics-drop-the-adjective-2>

thousands swayed and fell as slain, speaking unintelligibly under the power of the Holy Spirit. In America, everything from the universities of Harvard and Yale to the last reaches of the American frontier reverberated with the transforming effect of this Great Awakening. Meanwhile, in Europe as early as the 1600s, Anabaptists, Plymouth Brethren, followers of Menno Simons, and a garden variety of other groups were likewise experiencing revival. By the 1800s, England found thousands in London daily hurrying on their lunch hours to hear Spurgeon preach while many more thousands in Scotland, Wales, France, Poland, and Eastern Europe were likewise experiencing dramatic new and sweeping transformative evidences of movement toward a restoration of the Christianity of the Bible.

However, each new revelation became, for many, destination rather than part of a journey. An early example of this can be seen in Luther's insistence, discussed by Helmut Thielicke, of how the Spirit makes itself known to the individual by coming "externally." Luther proposed that such comes through hearing the preaching of the Word, as well as the recorded miracles. One sees these as their own. But this is done objectively. "The Spirit directs one away from himself to a history which is outside him even though it includes him, so that it is an external word."⁶ Thus, Luther declared, "God will not give anyone the Spirit apart from the word and the preaching office" and, "A spirit that looses itself from these is not from God, but 'from hell.'"⁷ Luther thus saw emphasis of the Holy Spirit as directing the believing individual away from himself explicitly as a "safeguard against the supposed spiritual revelations of enthusiasm, which, being direct are not grounded in the external word, and are thus only contemporary and do not include the recollection as well."⁸ These "spiritual revelations of enthusiasm" would include Pentecostals.⁹

A Pentecostal truth is that precisely what Spirit-infilling does is, indeed, bring *direct and unmediated* spiritual revelation. God speaks to individual believers, guides them, carries them, and directs them. While

6 Helmut Thielicke, *Prolegomena: The Relation of Theology to Modern Thought Forms*, vol. 1 of *The Evangelical Faith*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 13.

7 Ibid., 17, 36, 135 and 501.

8 Karl Barth et.al., *Theological Foundations For Ministry: Selected Readings For a Theology of the Church in Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 68.

9 Ibid.

revelation clearly does derive through preaching, it is this preaching which gestures toward a dynamic, individual, and in-the-present reception of the Spirit which has been, and always is, contemporary, at once, with Acts 2 and the present moment, and is so in both a public and deeply private manner.

Because God is alive He is known immediately. Mediate knowing is adequate for knowing objects but, alone, is inadequate for subject-to-subject knowing. Subjective knowing is relational knowing, that is, encountering a living “other” and thus falls in the order of the immediate. On the other hand, immediate knowing by which one individual knows another creates a relational reality between the two, which is in isolation from the outside world. Mediate knowing (e.g., reading or hearing a lecture) is the fashion whereby the immediate is generalized. Both are essential. The Day of Pentecost outpouring was preceded (mediated) by instruction by Jesus. In contrast, the actual outpouring is pure, direct encounter with the divine Spirit, an encounter in which no part is mediated (John 4:24). This immediate knowing, like love, is so actual that its validation can be taken as fact. This is experience, or a spiritual/psychological phenomenon. Rather than “from Hell,” this infilling was, and is, a sound “from Heaven” (Acts 2:4). That the Spirit provides ongoing personal revelation is not accidental but is germane to the ongoing empowerment for salvation and service. Further, rather than directing the self away from itself (Luther), the Spirit directs the self to confrontation and contemplation of itself and toward comparison with Christ Himself (II Corinthians 3:18). As revealed in Jeremiah (31:33) and repeated by the writer of Hebrews (8:8-11) and as starkly illustrated by Christ (John 14:1, 20:22), the coming of the Spirit on the individual is anything except objective and “outside” the individual. However, again, from a Pentecostal standpoint, grasping the full meaning of such is only possible in the actual experiencing of the Spirit as exemplified on the birthday of the Church. It is this spiritual knowing of Christ (the Holy Spirit is *de facto*, the Spirit of Christ) which creates the Church (I Corinthians 12:13). This encounter, akin to any loving, ongoing, relational encounter, requires engagement and commitment of the full range of human intellect, love, emotional expression, and volition (Deuteronomy 6:5).

The Reformation saw preaching and continued individual reception of the Spirit lead to a sweeping aside of centuries old deference to

religious institution versus the rights and dignity of the individual. From the beginning of human history, institutional structure, whether secular or religious, has assumed priority over the individual. The Reformation was instrumental in effecting an epochal alteration whereby, for the first time in history, the rights of the individual took precedence over the rights of the state or institution. Luther's proclamation that the "just shall live by faith" (and not by dependence on the institution to award them salvation) provided seed which has transformed the world with a liberty heretofore unknown. Awareness of right to a personal salvation independent of any human controls led to awareness of the broader range of human freedoms. This, in turn, began the transfer of primacy of place to the individual. The product of such in today's world includes democratic government, early twentieth-century emergence of unions, minimum wage laws, women's and spousal rights, child labor laws, emphasis on Human Resource organizational frameworks in the workplace, and such like. People recognized personal worth and a spirit of "we can do this" swept through the free world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries so powerfully that it is difficult for today's citizenry to grasp its enormity. In religion, this awareness is seen in advancement of the right and responsibility of every individual to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). An ultimate expression of this individual freedom and opportunity is being personally Spirit-filled which, in turn, provides personal empowerment and access to revelation (I Corinthians 2:10-16; Hebrews 8:10).

Observing the origins of the New Testament church could lead to no other conclusion than that the quest for full restoration would eventually include a return to this personal Spirit infilling. Here is the ultimate beginning, the genesis of every subsequent action of the early church. This universal reuniting through reception of the Spirit is fulfillment of a major, oft-predicted goal toward which the Old Testament unerringly aimed.

That this Spirit-infilling was normative for Christians is unmistakable. That the Spirit enabled them to overcome every obstacle in proclamation was evident then as now. The experience was thorough and complete. God's Glory fell upon them and, like the Old Testament Tabernacle, fire appeared above each of them signifying the Spirit's work making each of them the new temple of God on Earth. Under the aegis of the Spirit, they all spoke in tongues thus signaling universal reuniting of people groups

of the world. The infilling was kairological, other-worldly, “from Heaven,” and radically transforming. Peter, the apostle with the keys for initially opening the door, then assures that the promise is interminable, proclaiming that it is for “... you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off ...” (Acts 2:39). Whether geographically or temporally, the promise would remain viable, fresh, and unchanged.

Peter preached and the hearers’ hearts were “pricked” (to pierce thoroughly, agitate violently, sting to the quick) by the preached word. Peter prefaces the promise of reception of the Spirit by a call for repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ “for the remission of sins” (v. 38). This is the first, the initial, the foundational salvation instruction that precedes any and every other instruction from the beginning of the Church until now. Herein are the organic and foundational roots out of which emerges the New Testament church.

One might ask, can there be any more logical definition of “Restorationist” than restoration, which begins where the Church began? One might rightly ask by what other standard should measurement be made other than the church in the Bible? What else exists which can be marshaled to assist in such a search? And what else could presume to hold such authority? Here, at the very inception, is found the first post-Resurrection quest for salvation and the first full apostolic response to this quest (Acts 2: 37-38). No other definition of “original” can be more specific.

At the same time, no group stands exempt from debt to those who have gone before the present. The movement from the spiritual darkness of the fifteenth century has been, in the main, a slow, inexorable movement, degree by degree, until today, Pentecostal renewal sweeps the world. The fact remains unchanged that each revelation toward restoration of the original church was, and is, important. Unfortunately, these groups often came to look on further revelation with the same familiar condescension and suspicion that had earlier been experienced by them from others. In spite of all such opposition, and in a sameness with the early church, whole continents are now experiencing the infilling of the Spirit and revelation of the high significance of the name of Jesus, beginning at salvation and baptism and extending out into every area of life. Such would not have been possible without the progressions accomplished by those who blazed initial trails that are now often taken for granted.

As briefly mentioned above, a classic evangelical approach to theology has historically been primarily objective. In the nineteenth century, and, in particular, the twentieth century, the Bible came to be increasingly examined empirically. This approach has made important contributions. Characteristic of twentieth-century American and European modernism, such approaches increasingly pivoted around efforts to apply the scientific method to everything. Derivative of the Enlightenment, this approach eventually resulted in attempts to evaluate the Bible in the same way as other books.

Biblical Hermeneutics and Pentecostalism

Biblical hermeneutics is the study of generally recognized laws and guidelines for interpreting scripture. For example, “no scripture is of private interpretation” is a biblical hermeneutic. Thus, regardless of what a particular scripture says, it must be compared with other scriptures that deal with that same subject before a final judgment as to full meaning can be ascertained.

Hermeneutics also includes decisions on methodological questions such as, when should a scripture be taken literally and when symbolically? Or should scripture be taken literally or allegorically? Or are their large sections of scripture (books, individual psalms, and such like) that are conveying a “mega-message” along with the obvious message(s) being conveyed in the local situation at hand? Do individual books, or groups of books, or the Bible itself, contain a message or messages greater than the sum of its parts? If so, what is to prevent the creation of all kinds of fanciful and imaginative scenarios with claims to such meanings?

In the last one hundred years, most books on hermeneutics have been written by non-Pentecostals. These have provided a kind of healthy defense against a wide variety of fantastic interpretive scenarios. It is also probably safe to say that these books, written with a particular hermeneutical approach, were primarily the books to which Pentecostals were exposed. There simply wasn't much else. Further, one hundred years ago Pentecostalism was a phenomenon in the present world that was birthed of the *dynamism* of Spirit-baptism. Pentecostals had little concern for hermeneutics and even less for learning such

from evangelicals, many of whose leaders were violently rejecting the entire concept of Spirit-baptism, miracles, the gifts of the Spirit, and the working of the supernatural in the present day. To understand the ensuing discussion of emerging Pentecostal hermeneutics versus this hermeneutical tradition, one must explore the ground from which each emerges.

Protestant Hermeneutics

Probably the key protestant hermeneutic that has literally transformed history is that scripture alone stands as final authority above every institution and that scripture applies, without mediation through another, to the individual, including unmediated access to God and God to man. It is these precepts that broke the hold of centuries old control of Europe's populace by both secular governments as well as the institutionally dominant Catholic church.

Attendant to this hermeneutic was new emphasis on the individual (the just shall live by faith) as opposed to the institution—whether religious or secular. From such thinking (from both religious and secular sources) came new freedom, new initiative, and new awareness of possibilities, all of which led to the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, to revival, to Luther, Calvin, Wesley, the Puritans and Pilgrims, to the great camp meetings of America, and eventually to Azusa Street and the resultant world-wide revival that not only continues one hundred years later but even now continues to rapidly accelerate. Pentecost has become the sweeping revival force of the world. It is recognized as one of, if not the, most profound sociological (as well as, of course, religious) occurrences ongoing in the world. There is no time in the near future in which it will slow as literally millions have been, and continue to be, swept into its flow.

Reformation hermeneutics have, from the beginning, been influenced strongly by rationalism. A contributor to this is the frustration with centuries of Catholic institutional control of the masses through subterfuge and superstition, manipulating the masses through fear, superstition, and ignorance. A brief example is that, during the Dark Ages, to convince the people that spirits were moving through the nighttime church courtyard, candles were placed on the backs of turtles

on cobblestone fences. As they, hidden by the dark, slowly moved, the moving lights were proclaimed to be spirits, thus creating an ethereal environment of awe and fear. Such firsthand experience of the reformers with crass manipulation of human affectivity and feelings in the name of religion (whether modern-day charismatic charlatans or the ancient Catholic church) created a deep distrust of experiential criteria in determining one's spirituality or salvation. Trust in a rational approach to scripture became a major hermeneutical building block as well as a defensive tool against Catholic institutional claim to authority. Meanwhile, the hermeneutic of the Catholic church declared the authority of the institution greater than the authority of the written Word or individual revelation, thus giving right to power, even if such was abused to control and manipulate. Individual salvation was held firmly at the whim of the institution.

Secular leaders recognized the same abuses as did protestant religious leaders and, likewise, saw the need for freedom and therefore joined the push for liberty. With radical whipsaw effect, once released, and in reaction to centuries of suppression and superstition, the power of reason and individual rights sped through the world with hurricane force, steamrolling all in its path. Signs were posted on the fence of the great Notre Dame cathedral which informed that Notre Dame was no longer a church but was now a cathedral of reason, that there was no Hell, and such like. As in all such situations, release from long suppression violently swung the pendulum in the opposite direction.

The protestant church and the secular world thus rode concurrent waves to freedom from oppression. Exploration was encouraged, and in virtually every field of inquiry, science advanced (and continues to advance) at breakneck speed. During this time, not only biblical hermeneutics were examined and established, but basic scientific hermeneutics were also established, a centerpiece of which came to be identified as the "scientific method." Meanwhile, Protestants, having similarly ridden the crest of rationalism into new enlightenment, and having experienced the exhilaration which resulted from freedom to think and act, also incorporated reasoning, and, where possible, the scientific method. This is easily seen in the careful and impressive exegetical scholarship of sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth-century scholars from John Calvin to Jonathan Edwards to Adam Clarke to Matthew Henry and scores of others.

The Scientific Method and Hermeneutics

The scientific method was developed in the 1600s. It is comprised of several steps of logical observation, measurement, and experimentation, followed by testing and adjusting, and ending with drawing conclusions that logically flow from the process. In order to minimize preconceived notions or bias, attempts are made to conduct the exploration in as objective manner as possible.

Utilized in studying the natural sciences, the scientific method became the discovery pivot around which not only the natural sciences revolved but virtually any other field of inquiry. It became, and remains, the oracle of secular human inquiry. In terms of being a reliable source of discovery, any field of study that did not fit, or did not utilize the scientific method as the primary tool for inquiry was considered flawed. Thus, to do something “scientifically” became, and remained through the modern era, the path to respectability.

Thus, it should be no surprise that protestant evangelical hermeneutics, which emerged from the Dark Ages on the backs of the Reformation and Enlightenment, and which by nature disdained judgments made affectively or intuitively, wholeheartedly embraced—and continues to embrace—a hermeneutic that attempts to establish rules for interpreting scripture which fit firmly and exclusively within a framework of rationality and the scientific method.

Nowhere is this seen more graphically than in the condescension of evangelicalism and the secular world toward early Pentecostalism. From the absolute disdain in evangelical responses in newspapers of the time which recounted the outpouring at Azusa, to the abundance of ongoing evangelical teaching which scorns and disparages modern miracles, speaking in tongues (including accusations of being demonic), the reception of the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, and spurning of supernatural healings, there is no lack of evidence of the mighty strivings, and almost terror, to coerce Christianity to fit within a solely rational presentation.

It can certainly be argued that an “objective first” approach to scripture was, and is, absolutely necessary. Sanity itself is grounded in the power of reason. History bears out the powerful positive impacts of such which has certainly produced soundness in a variety

of ways. All of the mighty preachers of the 1700s and 1800s on both sides of the ocean, such as John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Alexander McLaren, and scores more, preached the Word from a primarily literalist-historical hermeneutic, which was an outgrowth of the emerging protestant hermeneutic. This caused the Bible to come alive as readers realized that it could be personally understood. And, as previously noted, thousands attended services during business day lunch hours in eager anticipation of the Word.

Historically, a difference in liturgical churches (primarily Catholic and Church of England) and mainline protestant churches, and, particularly, evangelical churches, is the prominence of the role of preaching, and this from a “literal-historical” presentation of the Word. Not only all of the great older preachers preached thusly, but the scholars/Bible teachers did likewise, these becoming familiar in commentary sets including such as the *Biblical Illustrator*, *The Preacher’s Homiletic Commentary*, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Augustus Strong, Charles Strong, and many others—all who embraced a primarily literalist-historical view of scripture.

This literal-historical approach utilized an approach to research that fell comfortably within a kind of application of the scientific method to scripture. Included was such as identifying who wrote, to whom it was written, when it was written, what were the circumstances of the writing, and such like. Included are also word studies and comparison with other passages elsewhere dealing with the same or similar subjects. The level of insight attained from this assiduous attention to detail reached incredible levels.

Over time, an unrelenting application of this critical method caused further examination of the writings that led to even further examination and resultant suppositions about the text. This led to efforts to discover the “world behind the text,” and the “world in front of the text,” and well as “the world of the text.” Ancient manuscripts were studied and attempts were made to determine just when respective Bible books were written. Efforts were made to discover who wrote each book, regardless of traditional assumptions. All was done with assiduous commitment to being objective, and to “following the evidence.” Critiquing was divided into such as Textual Criticism, Source Criticism, Tradition Criticism, and many other “Criticisms.”

Outside of what the Bible itself declared or considered obvious, conclusive “corroborating” evidence in many areas was impossible to find. Therefore, after looking at the evidence, decisions were made which, admittedly, often could not be validated as more than educated opinion. However, in numerous cases, these opinions became far-reaching, and eventually treated as fact. To hesitate to embrace these conclusions was often cause for banishment to condescension and classification as “out of touch” with latest scholarship.

It was thus proposed, for example, that the Pentateuch, rather than penned by Moses, was written at different times in Israel’s history by widely disparate individuals. Jean Astruc, in 1753, proposed the “Eloist” (“E”) source for the writing of some of the Pentateuch explaining that this portion was actually written in the eighth or ninth century B.C. in Northern Palestine, but was derived from documents much older. Other portions of the Pentateuch were designated as “J” for “Yahwist” sources. In liberal circles, this is still commonly accepted as “true,” in spite of the fact that the extent, the date, the nature, *and even existence* of the “J” source continues to be widely debated.¹⁰ This is speculated to have been written during the ninth or tenth century, “perhaps during the reign of Solomon.”¹¹ In addition, a third section of the Pentateuch was determined to have been written by still others and was identified as “P” for “Priestly” sources. And, a fourth was identified as “D” for “Deuteronomist” as another source.

The above is an example of conclusions drawn from critical studies applied to the Bible in an attempt to follow the scientific method. Though the conclusions are fraught with wide disagreement and acknowledged to be interwoven with much speculation, these ideas have been embraced in a wide world of academia as being “the way” to view scripture. Many other examples could be cited. Again, in some circles, one is viewed with a bit of condescension if questioning these assumptions. As is often the case in scientific inquiry, a certain amount of academic hubris and even political correctness often enters the situation.

Bringing this new level of rationalism to bear on the study of scripture led, predictably, to also question anything in the Bible that could not fit snugly within the scientific method. This included, of course,

¹⁰ Richard N. Sculen and R. Kendall Sculen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 4th ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 101.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

signs, wonders, and miracles. The early twentieth century thus saw further application of rationality to scriptural interpretation. This, in turn, led to this “modern” period of hermeneutical development.

The 1500s to the late 1800s can be characterized as the “pre-modern” period of such development. Mainline, liberal, protestant churches led the way to new levels of submission of scripture to Enlightenment-based critique with questions such as, is it rational to believe that the miracles recorded in the Bible were intended to be taken as having really occurred, or are these myths intended to merely serve as literary examples to increase faith? Or does their being recorded simply accommodate and reflect superstitious beliefs of the time? After all, miracles in general cannot be subjected to the scientific method. Increasingly, mainline denominal preachers found it a bit embarrassing to be civic and academic leaders in modern society and still be thought of as defending the idea of supernatural miracles in any era of time. “Rational tidiness” demanded a sweeping out of such messy concepts. Slowly but surely, the authority for scriptural interpretation slipped from the Church to an increasingly secularized academy.

Evangelical preachers, however, would certainly not go so far as to accept that the miracles of Jesus were not authentic. However, they would, and did, and many still do, adamantly deny that such miracles were, or are, for today. In contrast, Pentecostals, which averred that salvation was *experienced*, that Holy Spirit baptism, evidenced with speaking in other tongues, and accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles was for today, were often vehemently excoriated and tabbed as exhibiting anything from weak minded emotionalism to demonic activity—and this from people who would give their lives rather than deny their belief in the Bible! Why, then, the dichotomy? How could one be so correct in many ways and yet progress to oppose something so patently biblical? The answer is an insufficient hermeneutic which thus allows for gravely misguided conclusions. Such a lack affects the ability to see God fulfilling His divine mission before one’s very eyes. Granted, a hermeneutic was embraced that, indeed, incorporated the finest use of “cognition,” of logic and rationality—things which are essential for biblical understanding. On the other hand, it was a hermeneutic which simply didn’t allow for the “how and what” of divine actions—a hermeneutic which omitted space for engagement of the full range of human-ness, including critical “relational and affective”

elements of human being. Herein lies radical love, relationship, heartfelt worship, extreme devotion, volition, emotional bonding, joy, attitude, commitment, and such like. Such is absolutely “real,” but not amenable to isolation and detached observation. This negative, knee-jerk reaction to spiritual renewal was created by the fact that it appeared hopelessly impossible to fit Pentecostalism into the existing truncated methods of reason. Spiritual realities defied existing assumptions and boundaries that were too narrow to be helpful. Reason, minus a way for inclusion of affective and relational realities, was found to be an insufficient reasoning framework. Meanwhile, Pentecostal experience continued breaking out in some new, embarrassing way, exploding among the unexpected and disenfranchised, circumventing every attempt to compress and isolate it to a size and shape which could be detached and viewed in a tidy and objective manner.

But this is not all. As already seen, slowly and inexorably, the attempts to submit theological studies to the scientific method led to the “criticisms,” source criticism, textual criticism, and so forth. For example, the remarkable fulfillment of prophecies in Daniel are proposed as not remarkable at all, but simply the writings of someone who posed as Daniel centuries later, who, reviewing history, positioned its re-telling as though it was being prophesied centuries before. While there are certainly answers to all these “criticisms,” the damage done by attempting to subject scripture to criteria characterized primarily by doubt had its effect. Mainline, liberal, protestant scholars became pronounced exponents of casting doubt on the veracity of scripture. Meanwhile, numerous evangelical leaders, while continuing to defend scripture, nevertheless, in alignment with a slavish adherence to Enlightenment methods, continued to denigrate, or, at best, downplay the dynamic working of the Spirit in today’s world.

The scientific method has proven its worth in producing discoveries so astounding as to create a world unlike anything heretofore. It is little surprising therefore that protestant hermeneutics, virtually without thought, built itself around principles of the Enlightenment. However, taken to its final conclusion, a biblical hermeneutic based solely upon the scientific method has proven to be deeply and gravely lacking. The end result was a determined drive, in a sincere but deeply misguided attempt to keep the Western populace interested in the Bible, to take from the Bible any idea of miracles or the supernatural working in

today's world. It should be noted that this attempt was not intended to lead people away from faith in the Bible, but in the grotesquely distorted logic of scientific method applied to biblical hermeneutics in an extreme manner, it was based on the mistaken idea that this was the only way a highly educated, rational population such as found in the United States would continue to embrace the Bible and the Christian religion itself. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

A leader in this was Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976). A student of a long list of well known scholars, he was also a colleague of philosopher Martin Heidegger. His book on Form Criticism is still used in universities and his little book on *Jesus Christ and Mythology* provides an introduction to his theology.¹² His program of “demythologization” of the Bible aimed at a Bible without the unexplainable mystery of the miraculous. It reveals the final result of a protestant fixation on a hermeneutic based totally on rationality.

If Bultmann's efforts led to the death of Protestantism's rational hermeneutic, The Jesus Seminar could be identified as its gravestone. The Jesus Seminar refers to a group of New Testament scholars who gathered in 1985. Their goal was to assess all the sayings of Jesus according to the probability of their authenticity. Decisions were made on each section by a practice of using colored balls to vote on a scale of one to four to determine each saying's authenticity. Finally, rather than scripture judging theologians, theologians assumed the position of authority to judge scripture.

Several decades later, it is not unreasonable, in retrospect, to identify The Jesus Seminar as one of, if not the primary, defining moments of the death knell of modernism as it applies to theology. Since then, much of the undergirding declarations concerning the “criticisms” have proven to be less than dependable. The balloon has deflated and much of this is now seen for what it really was, that is, overblown assumptions based on spotty and circumstantial evidence that was woefully inadequate in providing sufficient foundation for some of the conclusions. Nevertheless, these conclusions were often presented with strident proclamation as the latest conclusions of the finest of scholarship. But the reign of a purely rational-based, scientific method oriented hermeneutic is over. Further, while recognizing the unquestionably positive

¹² Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1958).

and necessary contributions it has made, its limitations are so severe as to leave out precisely those elements which are crucial to living, dynamic Christianity.

Post-Modern Hermeneutics

Post-modernism, having seen the failure of the promises of modernism and having observed the horrifying fall-out of two World Wars and other global failures, utterly rejects modernism as a reliable guide to the future. In its most extreme form, post-modernism sees the world through deconstruction, which ultimately concludes that nothing is reliable and that man is incapable of “getting outside of himself” in order to see himself and the world for what it really is. Therefore, ultimately, the best the world has to offer is to enjoy what community can be enjoyed while alive. Science is no longer looked at as the fount of life. Institutionalism with its early idealistic promises has clearly been shown to be woefully inadequate to produce the utopic society promised. Protestant mainline churches are, in many cases, dying and are finding themselves with empty church buildings, churches languishing without pastors, and many more dwindling congregations. Certainly, a hermeneutic that has spent decades downplaying dynamics of worship and explosive apostolic power in its services can expect little else. Constantly dousing the hope of seeing God and encountering the unusual, the ecstatic joy of supernatural intervention, and the divine relationship leads to a faithless, lifeless corpse of Christianity.

One characteristic of post-modernism is its hunger to encounter the living and dynamic while totally ignoring rationalist condescension. This particular aspect of post-modernism is a welcome breath of air for Pentecostalism.

Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic

The current hermeneutical approach of most academic Pentecostals has been to embrace modern assumptions and practices about hermeneutics from an evangelical perspective. After all, these are the writings from which most learned. A significant result has been to contribute

to the transformation of numerous traditional Pentecostals into mainstream neo-evangelicals. The result is an undermining of Pentecostal identity and practice. Thus, some Pentecostals attempt to express themselves with a modernistic hermeneutic (the Historical Critical methods). Yet, if Pentecostalism desires to continue in its missionary objective while keeping in tune with its early ethos, it too must continue to move beyond modernity. “A Pentecostal hermeneutical strategy should attempt to continue to forge an alternative path that neither entirely accepts the pluralistic relativism of postmodernism nor entirely affirms the objectivism of modernism—a pathway that began to be forged in early Pentecostalism.”¹³

A Pentecostal hermeneutic is certainly needed and is developing. There are numerous aspects of such a hermeneutic that are emerging. An example of one Pentecostal hermeneutical guideline, which exemplifies the contrast with a classical protestant hermeneutic, is that it is necessary to recognize that biblical interpretation involves both the discovery of past meaning and discovery of “presently-being-created meaning.” In this Pentecostal hermeneutic, past meanings can be gained through a process identified here as *cognitive/revelational*, that is, revelation of God’s meaning through rational contemplation of the scripture in the classic protestant hermeneutical fashion. On the other hand, “presently-being-created” meanings are gained only through an *affective/revelational*, living engagement with God who is Spirit. The former is primarily objective, the latter primarily subjective. The first is grasped incrementally, in parts that eventually come together to make a whole. The last is grasped “at once,” with the total being greater than the sum of its parts, so much so that its total import may be beyond the grasp of the receiver. And, of course, either form demands agreement, first with scripture, as well as the community of believers, as to whether the conclusions are correct. There is neither such thing as a solely individual Christianity nor a solely individually applicable hermeneutic. Christianity is indivisibly communal. Those who stray from this maxim invariably run aground.

Being “Pentecostal” is to discover the cathartic experience of Spirit infilling, which, in turn, creates a personal openness that is highly relational, liberating, experiential, and emotional. Attested to

13 Kenneth J. Archer as quoted by Bradley Truman Noel in *Pentecostal and Postmodern Hermeneutics: Comparison and Contemporary Impact* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 122.

now by hundreds of millions, that such is “real” is hardly debatable. Nevertheless, in an American society ensconced in modernity, such has, historically, been viewed with suspicion—and this, at least in part, because of an innate awareness that extreme emotions without the arbitrating influence of rationality can be detrimental both individually and to society. Secondly, such is a highly subjective in a society in which objectivity is considered the superior measure of reality. This almost universal faith in objectivity, along with the fact that, in recent memory, institutions of higher learning are the most intense form of this faith and, perhaps, the least accepting of the important role of relationality, spirituality, and affectivity (all unmeasurable by traditional, rational, measuring rods), has created suspicion and distrust on both sides. History attests to the fact that attempting to judge reality by pure objectivity has proven to be less than satisfactory. Abstract spiritual realities such as living relationship with God, dynamic encounter of the Spirit, and supernatural intervention proved difficult for inclusion in the limited scope of possibilities in such a presentation. As already discussed, after decades, modern attempts eventually resulted in the ignominious deconstruction of Rudolf Bultmann and *The Jesus Seminar* (1985) and was characterized by conclusions and methods far removed from the supernatural dynamics found in scripture. This only serves to reinforce the conviction that any well-rounded understanding of the New Testament must include consideration of the Spirit and its work.

With this said, those looking for in-depth Pentecostal theologies may wonder why there are but scant few. Why are there not more? The reason may be simple. Spiritual dynamics come quickly, kairologically, instantly, in the moment. But the outworking thereof theologically is a much slower process. Nevertheless, Pentecostal theology is emerging and none too soon. Moreover, because the dynamics of Pentecost are so powerful and real, and because of aversion to the lack of spontaneity found in evangelical churches, the development of theology was often considered of limited importance. Nevertheless, ultimately, a robust Christianity can no more do without full engagement of the intellect than it can without full engagement of the human spirit, will, and emotion. Now, with its worldwide growth, Pentecostals are, perhaps belatedly, recognizing the deep need for a grounding which only a sound theology can provide. Complete emotional and volitional commitment demands a clear and comprehensive theology that acts

to prevent, on the one hand, reversion to a wooden rationalism and, on the other, an unscriptural extremism. This is not necessarily a discarding of all previous conclusions but rather a recasting as revealed through fresh, revelatory lens. A growing number of Pentecostal scholars recognize the sobering—and exciting—potential of a Pentecostal theology that plumbs the depths of these possibilities and are producing an increasing amount of theological work.

Attempts to express theology Pentecostally are emerging in several areas with probably the preponderance of attempts coming from the Church of God and Assemblies of God. Scholar Steven Land's work can more or less be identified as trigger point for an advancing Pentecostal theology.¹⁴ An earlier Pentecostal theologian is Assemblies of God scholar, Gordon Fee. Though likely not Pentecostal, Lloyd Neve, in the early 1970s, wrote what was purportedly the first book in English ever found, which addressed the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. This was republished in 2011.¹⁵ In even more detail, Roger Stronstad expands understanding of the Spirit in both the Old and New Testaments in striking ways.¹⁶ Kenneth Archer has also contributed groundbreaking work towards a Pentecostal theology.¹⁷ Also, John Christopher Thomas, Frank Macchia, William Menzies, Robert Menzies, Amos Yong, Rickie Moore, and a number of others have joined in development of Pentecostal theology.

Pentecostalism is the logical conclusion of the long and arduous journey to return to the pure, life-giving stream of New Testament dynamics and doctrine. The Day of Pentecost on which the Church explodes into the world with power is the beginning. This bursting forth on the world introduced a presence that continues to this day. Pentecostals embrace the initial and individual dynamic of Spirit-infilling without reservation (Acts 2:1-4). The worship of those so filled was “noised abroad” with the gathering of a crowd filled with wonder. Peter, standing up with the eleven, then preaches (v. 14-36) upon the completion of which,

14 Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

15 Lloyd Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Cleveland, OH: CPT Press, 2011).

16 Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984).

17 Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, OH: CPT Press, 2009).

hearers recognize their sin and guilt and cry out to Peter and the eleven, “Men and brethren what shall we do?” The question concerns how to escape judgment for their sins. Peter answers with, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Than this, no experience is earlier, no instruction is more original, no preacher is more authoritative. From this beginning, nothing can be clearer than that the early church explicitly continues, “... stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship ...” (2:42). The Pentecostal experience and message hold high distinction of being first, foundational, essential, and the ground of all that follows. The search for a full and final return to complete restoration of New Testament Christianity can, if one chooses, stop short of this and remain unfinished. However, none can go further. “This is that.” It is that which was preached and practiced on, and from, the inception of the Church and is boldly promised to “... you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call” (Acts 2:39).

Ironically, there are numerous Pentecostals who, espousing the reception of the Spirit in like manner to the Day of Pentecost, do not espouse the first apostolic doctrine of the Church as pronounced by the apostle Peter in his original, Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2:38-42). In this present book, those who *do* espouse both the dynamics and doctrine of “first day” Christianity are referred to as not only Pentecostals, but “apostolic” Pentecostals. These are “first day” Christians, many of which find puzzling the lack of attention given by others to these earliest, “first day” Christian directives. This is particularly so in view of the fact that here, in Acts 2:14-39, are nothing less than founding statements of the Church. In addition, Simon Peter, the spokesman for the day, is the sole individual in the history of the earth who has formally been given the keys to the Kingdom of God by Christ Himself, thus, symbolizing, in the strongest way, the intentional design and authority of this preacher for this historic, initial unlocking of the door of entrance into the Kingdom of God. With the overall biblical emphasis on “firsts,” surely this must account for something more than is bestowed thereon by many twentieth-century theologies. Following this established, prototypical pattern seems to be the path of obedience and safety. Where is another to be found? Why would one seek to do otherwise?

Oddly, a significant number of Pentecostals also deny the

soteriological significance of the message and events of the Day of Pentecost. For some, this derives primarily from a view of Luke's theology that proposes that accounts of Holy Spirit outpouring in Luke's writings do not have salvation as their focus or concern. Instead, in alignment with the pattern of Old Testament anointing for leadership, including that of John the Baptist and Jesus, this Spirit infilling is solely an empowerment for leadership and service. Receiving the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2, in this perspective, is a post-salvation, equipping-for-ministry experience.

That such equipping was, indeed, a primary intent in Luke's writings is evident. Stronstad carefully and masterfully outlines these realities, and, in so doing, strikes a marked note of advancement in Pentecostal theology. This broadened understanding of the Spirit in both Testaments brings fresh insight regarding Spirit anointing as an ongoing characteristic of biblical leadership through the centuries, impacting not only a theology of the Spirit, but also of leadership.

However, while Stronstad's assertion that soteriological intent is not found in Luke's theology may reinforce the theological positions of some Pentecostal denominations, validation of this assertion certainly runs into difficulty when limited to scripture for corroboration. This view allows for the conclusion that Luke's recording of Peter's sermon at Pentecost, including his answer to those inquiring of how to escape judgment, has virtually no bearing on the Church's message of salvation. Thus, the entire birth account of the Church has nothing to say about deliverance from sin and nothing to do with being born of the Spirit and, furthermore, introduces nothing of consequence to one's initiation and incorporation into this new body. The very founding experiences, actions, and proclamations of the church are thus swept away as having no contribution soteriologically. And this in the face of the fact that the first mission of the Church is proclamation of saving truth which delivers individuals from sin. However, in a most direct contradiction to this assertion, it is none other than Luke himself who, in language unmistakably soteriological, records Peter's declaration on this very first day, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation!" (Acts 2:40). Such language undermines the premise that the Day of Pentecost, or Luke's theology of the Spirit, did not include intentional guidance concerning salvation. Equally true is that the teaching of the whole New Testament concerning the Holy

Spirit makes evident that the reception thereof is central to salvation. Interestingly, non-Pentecostal evangelical teaching agrees that reception of the Spirit is initiation into salvation even though it disagrees that such reception continues, in this day, to be experienced as in the New Testament, that is, as a profoundly experiential event accompanied with supernatural utterance of speaking in tongues.

Further, ample agreement can be found that the Pentecostal outpouring and speaking in tongues is divine response to the global confusion of tongues of Babel (Genesis 11), a response which brings the nations of the world back into a unified wholeness. Such an event is obviously more than a mere empowering of leaders. Instead, it is nothing short of epochal and signals an event of the highest rank, reverberating through the universe and human history with power to bring Earth's inhabitants back into unity. Thus, to attempt to reduce the happenings on the Day of Pentecost to mere enablement of leadership is an unacceptable underestimation of its import.

In the world of Pentecostal scholarship, it is a regrettable fact that very limited attention has been given to a theology which begins and continues with the ongoing implications of this patently apostolic, "first day" approach. As this truth and dynamic reality is rapidly spreading around the world, the urgency to provide such theological grounding increases.

The approach of this book is thus, an "apostolic Pentecostal" viewpoint. Its primary focus is development of at least an outline of a biblical theology of human spirituality, leadership, and the missional purposes of God's people. Admittedly, it ranges into other areas in an attempt to illustrate its indivisible integration with the whole. Hopefully, it will be helpful.

Prolegomena

This book is written, first and foremost, for the benefit of apostolic Pentecostal readers. It is an exploration of complex subjects. However, it is not required of one to be some kind of theologian to understand and embrace these truths. Divine genius is revealed in that such things can be comprehended, appreciated and rejoiced over with thanksgiving, on multiple levels of understanding.

The effort here is to extend these existing understandings to deeper, richer, and fuller levels. This presupposes that the author believes such understandings are needed and are possible – an assumption that all might not share. Either way, the reader is cautioned against a predilection to read only within the framed limitations of existing understandings. The purpose of the book is, of course, nil, if it does not strive to contribute to a more robust understanding of long-held, mutually shared, biblical truths.

The book views the Bible as being unlike other literature. The Bible can only be understood within a relational frame. Its message cannot, by use solely of the scientific method, be grasped. Required is engagement of the human spirit in order to realize its dynamic and living character. Further, the Bible provides a grand and transcendent treatment of every major theme known to man. Herein lies its greatness. No education in the world that lacks the Bible is complete. However, in order to gain its meaning and import, a kind of spiritual “revelation learning” is demanded (I Corinthians 2:9-14).

The very concept of “spirituality” originates from the New Testament. Spirituality is based first on the understanding that spirits exist and that God is Spirit. To speak of “human spirituality” also assumes the particular reality of the human spirit. In addition, it poses that the human spirit can encounter, in a living and sentient way, the divine Spirit (John 4:24). Further, it is human spirit—and only human spirit—that is capable of engaging the universal divine Spirit and to grasp spiritual realities (I Corinthians 2:14).

The infinite—the unseen, the spiritual—lies behind every created thing. In gaining these understandings, logic alone is not sufficient.

Reception and comprehension of particular kinds of knowledge remains elusive and unreachable without this engagement of the individual human spirit. While not “mindless,” these capacities do bring knowledge to the mind in distinctly different ways than with those things that are subject solely to objective observation.

This should not seem strange. Life is filled with encounters that require engagement of the human spirit such as love, courage, relationship, faith, hope, resolve, volition, and so forth. There are “knowings” in such pursuits, which are beyond mechanical measurement or mathematical formulae. Just as identifying body parts does not equate to knowing a person, the message of the Bible is not understood by mere observation of segments. Basic to understanding a human is acknowledgment of the presence and vitality of spirit. In similar manner, the Bible is activated by spiritual encounter between the reader and divine author of the book.

Attempts to extract and isolate a subject (whether it be the Godhead, Man, Salvation, Spirituality, or other) from this matrix of action and life invariably lead to conclusions that miss important realities. The belief that comprehension of the scriptures’ deepest message can be found by a detached, non-relational, solely exegetical, systematizing approach is inadequate and not native to scripture.

Thus, the traditional, systematic, theological approach of modernism may here be somewhat bypassed. There is little or no attempt to detach subjects from their dynamic, emotional, and volitional setting. Instead, attempts are made to locate and consider them as presented in this, their most organic form.

All would agree that the core message of the Bible revolves around knowing, that is, encountering directly, the living God. For one to know another living, sentient being is to enter the realm of experience. It is relationship that imbues “experience” with a dignity not found in sterile rationality. While often conservatively measured in evangelical theology, experience, encounter, and relationship lie at the core of not only Pentecostal theology but of the message of the Bible.

Another key premise of this book is that all theology leads to a call to spiritual formation and development of leadership for ministry. The “golden thread” which is woven through every part of the book is this action—highly effective, transcendent, leadership action by every Spirit-filled believer. The idea is that every individual believer is

intended by God to be filled with Pentecostal power in becoming an anointed, graceful, empowered leader. Thus, if this book is to qualify as a theology book, it does so first and foremost as a book that explores a Theology of Human Spirituality and Biblical Leadership. It also discusses other theological subjects, but always in the context of individual spiritual formation and biblical leadership. The goal in mind is that every subject in the book can stand alone as a concise discussion of the particular subject at hand. Nevertheless, all eventually moves toward a deeper, unified exploration of spirituality, leadership, and the resulting implications.

The quest begins with the search for the ultimate starting point—something that reveals a simple, uncompounded commonality shared-by-everything-that-“is,” everything that has being. Such a quest must begin in exploration of the nature of the very self of God. The assumption is that, if discoverable in God, this can subsequently be shared by all other being of every type, animate or inanimate. The goal is to identify this broad, critically important, common beginning point, then explore its application in human development and leadership.

A primary conviction of the book is also that human history has a plan, human action has purpose, and individual human life is the most precious of gifts. To be fully alive requires vigorous engagement of the whole man. From this flows personal fulfillment and finding one’s personal destiny and reason for being. It also leads to genuine leadership—a leadership that potentially has no equal—and is the right and responsibility of every believer.

Admittedly, the level of ineffectiveness among claimants to such leadership may cause wonder whether such potential even exists. However, these failures have nothing to do with the robust reality of the possibility. No amount of individual failure can, in the least, erode this reality. The potentiality always lies silent and latent in the infinite, regardless of the degree of its lack of actualization in the world. This world-class apostolic leadership is electric with redemptive power and, when seen in action, sparkles with beauty. Filled with divine wisdom, grace, and authority, there is no other leadership that compares. The need is great for such Spirit-anointed leadership. The reality of such in the earth is critical and is the signature method by which God brings His good news to mankind.

In the college classroom, this book is read after reading the author’s

preceding book *Ultimate Leadership: The Defining Moment*. Doing so enhances the reader's comprehension of key characteristics of this book.¹⁸

The subject of the divinity and humanity of the person and work of Jesus is also discussed extensively as this is central to any serious exploration of biblical leadership. As to spiritual formation, human development, and leadership, He is, of course, the ultimate model. As the Word, He is the sole point of knowability of God from eternity. Included is the Old Testament *ruach*, or Spirit of God, the *ruach* being the method used to express God's activity as He relates Himself to His world, His creation, and His people.¹⁹ It is the Bible's way of describing God, not as He is unknowable and invisible in Himself, but rather as He communicates to the world, His power, His life, His will, His presence. Other than where God has chosen to reveal Himself, there has never been, nor will there ever be, another way to know or encounter the invisible God. The Word (John 1:1), which became flesh (John 1:14), is this God in knowable fashion. First, as Spirit of God and in action by which God communicates Himself in the Old Testament, followed by the most profound of all historical events, the Incarnation.

The name of Jesus thus carries important meaning in both His divinity and His humanity. Jesus, the man, is the Last Adam, the Second Man, or federal head, of the race. As such, He becomes universalized by virtue of His successful Death, Burial, and Resurrection and thereby stands as the Savior of the world. Herein lies the importance of His signature on all He has purchased and of which He subsequently has ownership. This is a primary meaning of baptism by which the process of being validated as belonging to Him is enacted and recorded in an official and legal manner. His name called over the individual becomes family name for those so inducted.

When discussing ultimate leadership, Jesus, the man, takes center stage. Virtually ignored by post-New Testament creeds, the meaning of the humanity of Jesus is critical to any understanding of human transformation and empowerment for leadership. His Resurrection and exaltation are also central to an in-depth grasp of human development and spiritual formation.

¹⁸ Nathaniel Wilson, *Ultimate Leadership: The Defining Moment* (Sacramento, CA: Reach Worldwide Inc., 2003).

¹⁹ Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, 2.

PART I



Being

PART I INTRODUCTION

God, The Beginning Place

In the beginning ... (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1)

The Bible quickly and emphatically establishes two things concerning God and Creation. First, all things that have being are created by God (Genesis 1:1; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). All being is derived and there is no “thing” or being of any kind, in or out of the world, in or out of the universe, outside of God. Nothing “is,” or has being, other than that which He has created. For sentient beings, being a self, and having awareness of that self, is, of course, also a creation of God (Genesis 5:1). Outside of what God has expressly created is nothing, is non-being, which is not a thing but is negation of being, is no-thing.

A second dictum is that not only is all being derived from God, but also the framework of being of all things is derived from, and grounded in, the framework of the being of God. In a most basic way, God Himself, the Creator, is thus reflected in the being of every created thing. Thus, Paul explains that “... the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

The question then arises, how is the nature of God reflected in the nature of any created thing? The diversity of creation makes obvious that, whatever the commonality of natures between God and any created thing will, of necessity, be something very general in order to be so widely shared and will not be localized categories such as shape, size, color, weight, height, and so forth.

The purpose of this book is to first identify and explain this characteristic that is shared by God and all creation. Next, the purpose will be to sketch out how this discovery leads to an understanding of the being

of God Himself, and how this then applies to human spirituality and spiritual formation. It also leads to startling discoveries regarding the Church and of all things in the universe. Finally, it leads to discoveries about biblical leadership, a kind of leadership that vastly transcends all logical expectations. This can be seen in the enablement of 120 common people to facilitate the spread of the good news of Jesus to the entire known world in one generation.

CHAPTER 1

First Things

There is much that can be said about any particular thing or object, and there are numerous ways to describe such. The question is, what is the first, most basic description of anything? Deciphering such an answer is not an activity of personal choice or opinion. An answer cannot simply be created arbitrarily. Instead, such descriptions fit within an acknowledged structural arrangement of classification of reality in the world. Objects are explained and identified by categorization. This is an objective classification that is rational, is not attached to feeling, fondness, or whim, and is the first classification of any particular thing. Such classification is decipherable and can be established beyond individual view. This first classification, as well as all succeeding ones, is grounded in realities that exist beyond human intervention.

The first thought about a thing is that which is sensibly and numerically first, that logically precedes all others. Therefore, the question is, which of all descriptions of a thing logically comes before all others? This answer will provide the absolute, the first thought, the most basic thing that can be said about a thing. Whatever other thoughts can be thought about a thing will have this primary thought as the acknowledged reality upon which all succeeding thoughts are based. This is the least that can be thought.

The nature of thought is that a broader principle precedes one narrower. Thus, the idea of a “building” precedes kind of building, such as “big,” “small,” and so forth. There is no understanding of “garage” until first there is a grasp of the notion of “building.” The general description always logically precedes the more specific. To know “garage” is to know, at least to some extent, “building.” However, one cannot assume that to know “building” equates to knowing “garage.” One could know “building” without any awareness of “garage.” Thus, in logical thought, the general precedes the particular. The more discriminating

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