A JOURN FOR PENTEGOSTAL MINISTRY

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Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Initial Evidence, and New Model Gordon L. Anderson

Postpentecostalism? God Joseph L. Castleberry



MINISTRY MATTERS

Effective Pentecostal Ministry in the Emerging Church



BY GARY R. ALLEN

M uch today is being said about the emerging church. But the church has been emerging from its beginning because the church is a continual, dynamic, responsive process orchestrated by God's design within its cultural context. While the church responds to culture, culture is not the force that shapes the church.

In the past, cultural change was relatively slow, usually spanning several decades or even centuries. Often, people did not live long enough to see significant cultural change. They had little that served as a reference to then and now. Today, culture changes in a matter of months, and we are confronted with past experiences, present realities, and emerging projections. Into this changing culture comes postmodernism.

Postmodernism is one of many contextual cultures through which the church will pass. Exactly what the church will be as it emerges from this postmodern turn cannot be fully described. We know, however, it must continue to be God-driven, biblically based, and effectively Pentecostal.

The Pentecostal minister must respond to this fast-changing, abstract, nebulous culture of tolerance, relativism, and pluralism. A major key to our response is our Pentecostal spirituality.

In a counseling session early in my ministry, a demonic spirit manifested itself. I was suddenly confronting real demonic power — something I had previ-ously only studied. But I also realized the tremendous power of God in my Pentecostal spirituality. Prior to this, having been raised and trained in a solid Pentecostal church, I relegated Pentecostal expression primarily to the manifestation of supernatural gifts in local church worship. But now, in a moment, I had confronted and commanded an evil spirit by the power of God's Holy Spirit working in me.

After this experience, I concluded:

- 1. All I had been taught and experienced in my Pentecostal heritage and training was true.
- 2. The power of God in my personal Pentecostal spirituality was readily available and sufficient to do battle with anything Satan could use against me and within any cultural context.

What makes the Pentecostal minister different? Why are Pentecostal missionaries and chaplains sought out and recognized for effective ministry? It is the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with the powers of darkness that enslave, oppress, and possess the people to whom they minister. Many non-Pentecostal missionaries, after being ineffective against the powers of Satan, have actively sought and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and give testimony to the difference it makes in their personal lives and ministries.

Perhaps we concentrate too often on the function and moving of the Holy Spirit within the local church worship service. While the operation of the gifts within the local church is essential, it is outside the church where the difference is most evident. In the environment of sin and hopelessness, the Spirit of God transforms, heals, and delivers. Suddenly, the divisive issues of the process and procedures of our theology are minimized.

Correct Pentecostal doctrine is important, but correct Pentecostal doctrine alone does not make us Pentecostal in function. Pentecostal ministry is what we believe and how we minister. I challenge you to:

- 1. Create an environment where people can encounter the supernatural work of God and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Prayerfully and intentionally structure your worship services with expectancy. Expect God to move supernaturally when you preach, pray, and interact with others.
- 3. Expect believers to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

There is concern about the significant decrease in Holy Spirit baptisms reported by our ministers on their Annual Church Ministries Reports. Our goal is to raise an awareness of the importance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and to emphasize that the Baptism is a life process, not just an event.

In this issue of *Enrichment*, we address several important Pentecostal themes we think will help you be a more effective Pentecostal minister within your cultural context. For more articles on the Holy Spirit go to: http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org.

GARY R. ALLEN, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment* journal and national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.

CONTENTS WINTER



PENTECOST: EMPOWERMENT FOR LIFE-CHANGING MINISTRY

theme articles

22 ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT — PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

Interview with Thomas E. Trask There is no letting up on this leader's passion for Pentecost!

26 ETERNAL RESOURCES FOR ETERNAL BUSINESS By Byron D. Klaus

How does a Pentecostal leader cultivate the spiritual dexterity to know when "unauthorized fire" has compromised Pentecostal fire?

32 PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY IN A POSTMODERN CULTURE

By Howard Young Here is how to preserve Pentecostal vitality in an ever-changing American culture.

40 PRACTICING PENTECOST: INTIMACY WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ENERGIZING CHURCHES, EMPOWERING PASTORS, AND CHANGING LIVES

By Scott Harrup Find out how six pastors are connecting their congregations to the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit.

2005 • VOLUME 10 • NUMBER 1

48 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PENTECOSTAL?

By James K. Bridges Consider these five identifying characteristics that are evident in the lives of Pentecostal people.

54 WHAT A NAME TO LIVE UP TO Bu Charles T. Crabtree

By chartes 1. Crattere To live up to the title "Pentecostal preacher" is to strive to succeed beyond a Lindbergh, Talmage, or Spurgeon.

60 A WATERLINE OF ANOTHER KIND

By George O. Wood Six marks of a Pentecostal church.

70 BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, INITIAL EVIDENCE, AND A NEW MODEL

By Gordon L. Anderson How can Pentecostals deal with the problems raised by non-Pentecostals on issues of Holy Spirit baptism and still retain their Pentecostal

position? Consider this new model.

80 THEY SPOKE WITH TONGUES AND PROPHESIED

By Roger Stronstad

Despite the sometimes strident claims to the contrary, 21st-century Pentecostals can with confidence affirm their biblical position on initial physical evidence.

88 PRACTICAL EMPOWERMENT FOR EVERYDAY LIVING By Randy Hurst

Miraculous manifestations are wonderful, but the greater attraction of Holy Spirit empowerment relates to practical, everyday living.

92 SPIRIT BAPTISM: BEFORE AND AFTER

By Anthony D. Palma

What a Name

To Look Up To

Practical suggestions to help leaders guide the "not-yet-filled" and "already-filled" believer in realizing their full potential in this scriptural experience.

98 THE MINISTRY AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

By J. Lowell Harrup The essentials to fostering true life in the Spirit in your church.

106 POSTPENTECOSTALISM? GOD FORBID

By Joseph L. Castleberry It is time to consider whether Pentecostalism without expression of the *charismata* is, in the parlance of the Greek New Testament, an *idiotikos* Pentecostalism.

For more articles on the Holy Spirit go to: http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org.

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CONTENTS WINTER

PENTECOST: EMPOWERMENT FOR LIFE-CHANGING MINISTRY



8 eShorts

- **19** VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION UPDATE
- **20** GENERAL COUNCIL UPDATE

editorials

1 MINISTRY MATTERS By Gary R. Allen

144 IN CLOSING By Thomas E. Trask

columns

113 THE CHURCH & THE CHOSEN PEOPLE New Jewish Competition for Gentile Souls *By Ray Gannon*

116 POSTMODERISM AND THE CHURCH

What (if Anything) Has Changed?: The Postmodern Condition as Deconstruction and Reconstruction *By Stanley J. Grenz*

120 HISTORY IS HIS STORY Thomas Cartwright and English Presbyterianism *By William P. Farley*

124 PREACHING THAT CONNECTS What is a Pentecostal Preacher? By Craig Brian Larson

126 FINANCIAL CONCEPTS Wartime Stewardship By Randall K. Barton

128 WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH Any Given Sunday: The Preparation-Presentation Correlation *By Tom McDonald*

130 LET'S TALK ABOUT ISLAM The Message With Power By Sobhi Malek

departments

- **133 MARKETPLACE**
- **134** SERMON SEEDS
- **136 MINISTRY IDEAS**
- **137** ILLUSTRATE IT
- **138 BOOK REVIEWS**
- 140 NEWS & RESOURCES
- 142 WITH CHRIST
- **143** ADVERTISING INDEX



NEXT TIME IN ENRICHMENT Managing Church Conflict (part 1)

Church conflict is the major reason many pastors leave their churches, and sometimes even the ministry. Many times this happens because pastors and churches do not have the skills needed to resolve conflict in a healthy manner. Part one of this two-part series on managing conflict explores the nature of church conflict, its causes, and practical ways pastors and churches can resolve conflict. Read dynamic perspectives from Gary R. Allen, Richard L. Dresselhaus, Speed Leas, Michael Ross, Norman Shawchuck, George O. Wood, and others as they share insights regarding biblical conflict-management principles.

To order extra copies for your staff/volunteers or to subscribe, call $1\mathchar`-800\mathchar`-4310.$

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• Use of the masculine pronoun for pastor is used throughout this issue and refers to both genders.

• Unless noted, all Scriptures are from the New International Version.

SHORTS

CROSSING CULTURES



In the last 10 years, the U.S. population has increased by nearly 40 million. Prior to 1965, about 85 percent of immigrants came from Western Europe. Eighty percent of today's immigrants come from Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa. This presents a challenge for the church since Western European immigrants had more in common with Americans.

• Approximately 1 in 10 U.S. citizens is foreign born (30 million).

• Approximately 1 in 7 U.S. citizens speaks a language other than English in the home (40 million).

• About 1 in 3 U.S. citizens is an ethnic minority (96 million) — 37 million Hispanics, 36 million African-Americans, 13 million Asians, and 10 million various other.

Today's immigrants are more relational. Dependence on each other is valued more than self-reliance. There is no empty nest. Instead, the nest keeps enlarging.

What can we do as a church to reach these new immigrants?

1. Rely less on programs and more on personal touch.

2. Understand that sermons based on a structured didactic approach will be less effective than drawing spiritual truth from natural application.

3. Present the church from a family (body of Christ) instead of organizational paradigm. Immigrants often wonder why the church has so many forms and structured policies. The conclusion? They must not be able to trust each other.

4. Pray that God will give us as much of a burden for ethnic groups in America as we would have if they were still in their homeland.

DAVID MOORE, Convoy of Hope

FAITH COMMUNITIES **TODAY** CLERGY ATTITUDES ON CHURCH/STATE SEPARATION

Study results show 78 percent of Protestant clergy in the U.S. believe the separation of church and state has gone too far. However, ministers are divided over religious displays on government property.

Ellison Research, a marketing research company in Phoenix, Arizona, conducted the study of 700 Protestant ministers from all 50 states and all Protestant denominations and actively leading churches.

A controversial issue recently has been whether displaying the Ten Commandments in a courthouse is permissible. According to 86 percent of Protestant ministers, this should be allowed in the U.S. Individual denominations support the display, but with varying majorities: 98 percent among Pentecostal/charismatic churches, 96



HISTORY AT A GLANCE THOMAS CARTWRIGHT 435 YEARS AGO - 1570

At age 34, Thomas Cartwright was granted the Lady Margaret Chair of Divinity at Cambridge University. Here he began a series of lectures on the Book of Acts that would greatly influence church history. Through his teachings he proposed church rule by a presbytery and freedom from State interference. For more on Thomas Cartwright see the column article, "Thomas Cartwright and English

Presbyterianism," page 120.

100 YEARS AGO - 1905

Mary Johnson, a Swedish woman from Moorhead, Minnesota, became the earliest known Pentecostal missionary from America to venture overseas when in December she set sail for Durban, South Africa, beginning her ministry in January 1905. percent among Southern Baptists, 96 percent among other Baptist groups, 76 percent among Methodists, 66 percent among Lutherans, and 80 percent among all other denominations combined.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, said, "The vast majority want general expressions of belief to remain in place, such as 'In God We Trust' on currency or 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those beliefs are per-vasive, whether the minister is young or old, liberal or conservative, and regardless of denomination."

"The divisive issue is how this parity applies to individual religious groups. There is a lot of disagreement about who should be allowed a religious display on government property, for instance. Pastors find it easy to agree on basic beliefs related to church and state, but much harder to agree on specific application of those beliefs," Sellers concluded.

More complete data from these questions, including denominational detail, is available at www.ellison research.com/PastorStudy.htm. For additional news releases by mail or by fax, please contact Laura Stump at Ellison Research (602-493-3500, ext. 143), or at laurastump@ellison research.com.

RON SELLERS, is president of Ellison Research. Additional data from this study can be found at www.ellisonresearch.com

CROSSROADS



Christianity Today reported on a new frontier that challenges biblical ethics. *Nanotechnology* deals with the manipulation of matter at the atomic or molecular level. Scientists can use this technology to create tissue for restoring arthritic joints and torn ligaments or to treat people who have Alzheimer's by replacing

diseased brain cells with new ones. If you add *cyborg technology*, which interfaces living tissue with electronic devices, Robocop is no longer science fiction. Hitachi is already marketing devices that will bring us close to seamless interfacing between computers and our own brains.

While these advances are inevitable, the greatest challenge to Christian leadership is *transhumanism* — the belief that we are moving toward the reshaping of human nature, and through technological advancements man will create a posthuman species superior to God's created humanity (Homo sapiens).

The challenges are huge for Christians. Questions include: How would technologically altered posthumans reflect the image of God? Bionic vision is already in experimental stages. Would Christians oppose advancements that could give permanent sight to people?

The claim that technology can alleviate the fundamental problems of humanity is left over from the Enlightenment. Christians affirm that our rebellion against God is the root of human depravity (Mark 7:21–23; Romans 3:23). Technology will certainly advance, but the claim that it will be an all-encompassing panacea for the human condition is to be rejected. We must rigorously engage the new realities and affirm that Christians can offer a picture of a truly human future made possible by the gospel's power to transform the human condition.

BYRON D. KLAUS, president, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

75 YEARS AGO - 1930

J.R.R. Tolkien began writing *The Hobbit*, a fantasy classic with Christian allusions and archetypes revealed through battles between good and evil. *The Hobbit* was Tolkien's first published work.

50 YEARS AGO - 1955

The Assemblies of God Women's Ministries Department, under the direction of Charlotte Schumitsch Goble, launched the Missionettes program. The first chartered girls club came a year later.

25 YEARS AGO - 1980

John and Anne Giminez, founders of Rock Church in Virginia Beach, organized the first Washington for Jesus prayer rally. Nearly 700,000 Christians gathered at the Mall in Washington, D.C., to pray. This spawned similar rallies across the nation that promoted unity in the body of Christ.

GLENN GOHR, assistant archivist, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

eshorts



BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS REVERSE MENTORING

In his book *Carpe Manana*, Leonard Sweet refers to young adults as natives to 21st-century culture, and to older people (like me) as immigrants. When immigrants get a hand from natives, we have experienced reverse mentoring.

In our morphing culture, every older leader needs young people from whom to receive information and insight. The corporate world is using such reverse mentoring widely, often in the marketing and sales areas, to keep older executives in touch with current market realities.

I realized the wisdom of reverse mentoring recently when younger friends taught me to use the text message function which had always been present on my cell phone. The thrill of sending my first text message is something I will never forget.

I followed up by asking these friends: "Why would anyone want to send a text message?" After listening to their explanations, I felt very old. My phone may have a text capability, but my middle-aged soul simply does not have it to give. Yet, there was a sense of relief as well: I do not need to become like my young friends, I only need to learn from them so I can navigate the culture we are both called to reach.

Reverse mentoring, then, has several important benefits:

1. It is great fun: getting to know Justin, Andrea, Dan, Rachel, Brian, and the others who taught me to text was (and is) a joy.

2. It is of great value: I can see native culture through their eyes to partner with them in ministry.

3. It is profoundly sanctifying: admitting that I need input from much younger people requires a level of humility that I really don't like much, but have come to believe is essential to ministry.

4. It is not difficult: developing a mentoring dialogue requires only an open heart and the willingness to ask questions of young people and take their answers seriously.

So find a young person, and ask him to teach you to text.

EARL CREPS, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

TIMEWISE HELP FOR PROCRASTINATORS

WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION?

Procrastination is avoiding a task that needs to be accomplished. This can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, depression, and self-doubt.

WHY DO WE PROCRASTINATE?

- Poor time management
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fear and anxiety
- Find the task boring
- Expectations and perfectionism

WHEN DO WE PROCRASTINATE?

Some people procrastinate only during specific periods of their life — during extreme stress or extenuating family circumstances. Others seem to have been born with the tendency to procrastinate and continue the pattern through childhood, adulthood, and their senior years.

HOW TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION

- Recognize self-defeating problems: fear, difficulty concentrating, poor time management, indecisiveness, and perfectionism.
- Identify your goals, strengths and weaknesses, values, and priorities.
- Compare your actions with the values you have.
- Discipline yourself to use time wisely: set priorities.
- Do work in small blocks, not longer time periods.
- Keep a reminder schedule and checklist.
- Set realistic goals.
- Modify your work environment.
- Ask for God's help.
- Start working at overcoming procrastination today.

Excerpted from: www.powerhomebiz.com/vol72/procrastinate.htm

FAITH HAMILTON, Enrichment journal

ESHORTS FIELD TRIPBUILDING CHUCH-PLANTING TEAMS

"Every church a parent or a partner." This is more than a campaign slogan; it is a necessity. Notice that relationship is inherent to the statement: church, parent, partner. The words intentionally invoke community and connection. Church planting, from biblical and contemporary cultural standpoints, was never meant to be a solitary venture. The current failure rate of 50 percent is unac-



In his doctoral project, "Building Effective Ministry Teams for Aspiring Church Planters," Paul Martinez tested the theories of team building with a group of potential church planters. The results were invaluable for the participants and their future ministries. Believing that the isolation and discouragement felt by a lone church planter is the root cause of failure, the project sought to prove the value of a team approach.

Highly effective teams include the following characteristics: 1) commitment to a common purpose and goal; 2) mutual and individual accountability; 3) mutual trust and



respect; 4) positive communication; 5) constructive conflict resolution processes; and 6) unity through the diversity of team members' skills and spiritual gifts.

The predictability of the team formation process was surprising. Learning the stages of forming, norming, storming, and performing prepared the participants to succeed throughout the experience. Minor and major conflict threatened to derail the group's productivity, but taking the time to resolve the

issues resulted in a stronger, healthier group, with little loss of momentum.

Teams provide benefits in church planting. Complex problems are more easily solved when several gifted people tackle them and the weaknesses of individualism are conquered. Since we are called to fulfill the Great Commission, perhaps team principles need to be incorporated in church planting and growing ministries.

To read the entire project, contact Paul Martinez at pmartinez@agts.edu.

LORI O'DEA, doctor of ministry coordinator, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

SHELF TALK FINDING THE BEST BOOK DEALS ON THE WEB



I heard it said that if you read an hour a day in your chosen field, you will be in the top 10 percent of your field. Ministers know the importance of reading good books. Here are a few websites that will help you find the best deals on the good books you want to read next.

- Christianbook.com (1-800-247-4784) is the home of Christian Book Distributors. Christian Book Distributors sells Bibles, commentaries, reference works, and software. Call them for a catalog and consider becoming a member for \$5 a year.
- Cumberland Valley Bible Book Service, www.cvbbs.com (717-249-0231). Catalogs are available with books arranged by topic in alphabetical order.
- Gospelpublishing.com is Gospel Publishing House online (1-800-641-4310). This is the official website store for the Assemblies of God.
- One of my favorites is abe.com or abebooks.com. Advanced Book Exchange is a used, rare, and

out-of-print book site that has millions of titles. The book you cannot find is probably for sale here.

- Alibris.com has 35 million books for sale.
- Bookfinder.com has 50 million titles.
- Bibliofind.com is affiliated with Amazon.com.
- Half.com is a branch of ebay.com, an online auction.
- Bookcloseouts.com is worth a look.
- Overstock.com is an online outlet store that sells books.

One final hint. Check froogle.com. Froogle is a retail search engine where you can find almost anything, books included.

Visit these sites and compare prices before you place an order. Also check for coupons and free shipping.

KEVIN WILSON, Enrichment journal

CSHORTS

A HOLY LAND TRIP WITH RICH DIVIDENDS

Phillips Brooks was one of the most eloquent Christian communicators of the 19th century. When he died in January 1893, this inscription was engraved on his gravestone: "A preacher of righteousness and hope, majestic in stature, impetuous in utterance, rejoicing in the truth, unhampered by the bonds of church or state, he brought by his life and doctrine fresh faith to a people, fresh meanings to ancient creeds."

Brooks was a skilled preacher and hymn writer. His talent as a hymnist was developed by his early exposure to singing in church and at home. When Brooks left for college, he had committed to memory more than 200 hymns, and he frequently illustrated his messages with their lyrics.

One December, while traveling in Israel, Brooks spent Christmas Eve in the village where the Savior was born. Looking out over the small town, he imagined what it might have been like the night Jesus was born. In 1868, Phillips Brooks felt inspired to write a Christmas hymn for his congregation in Philadelphia. Thinking back to his Holy Land pilgrimage and his unforgettable Christmas Eve in the town of Jesus' birth, he proceeded to write, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!"

THE HIM BEHIND HEALTH AND U HAVE WE GONE CARB CRAZY?

The good news is we have identified weight management as a major health problem in this country, and millions of people are looking for a solution. The not-so-good news is that the people who are opting for the low-carbohydrate plan are ignoring other essential elements that are important to a complete diet plan.

The low-carb diet books are top sellers. The food industry can't crank out low-carb foods fast enough. Low-carb diets are the latest in fashion dieting. And, as with most diets, they do work and they work quickly.

Weight management is a balance between caloric intake and the calories used for energy. Three nutrients in the diet supply calories: carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Carbohydrates are the body's first choice for energy. There are some organs in the body that can only use carbohydrates for energy. Many foods that contain carbohydrates are also loaded with vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, and fiber. Excluding these from your diet excludes all of those health-building components. When considering weight management, keep in mind that the key is to eliminate less healthy carbohydrate foods from your diet while utilizing healthy carbohydrate foods.

Most overly processed foods and sweets do not have health-building nutrients. Choosing whole-grain foods, fruits (not in pie), and vegetables (not breaded and deep-fried) will provide better weight management, decreased risk of colon cancer, decreased risk of heart disease, facilitated blood sugar control, and a readily accessible energy source for the whole body.

Healthy carbohydrate foods are our friends. Super-sized portions of overly processed foods, sitting around more, moving around less, and grab-and-go junk food are not our friends.

GREG ASIMAKOUPOULOS, Naperville, Illinois

DONNA SKELLY, RD, Springfield, Missouri

WHAT IN THE WORLD BE SURE YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT



In March 2004, 44-year-old Jack Ryan had the world by the tail. The millionaire investment banker turned inner-city schoolteacher had won the Republican primary election and was their candidate to fill the vacant Illinois Senate seat.

Ryan, with a graduate degree in business from a prestigious Ivy League university, has the looks to go along with his education and experience. In addition, he has the personal wealth to fund a campaign.

By the end of June, however, Ryan was forced to withdraw from the race. A judge ordered Ryan's divorce records unsealed. The records alleged that he had pressured his ex-wife

(Hollywood actress Jeri Ryan) to frequent sex clubs and encouraged her to participate in activities that violated her convictions. Ryan's past appeared less than honorable. The embarrassing allegations undermined Ryan's bid for political office. What was hidden from the public was no longer a secret. Once the press discovered the lurid details alleged by Ryan's ex-wife, his campaign collapsed.

The biblical principle Ryan painfully discovered is illustrated in the words of Moses: "You may be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

GREG ASIMAKOUPOULOS. Naperville, Illinois

eshorts

LEADERLIFE WHAT I KNOW IS WHO I KNOW

In a recent literature search on Amazon.com, I turned up between 600 and 800 leadership titles published in just the last couple of years. While this information is helpful, it cannot replace the wisdom I can receive from flesh and blood people. Receiving wisdom from others requires that I challenge myself with three questions:

(1) Do I have the active humility to ask questions that reveal my own need? Philippians 2:3 counsels us "in humility to consider others better than ourselves." In other words, almost everyone knows more about something than I do. Wise leaders find that "something" and ask about it.

(2) Do I have the passive humility to provide "white space" in conversation? In other words, can I follow James' advice and be "quick to listen, and slow to speak" (1:19) so my dialogue partner gets a chance to share?

(3) Do I have the integral humility to admit the limits of my own knowledge? Isaiah 5:21 pronounces woe on those who are "wise in their own eyes" for good reason: God resists the proud. This form of humility is rooted in three dreaded words: *I don't know*.

Recently, I spoke to a group of youth pastors to whom I confessed that I have zero experience in youth ministry. It got quiet, but I had a liberty to preach. There is so much less pressure if you don't feel the need to know more than every other person in the room.

Perhaps the crucifying level of self-control that it takes to act on these three challenges is itself a form of wisdom. I struggle with all three areas every day, but when faced with a need for information or insight, I am now trying to ask myself: Whom do I know who knows about this?

EARL CREPS, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

A FACE AND A NAME

Homosexuality may seem faceless to an older generation, but to the younger generation, homosexuals have a face and a name. This creates several challenges for youth workers. We cannot assume all teens share our convictions. They have lived less than two decades, and many of the developments in the gay community occurred as they were formulating their opinions. Not only do they view homosexual culture in the media, but they also walk the halls with teens who openly live an alternative lifestyle.

What about the Christian teen who privately battles with sexual identity? Is there a safe place to say, "I struggle with thoughts of homosexuality and need help?" He or she will either keep silent or reach out for help based on the perceived response.

An awkward challenge for the church is clearing up the confusion caused by conflicting messages. Louise, a 16-year old, says, "I know the Bible says that a man shouldn't lay down with another man, but didn't God also say that divorce is wrong?" Ouch! Louise's statement is powerful. Her question shows the confusion of teens and unbelievers. Are we teaching absolutes, but only in areas such as homosexuality?

Despite the challenges, there is great news. Because of their culture, teens are leading the



church in its ministry to homosexuals. Teens see homosexuals as a person first, and then as a possible seeker. They recognize the sin of homosexuality, but they do not place it in a different category than any other sin. They believe God can change anyone's life. This enables today's youth to reach out and share the message of love, healing, and salvation with homosexuals in a way their parents might not have felt comfortable.

If you know of a teen struggling with homosexuality or homosexual feelings, the following two web resources from Focus on the Family may be helpful.

http://www.family.org/breakaway/pdf/amy&jason.pdf http://www.boundless.org/2001/departments/theophilus/a0000576.html

T. SUZANNE ELLER, Muskogee, Oklahoma

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U ASKED!

Q. IN TODAY'S PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES WE MAY SPEAK IN TONGUES, BUT WE DO NOT SEEM LIKE THE CHURCH DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. WHY DOES OUR PENTECOSTALISM OFTEN SEEM POWERLESS?

A. Pentecostals have always viewed the Early Church in the Book of Acts as a model of healthy church life and as a benchmark that contemporary churches can use to judge their own effectiveness and health. The church in Acts was not without problems, but was vibrant, growing, and energized by the Holy Spirit.

In many countries, today's Pentecostal churches do resemble the Early Church by their explosive growth and by the frequent occurrence of the miraculous. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, a recent book by Professor Philip Jenkins of Pennsylvania State University, is making waves by chronicling how the center of Christianity is moving from Europe and North America to Asia, Latin America, and Africa. In these continents, Christianity is growing rapidly, is morally and theologically conservative, and is largely Pentecostal. One hundred years ago there were only a handful of Spirit-filled believers. Today, the number of Pentecostals and charismatics worldwide is estimated to be more than half a billion people. That is explosive growth. Worldwide, roughly one Christian in four is Pentecostal or charismatic.

Nevertheless, to many observers, Pentecostalism in North America and Europe often seems powerless and, at best, a pale reflection of the glory portrayed in Acts. Why is this so?

There are probably two chief reasons. First, many people who attend Pentecostal churches today are not baptized in the Holy Spirit; therefore, they have not experienced the power for witness that characterized the New Testament church. Second, many people in Pentecostal churches who are Spiritfilled have turned inward, focusing their spiritual energy on events within the church building, rather than touching people in the marketplace and in the streets. Worship has often replaced evangelism as the primary focus. Parishioners have become spectators hoping to be entertained rather than participants. This was not a temptation for the Early Church; they did not have church buildings, choirs, or video productions.

Powerless Pentecostalism is a contradiction. When Pentecostal churches seem powerless, they are not very Pentecostal. Forty years ago, more than half of the sermons preached in Pentecostal pulpits emphasized the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Today, maybe two or three percent of sermons in Pentecostal churches have this emphasis. Is it any wonder our churches are not as Pentecostal as they once were?

In the 1970s and 1980s, many charismatics from mainline congregations flooded into Pentecostal churches, and a transformation occurred within Pentecostalism. Worship and the mystical experience of the Spirit's presence became the focus of many Pentecostals. While we must not diminish the importance of worship, we must also recognize that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is intended to empower believers for evangelism. It should thrust us outward, not make us better mystics. The power of the Spirit will become more evident in our churches when we re-emphasize the importance and purpose of the baptism in the Spirit.

GLEN MENZIES, pastoral ministries department, North Central University

A SINGLE PERSPECTIVE WHO IS INFLUENCING THE SINGLE ADULTS IN YOUR CHURCH?

Ministry today is much more complex and diverse than it was 25 years ago. Pastors and teachers have the challenge of addressing a multiplicity of issues.

Married and single adults have the same spiritual needs, but different personal needs. Most churches do a good job of meeting the spiritual needs of married and single adults, but meeting their unique personal needs is another matter. If the church does not deal with single-adult issues from a biblical perspective, where will they get their information?

Our postmodern culture is happy to provide its influence through television, theaters, the Internet, and non-Christian friends. Unfortunately, much of this information is unbiblical or unhealthy.

Is your church addressing the following single-adult issues?

- healthy male and female friendships
- contentment in singleness
- money management
- sexuality and singleness
- healthy identity
- single parenting
- change
- courting and dating
- premarital education
- remarital education
- loneliness
- rearing children
- forgiving ex-spouse
- divorce recovery
- grief recovery
- abortion recovery
- blended families

Consider the impact your church can have on 45 percent of the adult population.

DENNIS FRANCK, director, Single Adult Ministries

VFT UPDATE

RECOGNITION OF 'TRANSFORMATION CHURCHES' PUTS THEORY INTO PRACTICE

The General Presbytery, meeting on August 9–11, 2004, accepted a proposal from the Vision for Transformation Committee that a system of recognition be established for churches that enthusiastically embrace transformation principles.

As Vision for Transformation philosophy and practice take root across the Assemblies of God, the Fellowship plans to recognize these churches as a means of identifying concrete embodiments of transformation theory.

"This puts flesh on the concept of transformation," says Randall K. Barton, VFT Committee member and CEO of A/G Financial. "We've identified five key areas that represent a balanced New Testament Pentecostal church, and nominated churches would need to be active in each of these areas."

Nominations for "Transformation Churches" will be solicited according to the following guidelines:

- The church is committed to discipleship, the diligent and intentional teaching and practices that promote Christlike living and the reproduction of that life in others. Discipleship tools to be evaluated include elements such as Sunday School, small groups, age-group ministries, ministry training, mentoring programs, lay-ministry development, an integrated mission statement, and a commitment to Pentecostal distinctives.
- The church actively promotes worship through music, praise, and creative arts, and empowers prayer through opportunities for daily personal prayer, family prayer, and corporate prayer meetings.
- The church is involved in both local and world evangelism as evidenced by conversions, water baptisms, Spirit baptisms, sustained growth, ethnic and cultural diversity, church planting, missions support, and laity involvement in missions ministry.
- The church is characterized by compassion with a reputation for giving to anyone in need and sharing material resources generously within the church itself and toward the surrounding community and with support to broader benevolence and compassion outreaches across the country and internationally.
- The church nurtures fellowship among its members and visitors and with other churches within the Fellowship and across denominational lines.



All of the principles are exemplified in Scripture (Acts 2:42–47) and played out in the everyday ministries of Assemblies of God churches across the nation. The nomination process is an opportunity for local churches to be encouraged in ministries to which they are already committed. The intent is to make this a peer recognition program while raising a standard and model that is both balanced and cutting edge for churches to consider.

"We have many churches that are truly 'transformational,' " says General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask. "The lost are being saved. People are being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Missions and church planting are priorities, and discipleship and worship are woven into the fabric of the church. And we want other churches to hear what God is doing through these congregations."

"Our churches are the backbone of our missions outreaches across the United States and in nations around the world," says Charles Hackett, executive director of U.S. Missions, concerning the third point. "Anytime we can point out a congregation as an example of how missions can be more fully supported, it serves as a guidepost for other churches in their own ministry growth."

"The first one or two rounds of nominees will be considered by the Vision for Transformation Committee," Barton says. "Thereafter, we anticipate that the pastors of the transformation churches honored by the committee would receive future nominations and pick additional transformation churches."

The nomination process will allow national leaders, district officials, and the grass roots to nominate churches that exemplify an outstanding balance of Pentecostal ministry.

All of the churches that have been identified during the year will be recognized during General Council in Denver, with 10 outstanding transformation churches chosen for special recognition. Nomination forms are available from any district office or online at the Vision for Transformation website: http://www.vft.ag.org.

GENERAL COUNCIL UPDATE



WHY WAS DENVER CHOSEN AS THE LOCATION OF THE 2005 GENERAL COUNCIL?

TRASK: We wanted to have Council in the western United States. Denver is a gorgeous city with much to offer. It has new convention facilities and marvelous transportation systems. Denver is also a wonderful city for family vacations, with attractions such as Pike's Peak and the Air Force

Academy just to the south at Colorado Springs. We have also planned family activities for pastors and laity. These activities include: youth outreach ministries, Convoy of Hope outreach, children's activities, and the Fine Arts Festival. Every year, General Council has up to 300 exhibits that provide opportunity for pastors and church delegates to see the newest resources available from the Assemblies of God and from exhibitors outside our Fellowship.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE VOTING CONSTITUENCY FOR THIS GENERAL COUNCIL?

TRASK: Our bylaws provide for General Council churches to have one voting delegate. We encourage churches to bring a delegate. We believe that each church needs representation.

This will also be the first General Council where licensed ministers can vote. This change was made at the General Council in Washington, D.C. We want licensed ministers to have a voice in the business matters of our Fellowship. We are hoping many of our constituents will be there to participate.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT ISSUES THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT COUNCIL?

TRASK: The General Council in Washington, D.C. voted that the executive presbytery and general presbytery develop matters that needed further action. Some of these matters will come before the Council. During this 2-year period, we

LICENSED MINISTERS ENCOURAGED TO VOTE IN DENVER

With licensed ministers now approved to vote as General Council delegates, these members of the Fellowship are strongly encouraged to plan now to attend the 2005 General Council in Denver.

"The 51st General Council will be the first Council for those who carry our License to Preach credential to be able to participate in the governance of the church," says General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask. "It is very important that they attend General Council so we will continue to be a church represented by the grass roots."

WHAT IS THE EMPHASIS OF THIS GENERAL COUNCIL?

TRASK: Our theme is "People of the Spirit." The Assemblies of God is known as a Pentecostal Fellowship. We are people of the Spirit. We are still alive and sensitive to the Holy Spirit. We are believing God for spiritual renewal for our Fellowship and for those who attend General Council.

General Council is also a challenge. We are not there solely for a camp meeting, but to also conduct church

business. But this can be a spiritual experience. During the course of a day's business and in the evening rallies there are testimonies of God's sovereign move. These blessings allow attendees to return home with a new appreciation of God and His church. have also further developed the Vision for Transformation at Headquarters — the culture, budget by deliverables, and structure. We are here to serve the local church. We want to work closely with pastors and their churches so we can respond to their needs. This fulfills our mission and is the reason we exist.

ANY FINAL THOUGHTS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE COUNCIL?

TRASK: We are believing the Lord for another great General Council. The services have been planned. The events are going to be enjoyable. What we must do now is pray. The best plans of men are only men's plans unless God puts His approval on them. We want God's plan and God's will and God's smile on the General Council in Denver, Colorado.

🕆 INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK 🛠



Ask the Superintendent — PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

ne does not talk with General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask very long before you realize his passion for Pentecost. He understands his own need to maintain a daily experience in Pentecost. He also knows that our Movement must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit if it is to impact our world for Christ. One of Trask's greatest concerns is a lessening of Pentecostal emphasis within the Assemblies of God. In his quarterly interview with Enrichment journal, Trask shares his passion for Pentecost. He also provides practical advice to pastors who also desire that the Holy Spirit empower their churches for ministry.

WHY DO WE NEED TO RAISE AN AWARENESS OF PENTECOST AMONG OUR MINISTERS?

TRASK: God raised up the Assemblies of God to be a Pentecostal church. We must never shrink back from our God-ordained purpose. The mission of the church must not be carried out in the flesh, in programs, or in human ingenuity but in the power of the Spirit. The Early Church filled Jerusalem with its doctrine because believers had the power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost must remain in the forefront of why we exist.

DESCRIBE THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

TRASK: The transforming power of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is like the difference between a four-cylinder engine and a turbocharged eight-cylinder engine. The baptism in the Holy Spirit enables a person to be elevated out of his plane of existence and placed on a level in God that could not have been experienced or achieved otherwise.

Jesus knew the early believers needed added power. That is why He instructed them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. If Jesus recognized the need for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and instructed His disciples to wait for it in the Upper Room, why would we be any less persuaded that it is still needful today?

Without the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the church is powerless against demonic forces. People are bound by Satan's power, whether it is through drugs, gambling, alcohol, or pornography. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to help them find deliverance through Christ.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PASTORS WHO ARE HESITANT OR AFRAID TO CHALLENGE PEOPLE TO THE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE OR TO DIVINE HEALING?

TRASK: The instruction in God's Word is clear: pastors must be people of faith and obedience. God's Word says to anoint with oil, lay hands on the sick, and pray the prayer of faith (James 5:14,15). If pastors do what the Word says, Jesus will confirm the Word with signs following (Mark 16:20). We do not need to worry about people being healed. I cannot heal. No one has the power to heal. Only Jesus heals. But we play an integral part in the process.

The same is true with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I cannot fill anybody with the Holy Spirit. But if I will encourage people to be hungry for the Baptism, He will baptize them.

HOW CAN A PASTOR MAINTAIN A PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE IN HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY?

TRASK: Pentecost is a daily lifestyle. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Pentecost means living in the Spirit and the Spirit living in you. A person first has to be baptized in the Spirit to have a Pentecostal experience. You cannot preach, live, or admonish others to live something you have not experienced. Pentecost has to begin with your own experience.

The Holy Spirit dynamic in ministry is born out of relationship. A minister is not going to have passion until he has fellowshiped with the person of passion — Jesus Christ. He will not have compassion until he knows the heart of Christ. He will not be Spirit-filled until he has an experience with the Holy Spirit — an ongoing experience.

I have been baptized in the Spirit. I know the value of praying in the Spirit, the value of living in the Spirit, the value of walking in the Spirit, the value of depending on the Spirit, and the value of the gifts of the Spirit. These are gifts God has given to the church. Why would I not want them?

I have always been a strong advocate of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the earlier days of my ministry I had those in the congregation who were not Spirit-filled and did not desire to be Spirit-filled. The enemy said to me, You can be a Spirit-filled believer, but do not emphasize the baptism in the Holy Spirit and bring people under condemnation who are not Spirit-filled. The enemy would love for us to compromise and not avail ourselves of the power that drives back darkness and makes inroads into the community.

WHY IS SENSITIVITY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IMPORTANT IN A PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP SERVICE?

TRASK: One challenge the church faces is to stay away from entertainment. When the church becomes an entertainment center, that is all it will have — entertainment.

Also, the Holy Spirit is not going to come against your will. He must be invited. He will not come if you have your service tightly programmed and are determined to do your own thing.

I have been in services where the Spirit of God came in convicting power during the song service and the leader sensed that and laid aside his schedule. There is nothing wrong with order, but leaders must recognize the Spirit's moving and give Him opportunity to work. I have seen people saved in the preliminary part of the service because of the work of the Holy Spirit. God created the fertile soil in the hearts of people and provided the Spirit's drawing. When you sense that, you accomplish what God wants to accomplish.

YOU ARE A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE ALTAR. WHY IS THE ALTAR SO IMPORTANT IN A PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP SERVICE?

TRASK: More can happen in 5 minutes at an altar than 1 hour in a counseling session, because the Spirit accomplishes it. It is a mistake for the church to not provide time in the service for people to come to the altar. Churches that remain focused on calling people to the altar — whether for salvation, healing, deliverance, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or individual needs — are the churches that are alive.

WHY IS INITIAL EVIDENCE AN IMPORTANT PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINE?

TRASK: First, it is scriptural. Second, it is a sign to the recipient that he has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The pattern given throughout the Book of Acts is that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. History substantiates this doctrinal truth. Through the centuries and still today tongues is the outward sign that people have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. People are being baptized in the Holy Spirit around the world. They are speaking in tongues immediately as the initial physical evidence of their Pentecostal experience.

A Spirit-filled Christian does not stop there. Speaking in tongues is only the indication that you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Afterward, you use the prayer language of the Spirit that makes intercession (Romans 8:26).

HOW IS PENTECOST A PROCESS, NOT JUST AN EVENT?

TRASK: One should never view receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an end in itself. Receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of a process. The Holy Spirit is given to refine us, enable us, and empower us.

Those are ongoing processes. We will never complete the process because we depend on the Spirit. New challenges, new hurdles, and new attacks of the enemy will continue to confront the Spirit-filled believer, but the Holy Spirit is able and qualified to meet all of these challenges if we will depend on Him. Look what has happened to the church in our changing culture over the last 30 years. There has been tremendous cultural change. Is the Holy Spirit adequate to meet these changing cultural realities? Absolutely. Changes may continue to take place in days to come, but the Holy Spirit is going to be adequate to meet the new cultural challenges of tomorrow's church.



ETERNAL RESOURCES forETERNAL BUSINESS

How does a Pentecostal leader cultivate the spiritual dexterity to know when "unauthorized fire" has compromised Pentecostal fire?

he task of leading the 21st-century Pentecostal church is fraught with unique challenges. The expectations from church members and the expectations pastoral leaders place on themselves can be quite daunting and debilitating. H.B. London and Neil Wiseman put it this way: "Contemporary pastors are caught in frightening spiritual and social tornadoes which are now raging through home, church community, and culture. No one knows where the twister might touch down or what values the storms will destroy. Something

has to be done. Ministry hazards are choking the hope out of pastors' souls. They feel disenchanted, discouraged, and often even outraged. ... Fatigue shows in their eyes. Worry slows their stride. And vagueness dulls their preaching. ... Overwork, low pay, and desperation take a terrible toll as pastors struggle to make sense of crammed calendars, hectic homes, splintered dreams, starving intimacy, and shriveled purposes. Many hold on by their fingernails, hoping to find a hidden spring to refresh their weary spirits and scrambled thoughts."¹

BY BYROND. KLAUS

While there will always be a sense of loneliness associated with leading the church, we have ways to reach out for help, support, and intervention in crisis that were unavailable to our forbearers in ministry. And yet the ready availability of these resources may be part of the problem.

The ancient story of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, reminds us of what can happen when we are under pressure and desperately looking for resources to fill the gap. Leviticus 10:1 says: "Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to His command."

In the rush to keep things moving and have a service that looks good, the assumption of Nadab and Abihu was "in a pinch, any fire is better than no fire."

The actions of Nadab and Abihu are typical of a busy pastoral leader. The demands of day-to-day ministry dull us to the eternal dimensions of our actions as a minister called by God. We can be busy doing God's work with the best intentions, but that same busyness can hinder the connection of the eternal transformative presence of Jesus Christ to the people whose lives are in desperate need of hope and healing.

Nadab and Abihu are not necessarily sinister characters. They simply reflect the tendency most of us have to look for shortcuts when the pressure is on. We justify our actions based on our good intentions. If we are called by God and are serving His mission, it is not difficult to work 80 or more hours a week. That pressure can cause us to easily believe that God grades on a curve, and He will understand why we rely on our own resources in ministry. "It's all for God's glory anyway" — or so we rationalize.

A 21st-century equivalent to the "unauthorized fire" that Nadab and Abihu used in their ministry duties would be any ministry activity where a divine task is attempted with reliance on human design alone. Some examples might include:

- When you access a sermon website because you have not taken time to prepare your messages for the week (and you take credit for someone else's work).
- When professional excellence, supported by technology, is substituted for the dynamic of the Holy Spirit as the primary measure of an effective worship service.
- When the personal charisma and communicative ability of a pastoral leader are the central attracting factors to the growth in a congregation.

The Internet, media technology, and the ability to communicate and relate to others effectively are vital to leadership in the church. These necessary parts of effective leadership are also areas where we can become unclear in our thinking and take the short-term, more immediately available, high-impact resource. Because of the pressure in the ministry today, we can convince ourselves that we are doing a creditable job presenting the eternal transforming power of Jesus Christ.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A significant challenge for Pentecostal leaders is not only spiritual warfare against principalities and powers, but also the spiritual discernment to differentiate between Spiritempowered ministry and ministry that is conducted by human

> resources alone. Unfortunately, our culture's propensity for entertainment and the technology we have to support this propensity offers a significant temptation to Pentecostal leaders. A favorite quotable verse in our church is Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of

the hosts" (KJV). This Old Testament prophetic verse highlights the real temptation to rely on human resources and efforts to do God's work. This small but powerful verse is an enduring reminder that every leader serving God can become too reliant on the human resources so readily available. Even the simple human tendency to believe that working harder can resolve any deficiency in a program or ministry is brought under critique. This verse reminds us that the temptation to offer our resources to the service of God as an adequate substitute for God's eternal resource is self-deceiving. Only the divine initiative and power of God can accomplish His eternal purposes.

MAYBE I NEED A LONG VACATION

One important way to recognize the difference between human-constructed and Spirit-initiated ministry is for leaders to take time to be refreshed and enjoy life with their families. Jesus often went apart from the people and His disciples to be alone with His Father and gain perspective on His redemptive mission (Matthew 14:23).

But are the pressures of 21st-century ministry ameliorated by taking a vacation or a spiritual retreat? The 24-7 nature of ministry increasingly calls us to add new skills that are needed in a world where busyness is unavoidable. Time management is not adequate, neither is regular days off, nor even vacations. We need an eagle's perspective in the middle of steady ministry pressures, congregational demands, and personal inadequacies.

The pragmatic demands of day-to-day ministry may overwhelm our vision (our capacity to see what God has done in Jesus Christ) and dull our discernment (our capacity to see the congruence between the Jesus seen in the Gospels and the Christ at work in our current ministry situations by the presence of the Holy Spirit). In a ministry that is increasingly pressured to look and act busy to approximate effectiveness, Pentecostal ministers need to drink at the well of Pentecost in very specific and practical ways.

PENTECOST AS A COMPASS

Pentecost, as an historical event, is a compass for ministry in the 21st century. Pentecost orients us biblically to the clear intent of God's redemptive revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. Pentecost guarantees that the Jesus, whose life is authoritatively recorded in the Gospels, is the same Jesus who is among us today doing the same things He did while He was on earth. In the middle of our busyness, the greatest resource the Pentecostal minister has is the realization that all ministry is God's ministry. If ministry with eternal dimensions is going to be accomplished, God will make it happen. My task is to recognize the presence of Jesus in the place He has called me to serve.

Pentecost also reminds me that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a deep work. My encounter with Jesus Christ in the baptism in the Holy Spirit convinces me that the continuing work of Jesus Christ is always redemptive and transformative. The true work of Jesus will not feed our tendency to be impressed by the novel or the faddish. Jesus' ministry among us replicates what He did while He was on earth. He called people to repentance and subsequently saw their lives transformed. He healed people of all kinds of diseases. He delivered people from crippling, spiritual bondage to demonic forces. He demonstrated compassion for human need, and He applied His transforming power to their lives at all levels. in Christ would continue by the Spirit until our Lord's return.

Harassment and confusion do not need to be our experience. The ministry we have been called to can be clear to us. The busyness of 21st-century Pentecostal ministry does not need to cloud our perspective and tempt us to rely on human resources to do eternal business for God.

Additionally, Pentecost reminds us that the indwelling power of the Spirit of Christ is the source of the church's life and ministry. Excitement and novelty are not adequate substitutes for the power of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can change a person's life. When we as leaders confuse noise, numbers, and novelty with the transforming presence of Jesus Christ we will reap what we sow.²

CULTIVATING THE PRESENT TENSE OF JESUS

How does a Pentecostal leader cultivate the spiritual dexterity to know when "unauthorized fire" has compromised Pentecostal fire? How do we gain perspective in the middle of the chaotic and ever-increasing complexities of ministry?

Pentecostal leadership in the 21st century requires:

A connectedness to the life of Jesus

John 15 provides a poignant picture for sustaining spiritual vibrancy. The imagery of the vine and branches does not focus on frenetic activity to achieve spiritual maturity. The picture painted by John's Gospel is a living, abiding relationship for sustaining vibrant proximity to the Source of all spiritual life. John 15 shows you cannot earn or impress God with activity

A significant challenge for Pentecostal leaders is not only spiritual warfare against principalities and powers, but also the spiritual discernment to differentiate between Spirit-empowered ministry and ministry that is conducted by human resources alone.

Pentecostal leaders must find anchorage in the power of Pentecost. The reality of 21st-century ministry is that life is not going to mellow out, but will become more complex. The expectations placed on pastoral leadership require more restoration than a month-long vacation can provide. We need to meet our daily challenges with a perspective on ministry that truly relies on the fullest implication of Pentecost.

Pentecost connects the ministry of Jesus that fully revealed the redemptive character of God with the continuing and contemporary expression of that ministry, superintended by the Holy Spirit. I do not need to generate activity to prime the pump. At Pentecost, God made it evident that what had begun that does not rely completely on the Source of all life. God is not impressed with our spiritual activity for activity's sake. The judgment of Jesus in Matthew 7:21–23 shows that there may be effective ministry, by human standards, that people will try to convince God was done for His glory. They are shocked when Jesus assesses them not as spiritual, but as evil.

What would Jesus do? is a question many Christians ask themselves as a well-intended measure of spirituality. But, is that question inadequate? Could it be that the real question needed to measure connectedness to Jesus is: What is Jesus doing?

Pentecost means Jesus is among us by the Holy Spirit, and

He is clearly completing the redemptive mission with which we have been commissioned. The continuing and effective ministry of the Church will always reflect the minister par excellence, Jesus Christ. Ministry that reflects Jesus clearly will always embody the redemptive purpose of Jesus, the integrity of Jesus, and the power of the Spirit that Jesus relied on to complete the will of the Father. The activity of God, not the activity of His followers, is the major variable in the equation of the spirituality of Pentecostal leadership.

Participating in the present tense of Jesus' ministry

We must humbly acknowledge that our ministry is the ministry of Christ continuing through us by the present power of the Holy Spirit. Our ministry is only as valid as our participation in what God is doing through Jesus Christ. How will we know if something is of the world, the flesh, the devil, or from the Spirit? We gain clarity in that task by participating in ministry that connects the gospel to people who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ. Regardless of our place in ministry, we cannot hope to clearly see a move of the Spirit if we are not regularly communicating the gospel with the lost.

In the Acts 10 account of Peter at the house of Cornelius, God spoke to Cornelius and Peter the same week in separate visions. While we commend Peter for being obedient to God and responsive to the appeal of Cornelius, the most powerful

Pentecost reminds us that the indwelling power of the Spirit of Christ is the source of the church's life and ministry.

result lies beyond the surface. Peter initially protested God's instructions based on Scripture by arguing that he could not eat unclean food. But Peter was given insight as he preached to Cornelius' household and saw the incredible results. In verse 34, Peter said, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality." What a monumental step in that one little statement. That key insight superintended by the Spirit of God came while Peter was participating in the present tense ministry of Jesus in a most unsavory place — a Roman centurion's house. In that little-understood action, the living reality of what the power of the Spirit has come to do was born. The Spirit has come to empower us to bear witness to the nations.

When we place ourselves obediently in a position where God can use us, like Peter, we will see with clarity the present work of Jesus among us. This kind of sight is refreshing. It does not come because we have taken time to relax and clear our minds. It comes because we have responded obediently to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to participate in what Jesus is doing among us today. It is in that place of obedience to the Spirit that we are refreshed and learn once again that Jesus is working to this very day (John 5:17).

Evaluating strategies by whether or not they facilitate the continuing ministry of Jesus

It is a human tendency to protect programs, structures, and causes to which we have given sincere efforts. Unfortunately, some of those efforts can become idols if we sustain programs because they are venerable and people have given much time and effort in building and maintaining them. The real question is, do these ministries continue to reflect the ongoing ministry of Jesus? When ministries no longer connect people to the gospel, or build communities of Christians who edify one another, or rely on the Holy Spirit, but use high-pressure fund-raising, and cut missions and outreach budgets to undergird sagging ministries, we are destined for mediocrity.

NADAB AND ABIHU REVISITED

The Leviticus 10 account of Nadab and Abihu is one that should sober us because it illustrates the temptation that faces busy Pentecostal leaders every day. In the rush to keep things moving and have a service that looks good, the assumption of Nadab and Abihu was "in a pinch, any fire is better than no fire." That is an understandable response given the pressure they were under and the regular expectations that every Pentecostal leader faces. The swift and final response of God to Nadab and Abihu in verse 2 is sobering. Our busyness is never an excuse for relying on resources that do not fairly represent the gospel of Jesus Christ. The biblical theme of the Sabbath teaches us that even God took time to rest, and that is certainly instructive for all 21st-century leaders. We also need to see clearly when the pressures rise and the complexities of ministry are suffocating. In that context, Pentecostal leaders can participate in the present tense of Jesus. We have the assurance that Jesus is among us carrying out the redemptive mission of His Father, and we are commissioned to fairly represent Him with ministry on the firing line.



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ENDNOTES

 Accessed at www.family.org/pastor/resources. See also www.parsonage.org.

2. Ray Anderson, *The Soul of Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 107–136.



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How To Preserve Pentecosta Vitality in an Ever-Changing American Culture.

Why view ministry within American culture from a distinctively Pentecostal perspective? After all, Pentecostals are only one segment of a greater American church that proclaims biblical truth and sustains uplifting influences within our culture. On the other hand, many Pentecostals are responsive to an important reality. Cognizant of erosive cultural changes, contemporary Pentecostals are likely to view the rapid decline of Western culture as a challenge mandating a Spirit-empowered ministry reminiscent of the Early Church.

BY HOWARD YOUNG


THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURE

As the capstone of God's creation, humankind has moved from creation's dawn to the present and along the way produced the anthropological phenomenon of culture. This journey has fashioned definitions of culture naturally inclusive of the many aspects of human development including linguistic, political, economic, social, psychological, racial, and religious concerns. According to Kluckhohn, culture embraces the cognitive and emotional aspects of a people. "Culture is a way of thinking, feeling, believing. It is the group's knowledge stored up for future use," he observes.¹ Culture is learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving.² Culture is, therefore, varied and complex. Demanding the utmost effectiveness in Pentecostal ministry, culture is a distinctively human characteristic that does not yield easily or naturally to the Christian message.

The Unfolding of American Culture

Over 200 years of cultural development has allowed an intriguing, if not provocative, development of American culture. Like all cultures, American culture is dynamic, always changing. Converging influences from many sources create the American profile. The cumulative influences of American culture may be viewed as a powerful river that impacts they pursued alternatives to the truth of Scripture and the value of historical tradition.

Theorists of the Enlightenment created a new cultural perspective concerning the individual's role in society and how truth and meaning are discovered. The values of reason, logic, and empiricism prevailed and became the means for ascertaining truth.3 The enlightened individual had no need for special or divine revelation. Individual destiny and purpose are achieved through the rational and autonomous processes of life.

The tenets of the Enlightenment have yielded to the complicated cultural condition of postmodernism, a philosophical phenomenon that has hurled America into a cultural shift of remarkable proportions. Grenz observes that postmodernism questions the ideals, principles, and values that lie at the center of the modern mind-set.⁴ Characterized by a denial of knowledge's objectivity and inherent goodness, postmodernism elevates the value of community-based knowledge that both defines the community and provides truth for it. Postmodernism posits the idea that truth can be achieved through intuition, seriously questioning the scientific method as the epitomization of objective knowing.⁵

Although the Christian response to postmodernism has been varied, some things seem to be evident. Postmodernism has not stemmed the American cultural drift away from

Complicated and erosive cultural conditions must not force Pentecostals into a completely defensive posture of ministry.

everyone living on its shoreline. In addition, numerous tributaries feed this massive cultural river. These tributaries originate in the various aspects of American life and activity including politics, government, art, education, religion, and other permeating influences. Some tributaries bring life and vitality to the cultural river while other streams engorge the current lifestyle with moral pollution and spiritual death.

To minister effectively, the Pentecostal church must critically assess and understand existing culture and, in some cases, unmask its sinister foundations and values. This understanding of culture is essential for achieving a transformational presentation of the gospel to those around us. In the end, understanding a culture is tantamount to understanding its people and how best to present Christ's claims to them.

Historically and ideologically, contemporary American culture is linked to the humanistic thought of the Renaissance of the 14th through the 16th centuries with its emphasis on the individual. Somewhat inspired by Renaissance thought and empowered by the notion of greater personal freedom, Enlightenment thinkers of the 17th and 18th centuries sought for alternatives to the authoritarian models of thinking and leading found in both government and religion. Predictably, morally and biblically based values that birthed this country. Furthermore, the postmodern condition fails to adequately inform humankind of its highest purposes in life and allows the culture to wallow in the muddy pools of humanism and secularism. Consequently, the American culture manifests an unashamed devotion to secularism — a concern for only the flesh-and-blood life on this planet that blatantly dismisses the importance of God and the pursuit of the spiritual in life.⁶

Pentecostalism in Culture

Complicated and erosive cultural conditions must not force Pentecostals into a defensive posture. The Book of Acts, a point of historical, theological, and experiential reference for contemporary Pentecostals, is a testimony of how the authentic empowerment of a Pentecostal church forged significant inroads into prevailing cultures. This infant church deeply impacted the cross-cultural crowd present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5–41) and defied the strong religious culture that sought to marginalize their efforts (Acts 4:1–31).

Ultimately, these early disciples broke though their own cultural and theological presuppositions to minister effectively to the various cultures that prpulated Israel, Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe. The Spirit's life-changing revelation to Peter began a process of cultural change that allowed the Church to flourish in the Gentile world (Acts 10:9–22). This life episode of Peter stunningly illustrates how the Holy Spirit escorts the Church through its own cultural and traditional biases so it may minister to cultures that know nothing of Christ's power. Ignoring cultural differences between Jews and Gentiles, the Holy Spirit ushered in a Gentile Pentecost as glorious as the Church's original Pentecost (Acts 10:27–46). Fortunately, the Jewish arm of the Early Church accepted the validity of this event and rejoiced because Pentecost came to others (Acts 11:4–18).

Ensuing years reveal early Christians effectively ministering within the pagan cultures surrounding them. The Early Church endeavored to stay separated from the pagan practices of decadent cultures but at the same time mingled and remained in social dialogue with non-Christians. Moral and spiritual separation from the evils of the culture did not preclude the Christian's obligation to civil authority, paying taxes, social and philosophical dialogue, and constant prayers for those in authority (Romans 13:7; 1 Timothy 2:1,2). Simultaneously, early believers embraced new values, lifestyles, and attitudes vastly different from Roman society. All believers, for example, were to be accepted in the church with a sense of equality (Colossians 3:11; James 2:5-9). While culture engendered a stratified society in which the privileged few were served by the lower class and slaves, the church consistently undercut this cultural bane through its emphasis on equality; attitudes of a loving servanthood were encouraged among all Christians.7 Remarkably, Christians of the first century had planted within the prevailing culture seeds of a true biblical Pentecostalism that strategically resurged in succeeding generations of devout believers.8

Christians beyond the first century continued to permeate culture in a significant manner. Despite periods of imperial persecution, pagans were positively influenced by the purity of life, love, and courage of believers. Amazingly, three centuries after the death of Christ, Constantine gave official recognition to the importance of Christianity in the state by calling and presiding over the Council of Nicea. Christianity had successfully produced its own culture within the more pervasive and spiritually bankrupt culture in which it existed.⁹

AMERICAN PENTECOSTALISM

America became a point of Pentecostal light at the beginning of the 20th century. The period of time between the early revival fires of Azusa Street and the present have witnessed the development of Pentecostalism as a dominant religious force in American culture. Synan observes, "Pentecostalism is one of the few religious movements to originate in America and subsequently become a major force in other parts of the world."¹⁰ Some believe that Pentecostalism has become a third force in Christian history, taking its place of cultural influence beside Protestantism and Catholicism.

Ideally, American Pentecostalism will continue as a formidable cultural force, a replication of New Testament Christianity that expresses itself in complete devotion to the Spirit and His empowering work in the church. Offering a similar understanding of the vision of contemporary Pentecostals, Durasoff describes Pentecostals as those who have an earnest desire to recapture the early practices and spiritual dynamics of first-century disciples and to know Jesus as a present living personality, all through the enablement of the Holy Spirit.¹¹

Pentecostalism in Crisis

Remarking on the impact of Spirit-initiated revivalism of recent years, Presbyterian writer Charles Syndor writes that Pentecostalism "is an authentic reformation-revival movement of historic significance, equal with those of other great movements of centuries past."¹² Despite the glowing reports of the immediate past, many individuals feel that Pentecostalism has stalled in America. Historically speaking, great religious movements that fail to nurture the unique dynamics that characterized their origins will replace them with attitudes, practices, and methodologies friendlier with the current culture. Some feel that Pentecostals are at a crossroads of embracing the biblical spirituality of their beginnings or accepting absorption into an American religious fabric devoid of the rich texture of the past.

Our present situation may be well framed by the words of author Ron Auch. In Pentecostals in Crisis, he fears that something of the uniqueness and power of the classic Pentecostal heritage may be lost as the baton of Pentecostal experience and ministry is passed from one generation to the next. Auch does not fear a total compromise of faith and experience but rather a slow retreat from the power encounters that characterized the salvation experiences, personal healings, and Spirit baptisms of earlier Pentecostals. This cycle is, however, a tendency and not an inevitability. The point of concern, Auch explains, is that ultimately a new generation emerges with entirely new points of reference to spiritual experience and, consequently, a different approach to ministry.13 If he is right, Pentecostals must continually recommit themselves to spiritual vitality and biblical mission through effective methods of ministry as well as personal and corporate Pentecostal experience.

The Matrix of Contemporary Pentecostalism

Part of the answer for preserving Pentecostal vitality is the ability of Pentecostals to foster a Spirit-empowered expression of Christianity by blending important aspects of New Testament experience and ministry. This blending of critical Pentecostal fundamentals may be viewed as the matrix of life-changing Pentecostalism, a merging of key Pentecostal elements including preaching, personal and congregational spiritual experience, lifestyle, and the Spirit-filled environment. Achieving this holistic approach to Pentecostal ministry is essential for a life-changing expression of Pentecostalism within the cultural milieu.

Pentecostal Preaching

Preaching the gospel is a critical aspect of Pentecostal influence. The gospel possesses the inherent power for personal transformation (Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 1:22,23). The gospel provides a compelling message of personal transformation that lifts the individual above the destructive influences of a decadent culture. When the gospel is presented through empowered individuals, the result is personal salvation and entrance into the kingdom of God and the life it provides (John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Clearly, the apostles believed both in the authority of their historical message concerning the meaning of Christ's life and the exceptional dynamic needed to deliver their message to the world. The apostle Paul possessed deep convictions concerning the transformational content of the gospel and the Spirit invigoration required for preaching to others (1 Corinthians 2:1–5). Jesus had ordered His disciples to forbear a witness of any kind until the empowering Spirit came to them (Luke 24:44–49; Acts 1:8). Breaking down walls of cultural resistance still mandates a Spirit-empowered preaching event that compels listeners to experience God's power. The anointed and impassioned preaching of God's Word still ushers individuals to the threshold of the Pentecostal experience.

Pentecostal Experience

The years preceding America's turn-of-the-century Pentecostal revival were dark. Post-Civil War America was under the crushing blows of sectional hostility and financial confusion. America's cities were filled with moral decay. Crime, alcoholism, and prostitution grew rampant. Corruption was often widespread in business and government.¹⁴ Chaotic and confused, American society was adrift in an ocean of moral laxity.

America's spiritual condition brought devout Christians to their knees. Spiritually speaking, it was a watershed moment for America. Miraculously, God responded to their prayers by sending a revival to America — a revival deeply marked by the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, complete with moral and spiritual empowerment, a devotion to personal holiness, and glossolalia. The Azusa Street Revival and other moves of God like it prompted a remarkable growth of

Q & A WITH IVAN M. SATYAVRATA

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE FACING PENTECOSTALS WITH REGARD TO POSTMODERNISM?



SATYAVRATA: This is perhaps the most critical question we should be asking. The postmodern culture, as it has emerged in the West, is really not new. Many believe that India and Asia are a postmodern culture.

Postmodernism rejects metanarrative — one unifying story that binds all of life and connects history together. Our Eastern world has never looked at history as metanarrative. Instead, the Eastern world believes reality is not monolithic. It believes that reality consists of an inevitable ultimate that no one can see, no one can experience, and no one can really know. We have different perspectives on ultimate reality that reality is fragmented and there cannot be one unifying theory of reality. In other words, I have one corner of reality; you have another. By implication, then, I don't impose my perspective on you and vice versa. This same idea is at the heart of the postmodern.

This presents serious concerns because it erodes the evangelical-Pentecostal belief in absolute truth — the basis on which we communicate Christ as the only way, truth, and life. Once you do away with the possibility of absolute truth, when you talk about Christ as the only way to God and, as God's final absolute solution to the predicament of man, you are talking to someone who is on a different plane. As you talk to him, he is thinking, *That's your perspective*. The dilution of absolute truth represents a real challenge to Pentecostals.

Though this is a very real danger, it also presents a tremendous opportunity. Conservative Christianity sometimes looks at cultural change somewhat tentatively and even defensively. Cultural change brings challenges and opportunities. Culture is not under our control; but it is under God's control. God allows cultural changes.

Years ago Christianity reacted negatively to modernity. The Pentecostal revival of the 20th century took place somewhat in opposition to the prevailing view of modernity. Modernity emphasized rationalism and positivism. Pentecostalism reacted to that. Later, though, Christianity reacted positively to modernity. I think we're going to experience the same thing with postmodernism.

The postmodernist's emphasis on experience represents the greatest opportunity for Pentecostals to communicate the truth of the gospel — perhaps since the New Testament but certainly since John Wesley and the Methodist revival. In the 21st century we are witnessing a legitimization of what Pentecostalism throughout America. Thomas F. Zimmerman remarked: "This, then, is the explanation for the remarkable growth of the Pentecostal movement. Men have tried to adduce all kinds of reasons for it in terms of sociology, psychology, ecology, and economics. But nothing short of the almighty power of God responding to the contrition of His faithful remnant could have produced such results."¹⁵

The elements of Pentecostal experience articulated in Acts have characterized the growth of Pentecostalism in America. Prayer, *glossolalia*, fearless proclamation of the gospel, a thriving sense of community, conversions, and the miraculous are the continuing signs of God's presence within His church. Still desiring to uniquely manifest His presence in this new century, the Holy Spirit desires to propel sincere believers into an increasingly glorious future.

Pentecostal Practice

An authentic Spirit experience is designed to change both those empowered by the Spirit and those who come in contact with the empowered. First-century believers carried the experience of Spirit renewal into the world around them, unlike the privatized religions of the Roman Empire that served only their immediate adherents. The Spirit's influence led early believers into Christian practices that fostered the formation of communities with a distinctive self-awareness.¹⁶

Pentecostals already believe in terms of the plausibility structure of what people are willing to believe. This is one of the reasons the church is exploding in Africa, Latin America, and Asia where, under the influence of Pentecostal missionaries, there is an openness to and an affirmation of experience that more rationalistic Western cultures are reluctant to open themselves to.

If you look at 20th-century missions, white Pentecostals have been active. In places like India, traditional evangelicalism with its emphasis on reason met with limited success. In fact, in the 19th century, the education-missions movement in India was based on the belief that if rationalism is injected into the culture it will cause Hinduism to crumble and Christianity to be accepted. What happened, though, was the reverse. Rationalism didn't cause intellectuals to only question Hinduism; they questioned Christianity as well.

In contrast to this approach to missions, at the end of the 20th century and into early 21st century, Pentecostals are affirming the validity of experience by offering people an encounter with God. As a result we are witnessing the greatest revival we have ever seen in our history. When we examine the recent history of Pentecostal missions in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, we see strongholds — which for centuries were impregnable — crumble. I believe this is the result of the postmodern emphasis on experience.

What poses a threat to Pentecostalism also presents a tremendous opportunity. We know that for biblical experience Rodney Clapp contends that the early Christians were intentional in their effort to create and sustain a unique culture. By the Spirit's power, they pursued a way of life that would press them into the image of their God. Allowing their Kingdom agenda to often thrust them in harm's way, they were determined to make the message and life of Jesus a total way of life, a culture.¹⁷

American Pentecostals must capture and nurture the spirit of the first Pentecostals. These early disciples offered the hope of a new way of life within a spiritually pauperized culture. Embracing a firm belief in divine assistance, firstcentury Pentecostals successfully confronted cultural forces that publicly disgraced them and refuted their message (Acts 13:6–12). They overcame internal and external threats and dismantled personal fears (Acts 18:1-11). Geographical distances, cultural differences, and governmental opposition were at best inconveniences to their Kingdom agendas (Acts 20:17-24). Demons, mobs, and dangerous individuals held back the surge of Kingdom life only temporarily (Acts 16:16-34). Determined to make the Pentecostal experience a way of life for others, first-century disciples accepted setbacks in stride, strongly faced their opposition, and never expected defeat (Acts 4:1-31). Their thriving spirituality is still the birthright of every local church wanting to offer a better way of life to its community (Acts 5:17-21).

to be true it must be balanced with the Word. But very rarely do people come to understand the Word and then look for an experience based on their understanding. The non-Christian usually experiences God when he comes into a vibrant church or he encounters a Christian who communicates that experience to him. After he has an experience with God, then his experience can be explained and rooted in the written Word. That's the attraction of Pentecost; we offer and present an experience, and we should do that unapologetically.

Postmodernists want an experience with God. This desire is within the heart of every man. For almost half a century, people in Eastern Europe were brainwashed concerning the ideology of atheism. But as soon as the Iron Curtain came down, there was a huge search for God. People wanted to experience God. We call this experience-certified theology or theology that is found through experience. Chronologically, for Pentecostals experience comes first and then theology gives experience its rooting and grounding.

I pray that the church in America will realize this. Perhaps the tendency of the postmodern worldview in the West is making young people more open to the religious experience Pentecost offers than their more rationalist parents.

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Pentecostal Environment

Luke, the historian of the Early Church, takes the reader inside the corporate life of the Early Church and reveals the vibrant environment in which it nurtured its own. We are immediately in touch with the living soul of the Early Church, the quintessential quality that gave it durability against opposition — its vital sense of community (Acts 2:42–47; 4:33–35; 5:12–14).

Carried along on the breath of God's renewing Spirit, these early disciples continued to face both the external challenges of antagonistic cultures and the internal challenge of nurturing God's kingdom in redeemed human beings. The struggles, miscalculations, and failures of this fledging entity were apparent. Nevertheless, the apostles and those who followed them met the gauntlets thrown down before them. The Church not only survived but also miraculously prospered as a caring community of followers and leaders (Acts 2–6).

Cerillo emphasizes that Pentecostals still offer a loving community that encourages spiritual conversion, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and divinely bestowed spiritual gifts as a means to a new, improved life in this world. Local congregations of Pentecostals, often comprised of all social classes, open their heart to engage the power of God through the Holy Spirit. Spiritually fervent Pentecostals provide accepting environments in which cultural and social dichotomies are transcended and personal and social chaos yield to a new vision of a higher order, a greater community than what is offered by the world outside.¹⁸

More than an aberration from American cultural Christianity, Pentecostalism is a journey in biblical Christianity. In fact, there is evidence that Pentecostalism is viewed less as an aberration from the more common expressions of American Christianity and more as a significant force for spiritual change in society and the life of the individual.



Pentecostals may have opportunities within the present culture that did not exist in the past and may not be guaranteed in the future. We would do well to be ourselves, faithful to our biblical roots, and take advantage of the moment.



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STHEME INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH RAY BERRYHILL, JAMES BRIDGES, ISAAC CANALES, CHARLES CRABTREE, DANNY DUVALL, SCOTT ERICKSON, MARIA KHALEEL, THOMAS TRASK, RANDY VALIMONT, GEORGE WOOD



RAY BERRYHILL



SCOTT ERICKSON



JAMES BRIDGES

MARIA KHALEEL



ISAAC CANALES



THOMAS TRASK



CHARLES CRABTREE

RANDY VALIMONT





GEORGE WOOD

PRACTICING PENTECOST: INTIMACY WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ENERGIZING CHURCHES, EMPOWERING PASTORS, AND CHANGING LIVES

Each of the pastors and executive officers interviewed for this article is equally uncompromising in his or her focus on the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit — not to the exclusion of any other theological truth, but as an empowering foundation for every life-changing principle in Scripture. BY SCOTT HARRUP

ennifer came from a Jehovah's Witness background. Life as a single mom was difficult, and she discovered that her relationship with God was hollow. She was desperate. As she cried out to God one day in her home, an incredible thing happened. She sensed God's presence like never before and began to pray in a language she had never heard.

"I felt so good," she remembers. "After it stopped, I didn't know what it meant." She began going from church to church in Salem, Oregon, searching for that kind of worship.

"I encourage our people during worship time to pray together and sing together in the Spirit," says Pastor Scott Erickson of The People's Church (Assemblies of God) in Salem, Oregon. "When Jennifer walked in she realized immediately what she had was what we were doing. The Lord heard her cry longing for a relationship. She's been growing and understanding that Jesus has forgiven her."

Individually and in groups, believers at The People's Church are experiencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit and His fullness. In a recent service, 40 people were spontaneously filled with the Spirit. The sermon about Elijah and Elisha, on the surface, had nothing to do with Pentecost.

"I've never seen an altar call like that," Erickson says. "I just said, 'Some of you are here and you're dry and you need the fullness.' And they just jumped to the altar."

Erickson has shone a spotlight on the Baptism and the spectrum of spiritual gifts since his earliest days as a pastor, when he says he soon discovered that he "didn't have any choice but to lean upon the Holy Spirit." That reliance on the Spirit's power resulted in about 90 percent of his congregants receiving the Baptism during his pastorate at Lighthouse Worship Center in Whitemarsh, Virginia. Many experienced the miraculous. Erickson is seeing similar results in Salem.

"A lot of great things are happening," he says, "and the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the doorway to many of the gifts being expressed."

PRACTICING WHAT IS PREACHED

In light of the Assemblies of God's established Pentecostal doctrines, The People's Church might appear to be a standard affiliated congregation. The Fellowship has always proclaimed the power of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues when baptized in the Spirit and connecting every expression of the Christian life with a gift or fruit of the Spirit.

"I wouldn't want to endeavor to do ministry without the anointing and enduement of the power of the Holy Spirit," says General Superintendent Thomas Trask. "Why would I want to try to accomplish what only He can accomplish? I know I'm not adequate for the task."

This doctrinal position, however, finds limited practical expression in some churches. Annual statistics have shown a plateau in Spirit baptisms nationwide. Church leaders take a guarded view of this trend.

"Our statistics suggest," says George Wood, general secretary of the Assemblies of God, "that the number of persons receiving Spirit baptism, while not edging upward, is not decreasing either." (See chart, A/G U.S. BAPTISMS 1979–2003.)

If the plateau continues, the results could be devastating for a new generation of believers attending historically Pentecostal churches.

"John Wesley was once asked if he was fearful that the Methodist church in America would cease to exist," says General Treasurer James Bridges. " 'Never!' he replied. 'But,' he added, 'I am fearful that it will cease to exist as a movement with power and godliness and become only a church with a form of godliness, denying the power thereof.' That's a concern I have for our Movement."

"Nothing is more ineffective than an Assemblies of God church without the fresh touch of God, without the anointing," says Charles Crabtree, assistant general superintendent. "The anointing is what sets us apart and brings the reality of Christ into people's lives."

CULTURE AND PENTECOST

Changing dynamics within American culture have

contributed to a shift away from Pentecostal experience even in churches that promote Pentecostal doctrine. For example, shrinking attendance on Sunday night has led some pastors to shorten or cut out Sunday evening services, a traditional entry point for many believers to experience the Baptism.

"A great concern," Wood says, "since Sunday night service is so declined, is how are churches handling the process of people coming through to the baptism in the Spirit?"

A seeker-sensitive approach to evangelism, while valuable in some contexts, can fall prey to current societal trends that prioritize tolerance and seek to avoid anything that might offend. Some pastors are reluctant to place the Baptism front and center before their congregations for fear of driving away those who are searching for spiritual answers.

"There was a tendency in me, even as an Assemblies of God pastor, to try to be more relevant, to focus more on nice praise and worship, good rational preaching, conversion, and baptism in water — but not on the Holy Spirit's movement," says Pastor Isaac Canales of Mision Ebenezer Church in Carson, California.

A/G U.S. BAPTISMS 1979-2003		
YEAR	HOLY SPIRIT BA	PTISMS
1979	57,673	
1980	70,130	
1981	75,360	
1982	79,363	
1983	79,783	
1984	73,569	
1985	80,396	
1986	83,289	
1987	84,140	
1988	73,305	
1989	71,592	
1990	76,989	
1991	71,172	
1992	72,694	
1993	74,961	
1994	77,009	
1995	78,687	
1996	90,558	
1997	101,700	
1998	94,721	
1999	98,080	
2000	88,957	
2001	90,914	
2002	94,054	
2003	88,417	
General Secretary's Office. Statistician		06/22/04

General Secretary's Office, Statistician

Canales is now solidly among those Assemblies of God pastors who look for every opportunity to connect their congregations to the Holy Spirit. Sunday is no longer the single, targeted day for Pentecostal emphasis. These pastors believe that throughout the week, and in a variety of venues, people can experience the infilling of the Spirit and His touch on their lives.

"It's not a time to be afraid," Canales says. "Yes, we're trying to be relevant, but everybody needs God's Spirit. When you see rock stars shaking their heads, and you see people high on ecstasy, they're really hungry for something spiritual. What they need is a good baptism in the Holy Spirit. We see of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit, and that's why the people are seeking the Holy Spirit. The presence and the person of the Holy Spirit are essential to ministry. He makes the reality of Christ present in the world today."

"We really want our church to be a place where the Holy Spirit is welcomed and His ministry is received," says Pastor Danny Duvall of Christian Life Church of the Assemblies of God in Birmingham, Alabama. "So we prioritize establishing a clear identity that this is a church where the Holy Spirit is welcome, where He is honored, where He is esteemed in any and every way we can do that. We're not a stealth-Pentecostal



"Once I was exposed to the power of the Holy Spirit, coming from a different church background, it changed my life forever." —Ray Berryhill

in the teen culture a hunger for deep, mystic spirituality that people try to package and then bring into their lives. This spirituality that they're looking for is what God provided in the Holy Spirit baptism."

"Once I was exposed to the power of the Holy Spirit, coming from a different church background, it changed my life forever," says Pastor Ray Berryhill of Chicago, Illinois', Evangel Assembly of God. "I'm the wrong one to talk to about being seeker sensitive because I'm not very sensitive to that. Whenever the focus has been taken off of God and placed on the people, I think we've made a mistake."

Each of the pastors interviewed for this article is equally uncompromising in his or her focus on the person and ministry of the Spirit — not to the exclusion of any other theological truth, but as an empowering foundation for every life-changing principle in Scripture.

INTENTIONAL MINISTRY

If churches are to become Pentecostal in more than name only, pastors say, church leaders and congregations must intentionally integrate the Holy Spirit in all they do. They must take concrete steps to welcome the Holy Spirit into every expression of church ministry and promote that divine presence in every area of the believer's life.

"We preach regularly on the Holy Spirit," says Pastor Maria Khaleel of New Life Assembly of God in Pembroke Pines, Florida. "You get what you preach for. If you preach for salvation, you are going to get salvations, and we definitely do that. But we also preach the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the person church. There's nothing secret about our being a Holy Spiritoriented church. That's really our heart."

The results, these pastors emphasize, are dramatic. In a Holy Spirit-focused church, the third Person of the Trinity draws people to salvation. The Spirit moves in ministry to meet physical needs. He empowers a congregation's prayers.

"If I honor the Spirit and accommodate His presence in public services and make it possible for Him to touch lives, He always does it," Pastor Erickson says. "And the proof is that people are healed, people are baptized, people are set free from bondage. It's just amazing what God is doing."

SALVATION

Far from driving away spiritually hungry people, Pentecostfocused pastors are observing regular and multiple salvation decisions.

"We see as many as 20 or 30 people at a time come to know the Lord," says Berryhill. "Almost every Sunday and almost every service we see somebody come to know the Lord. Most of them are straight out of the street."

Berryhill stresses that the Baptism is a normal experience for new believers at Evangel Assembly, so much so that few congregants would even describe the Christian life without the Baptism.

"I don't have many people talk about the difference between what their life was like before and after the Baptism, because they don't know that," he says.

During 2003, some 3,000 people accepted Christ as their Savior at First Assembly of God in Griffin, Georgia. While



"Here is a guy who was involved in drugs, alcohol, and immorality. Now he's on our staff. God just turned his life completely around through the power of the Holy Spirit." — Randy Valimont

Pastor Randy Valimont preached numerous sermons on salvation, he attributes the magnitude of the people's response to his regular accompanying emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

"It has just been a process of putting in the life of the church those things that are important," he says. "It was amazing to me to see as people began to get filled with the Holy Spirit the differences in discipleship it made."

Greg Marsh, Valimont's visitation and outreach pastor, was saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, and then called to preach

CONVERTS AND SPIRIT BAPTISMS 1979 - 2003

The primary purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is empowerment for service and witness [Acts 1:8]. In keeping with the Book of Acts model, a high degree of correlation exists between Spirit baptisms and converts, as this chart clearly shows.



through Spirit-focused ministry at First Assembly.

"Here is a guy who was involved in drugs, alcohol, and immorality," Valimont says. "Now he's on our staff. God just turned his life completely around through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Jake Garland walked into a service both spiritually lost and obviously drunk.

"I've heard people describe how the Holy Spirit sobers people up," Valimont says. "But I had never seen it myself until that night. When Jake came and gave his heart to the Lord, God just sobered him up, and he was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. His wife and his family have been changed."

"During worship," Khaleel says, "when the Spirit is allowed to move, people meet God. We've even had people saved before the preaching of the Word by the very presence of God in operation in the midst of His people."

MOVING IN THE MIRACULOUS

The Spirit's blessing of salvation in a congregation is just the beginning. As His ministry gifts are promoted, people's lives are miraculously touched, often through physical healing. New Life Assembly's emphasis on the Holy Spirit is constantly connected with divine healing.

About 3 months after Shirley began attending New Life Assembly she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She came forward one Sunday morning for prayer.

"She said that when we laid hands on her, it was like heat went through her whole body," Khaleel says. "God miraculously healed her."

Shirley went back to her doctor. The same tests run weeks before were now giving opposite results. She accepted Christ as her Savior, shared her story with her doctor, and he came to New Life Assembly and accepted Christ as well.

"We've seen people who were paralyzed healed. We've seen people with cancer who have been healed, people with lupus who have been healed," says Khaleel. "We have a lot of unsaved people coming to the church because of the healing prayer ministry. They're open to prayer when they would not be open to coming to a church service. Many of them are getting saved and some have even gotten baptized in the Holy Spirit during the healing prayer.

"Just in the last 3 months, we've had a lady who was healed of glaucoma," says Khaleel. "She had lost 90 percent of her sight. She was actually prepped and on the table for surgery when she got up and said, 'I'm going to my church for prayer.' She got up off the table and came to our healing prayer ministry and a



week later was back in the doctor's office. They ran another test. She brought both tests to us. She has 100 percent of her sight restored."

"I don't claim to be a faith healer," says Berryhill. "We give all the glory to Jesus. We have the people release their faith in every service because in Jesus' presence healing can take place anytime. Miracles can take place anytime."

EMPOWERED PRAYER

Just as salvation and miracles are common fruit of churches that focus on the Spirit, so prayer is their common foundation.

As early as 7 a.m. on any weekday, anyone in Griffin, Georgia, who visits First Assembly will find the doors open and people praying.

"We set aside 2 hours every morning for prayer," says Valimont. "If you walk in, you're going to hear people speaking in tongues, praying in the Holy Spirit. It's a constant flow for 2 hours." Duvall describes the Saturday night prayer meeting at Christian Life Church as "the beachhead for everything that happens." Different groups within the church coordinate the

"A lot of great things are happening, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the doorway to many of the gifts being expressed."—Scott Erickson

meetings, creating a sense of ownership.

"It may be the ushers one week, the Sunday School teachers the next, the choir the next, the church board the next" Duvall says. "People involved get connected with the vitality of that Saturday night prayer, and then they come weeks after that on their own."

Evangel Assembly appoints an intercessory prayer team to meet for 2 to 3 hours every Saturday morning to supplement the 6 a.m. prayer meetings every weekday. Because of the expectancy generated through prayer, Berryhill says, the church encounters God's power.

"You have to have believers who are connected with the Holy Spirit to really have that burden for prayer," Khaleel says. "Prayer is the key to everything that takes place. We undergird everything we do with prayer."

Prayer augmented with fasting accelerates spiritual momentum. Valimont has coordinated a series of 40-day fasts for his congregation during the past 10 years.



"We're not a stealth-Pentecostal church. There's nothing secret about our being a Holy Spirit-oriented church. That's really our heart." —Danny Duvall "Right now our church is in the midst of 40 days of prayer and fasting," he says. "We've asked our church to fast one meal a day for 40 days. Our staff wrote a devotional called

Prayer preparation intensifies on the weekend when 100 to 120 people gather on Saturday night. Participants touch oil to their hands, emblematic of the Holy Spirit's anointing and ministry, and then pray over the pews and chairs in the auditorium.

"We anoint them and we pray in the Spirit over whoever is going to be sitting there," Valimont says. "We pray over the platform. We pray over the musicians. We pray that the altars will be full." *New Beginnings.* We started the first 40 days of this year on a fast. We take 6 weeks off then we fast again for 40 days.

"As I speak, our church is on a 40-day fast," says Berryhill. We're fasting for a greater release of the manifestations of God's Spirit and power. Initially, I took a soft-shoe approach. 'You can fast TV,' for example. But the Lord checked me. I don't have sign-up sheets or anything, but the people are participating in the fast, particularly leaders."

HOLY SPIRIT, CENTER STAGE

Every 6 weeks on Monday night Christian Life Church holds a Holy Spirit Night. It's widely advertised and people from across Birmingham and from a variety of church backgrounds attend. The focus is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The presentation is clear but low-key, and people are being filled consistently.

The format is simple — 40 minutes of Bible teaching on the Holy Spirit, 10 minutes of questions and answers, and then a break.

"People are free to go home and research the Baptism on their own or get as far from the church as they want to and never come back again," says Duvall. "After that break, if they're interested in moving into the baptism in the Holy In this atmosphere of worship, the church's 12 pastors stand in pairs at the front of the auditorium. Long lines begin to form as people seek the Baptism, healing, and other miracles.

"One of the pastors spoke a word of prophecy to one woman," Canales remembers. "She broke down and began to confess about her marriage, which was going to divorce. Her husband came forward. They reconciled. The entire pastoral staff gathered around the couple. The Lord opened up the service for any other people who were going through the same thing, and it turned into a service of power and reconciliation."

But beyond the special emphases, these pastors prioritize the Spirit's ministry in their churches' regular services.

"We have a fairly routine New Testament worship time,"

Spirit, then they're welcome to come in, and we really believe that we're going to have a Book of Acts' experience."

According to Duvall, the service has become a spiritual lifeline raising



"We're going to take the Holy Spirit out of the afterglow room and put Him in the sanctuary."—Isaac Canales

the vitality of the church and bringing to fruition the work of the Spirit in visitors' lives.

"We had two people come to a Holy Spirit Night," Duvall recalls. "They said, 'We saw your sign. We were praying in recent weeks and received this prayer language. We don't know what it all means.' Missionaries from another denomination on their way to Africa have come in and said, 'We saw the sign. We know we need everything we can get for our ministry, and we wanted to find out what this was all about.' "

Canales and Mision Ebenezer Family Church hold Catch the Fire services on the first Sunday night of each month.

"I began to preach on the moving of the Holy Spirit and making it clear to people from both the Old Testament and New Testament what the moving of the Spirit is," says Canales. "Then I taught a series on Wednesday nights on the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts, in Luke, and especially Corinthians. People could see that this was a legitimate experience that was given from Jesus, our Lord himself. This created a hunger in the church. So I opened up the first Sunday night of every month. It has exploded."

Canales emphasizes that there is very little structure to a Catch the Fire service. Music and spontaneous worship are the core expressions.

"We play wonderful old classical hymns on the piano," Canales says, "and we begin to worship God. We may sing all night. Nobody has to quit." says Erickson of Sunday services at The People's Church. "In the course of the message, I always honor the Holy Spirit by talking about – even if it is a couple of sentences – the importance of praying in tongues, of being a person devotionally talking with the Lord in the Spirit. I may use different phraseology but I always talk about the baptism in the Holy Spirit as being the normative New Testament experience for a believer."

EVERY BLESSING FOR EVERY AGE GROUP

Churches promoting the Holy Spirit's ministry are not limiting their focus to their adult members.

"We regularly see kids baptized in the Holy Spirit," says Khaleel. "One of our goals is to have kids baptized in the Holy Spirit by the time they're 12. We believe that the power of the Holy Spirit is essential to keep them through their teen years. They must have a powerful encounter with God."

"I saw my own children receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit at 4 and 5 years old," says Valimont. "I feel like if they're old enough to be saved, they ought to be old enough to be filled. In our children's churches we talk about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We pray with them."

The results are transformed young lives. Valimont reports fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade children who have made a spiritual covenant. "They're reading their Bibles and fasting," he says. "Some say you shouldn't have a child learn to fast. My response to that is why not teach them to fast one meal a day occasionally, so they can understand. There are kids all around the world who go without one meal a day. They seem to do all right."

"We had about 37 of our kids baptized in the Holy Spirit just recently in Kids Church," says Berryhill. "This is not just an adult thing. We see it in the youth. We see it in our kids."

For Canales' congregation, Catch the Fire nights have become a prime opportunity for young people to encounter the Spirit's power.

"This has been a real time for our multicultural teenagers to come before the Lord in prayer, and our youth pastors are leading our children into times of receiving the Holy Spirit," Canales says. "To me, it's a little bit scary, but it's wonderful because you can't deny the power of God. You can't deny it."

BANISHING FEAR, RESPONDING TO HUNGER

Canales admits to his own fears in the past, and he relates to pastors who struggle with launching into an undiluted promotion of the Holy Spirit. But he is uncompromising in his commitment to nurturing Pentecost today.

"We're going to take the Holy Spirit out of the afterglow room and put Him in the sanctuary," he says. "That's what I decided to do. I just got tired of hearing of so many ex-Pentecostal churches just stuffing the Lord in the afterglow room."

"I talked with a colleague the other day," says Erickson, "and he said, 'I'm not real good at seeing God do things, at letting the Holy Spirit work. I feel like I'm not equipped.' We need to eliminate that fear with information and know that God wants to better the services. People desperately want a move of the Spirit in



go. I tell our people how our church is governed. I tell them what we believe. I give them from the Word instruction on the etiquette and the person of the Holy Spirit."

"Every time we have a message in tongues and an interpretation," says Valimont, "I explain what's going on for the visitors. We never assume that everybody knows what's going on. In fact, we always assume there are people there who do not know what's going on. We've had times where there have been messages in tongues and interpretations that were out of order, and we've had to call that out of order. In front of several thousand people, that's not always easy. But a lot of people who were uncomfortable with how some undisciplined churches operate in the gifts now feel very comfortable coming because they know if it's out of order, that we will deal with it."

These Assemblies of God clergy are convinced that pastors who will guide their flocks into the deepest expressions of Pentecost in a biblically founded manner will experience true revival in their midst.

"There is a life that is present in a Pentecostal congregation that is not present in non-Pentecostal congregations," Khaleel says. "There is a level of sanctification that is present among Pentecostals that is not present among non-Pentecostals. I also see a zealousness of soul winning that is a natural part of the church's life, not just a program of the church.

"Many of the mainline denominational churches are trying to adopt a form of worship without necessarily having the

"I believe you get what you preach for. If you preach for salvation, you are going to get salvations."—Maria Khaleel

their church. Ministers don't have to be afraid or nervous about what the Holy Spirit is going to do."

Abuses can creep into any corporate expression of faith, pastors acknowledge. But that is where focused teaching from the pulpit comes into play.

"People appreciate it when you say, 'If this gift is not edifying the church, then it's not appropriate," says Duvall. "Then, when they ask what is the proper way for a gift to edify the church, that gives you opportunity to talk about ways everyone can be blessed and hear the interpretation or the word from the Lord or maybe the appropriate timing in the service so the church can be edified. People want to be educated. Leaving it just to guesswork is not the right way to Spirit of worship. During worship, when the Spirit is allowed to move, people meet God. We've even had people saved before the preaching of the Word by the very presence of God in operation in the midst of His people."

EMBRACING GROWTH

Far from driving people away, then, an intentional focus on the Holy Spirit nurtures personal spiritual growth. As a result, true Pentecostalism nurtures corporate growth.

Now in the second year of their Monday night Catch the Fire services, Canales and Mision Ebenezer Family Church have integrated a prioritized Pentecost with their church's capital campaign. "We call it 'Catch the Vision,' " Canales says. "God's blown up our finances."

The church has bought a \$5.5 million property.

"We have 6 acres here of prime property in the gateway of the South Bay area and Los Angeles off of the 405, 110, and 91 freeways," Canales says. "The main arteries of all of LA connect right outside of our gates."

Khaleel started New Life Assembly in 1992 and has seen more than 3,600 salvation decisions. The church now includes some 30 nationality groups and has about 750 in attendance on Sunday morning. Throughout that growth, the Pentecostal in name only," says Wood. "The utilization of the term *Pentecost* implies that we are a restoration church, that we represent the kind of atmosphere that was present in the Early Church. If we no longer represent that, then we've hung a slogan outside of our door that masks the reality. The Pentecostal church has to have the product that it holds itself out to have. If it doesn't, it's in trouble."

"Our pulpits need to articulate that the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to make Jesus a contemporary, to make Him real in the next 24 hours," Crabtree says. "Some mainline churches are declining because there is a focus on



"It was amazing to me to see as people began to get filled with the Holy Spirit the differences in discipleship it made." —Randy Valimont

Baptism has never moved off of Khaleel's priority list.

"We lead the majority of our people through to the baptism in the Holy Spirit," she says.

Duvall looks back to 1996 when he started Christian Life Church with 58 people the first Sunday. The church has grown nearly tenfold, drawing people from across suburban Birmingham.

AN EYE TOWARD THE FUTURE

The Assemblies of God's executive officers all stress that the Holy Spirit must continue to play a vital role in every avenue of church leadership and church life if the Fellowship is to thrive.

"We have people. We have finances. We have facilities," says Trask. "We have these blessings because of the Holy Spirit. It would be a tragedy for the church to live under the canopy of God's blessing and grace these 90 years and then say we don't need His help, His insight, and His wisdom. It would be the tragedy of all tragedies."

"I don't believe the Assemblies of God will be an effective force for God within a generation if we deny the very reason why we were brought into existence," says Crabtree.

"Ministry success is often defined by attendance and getting people involved," says Bridges. "I don't see that as the criteria of the gospel of the New Testament. A Pentecostal ministry is certainly reaching people and gathering people, but it is so much more. It is what you do with people when you get them. It's what kind of a transformation, what kind of a lifestyle you can bring them into."

"It would be tragic if the Assemblies of God became

a 'historical' Christ. If we say, 'Well, the Baptism isn't necessary. Tongues is not necessary,' what we have is a historical Pentecost. The problem with a historical Pentecost is that it results in a historical Christ rather than a contemporary Christ who we need today, who is revealed, who is working, who is presently alive in the practical aspects of life."

The hunger for a contemporary Pentecost is firmly planted in the hearts of many Assemblies of God pastors. They are committed to keeping the flame of the Holy Spirit kindled within spiritually hungry lives. It's a mandate they want to pass on.

"We have four services back-to-back on Sunday morning," says Canales. "I just want to say, 'OK, Lord, if You want to take over, we're just going to let her rip.' I can see the Lord bubbling up during our quiet times after praise and worship. There's just a real awesome calm over 700 folk. Then, somebody will say something in the Spirit. Sometimes we have someone interpret that, sometimes we don't. But we're being obedient to the Lord and letting that happen more and more. And we're just going to let it rip."

"I'm Pentecostal to the bone," says Berryhill. "You cut me, I'm going to bleed Pentecost. The theme that I am imparting to my people is we want to reach nations and generations. One generation shall tell another and keep this Pentecostal flame burning. That's my passion. That's what I want to do."



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What ODES it mean to be Pentecostal?

DEFINING A PENTECOSTAL

It is interesting to observe how non-Pentecostals are attempting to define what it means to be Pentecostal. Recently, a book entitled *How To Be Pentecostal Without Speaking in Tongues*,¹ written by a non-Pentecostal, defines Pentecostals from an external viewpoint. The author maintains when certain outward actions and expressions are copied, this is tantamount to being Pentecostal.

The church at Rome was using this same approach to define what it meant to be a Jew. However, Paul the apostle corrected their thinking by explaining, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly." To define a Jew, outward circumcision was not sufficient; it had to be an inward "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28,29*).

By way of comparison we would add: it is not the outward, exuberant expressions of shouting aloud our praises to God, singing choruses, raising our hands, or jumping for joy that make a person Pentecostal. These are merely means through which the Pentecostal experience is manifested. Such expressions and actions can be imitated without a spiritual experience. It is the inward experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and living the life of a Spirit-filled believer as taught in Scripture that defines a Pentecostal.

The characteristics of a Spirit-filled life are often absent in

the lives of believers attending Pentecostal churches because a dynamic life in the Spirit is not always taught, understood, and modeled to them. Many coming to a Pentecostal church from a non-Pentecostal background do not fully understand what it means to be Pentecostal. They do not understand what Pentecostals believe and practice, nor do they understand what it means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to exercise the Pentecostal gifts and ministries. To many, being Pentecostal simply means attending a Pentecostal church.

An important function of the pastoral role is to clearly define and communicate to those sitting in our pews what it means to be Pentecostal in the New Testament sense of the word.

Five identifying characteristics are evident in the lives of Pentecostal people.

A PERSON IS PENTECOSTAL WHOSE EXPERIENCE IS EXPRESSED IN AND THROUGH HIS LIFESTYLE

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in other tongues as the Spirit enables, is a distinct experience that is subsequent to and separate from conversion. Jesus spoke of this experience in John 7:38: "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

So we would not miss this truth, John commented: "But this spake he of the Spirit" (verse 39) that was to be given after Jesus' resurrection and glorification (see Acts 2:32,33).

BY JAMES K. BRIDGES



Jesus invites every believer to "come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37), symbolizing the Spirit's work in conversion. And further, those who continue to drink of the Holy Spirit will receive the infilling and overflowing river of the Spirit that Jesus promised in Acts 1:5: "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Jesus, whom John declared to be the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33), did not design an isolated work of the Spirit, but intended that His formula of "thirst, come, drink, and flow" would become a lifestyle in the Spirit.

The apostle Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 12:13 gives further emphasis to this truth: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Some identify these two metaphors as a Hebrew synonymous parallel that refers to the same experience. However, Stanley Horton, in his commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians, accurately explains that Paul had something else in mind. Those baptized into one body are then "given the one Spirit to drink or made to drink with the same Spirit" (Horton's translation). He states: "This is a new fact and can mean we are imbued or saturated with the one Spirit and can thus refer to an experience like that on the Day of Pentecost."²

It is clear that the believer is being encouraged to drink deeply of the Spirit on a continuing basis. This is in keeping with the directive that the apostle Paul issued in Ephesians 5:18: "but be filled with the Spirit." Weymouth translates: "Drink deeply of God's Spirit." This is not a one-time encounter with the Holy Spirit — it is a lifestyle of living and walking in the fullness of the Spirit. A Pentecostal seeks to imitate the lifestyle of the Early Church where the disciples were filled with the Spirit, power, wisdom, faith, love, joy, and good works.

A PERSON IS PENTECOSTAL WHOSE THEOLOGY IS PREDICATED ON SCRIPTURE

A Pentecostal looks to and leans on Scripture to establish a biblical worldview. In his book, *Think Like Jesus*, George Barna states, "Only 14 percent of born-again adults ... rely on the Bible as their moral compass and believe that moral truth is absolute."³ Pentecostals, however, accept the Bible as the Word of God and believe it is without error, infallible, inspired, and the authoritative rule for faith and conduct. The Bible is the basis of a Pentecostal's theology.

Pentecostals stand firmly with those who have upheld the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Charles H. Spurgeon stated: "We contend for every word of the Bible and believe in the verbal, literal inspiration of Holy Scripture. Indeed, we believe there can be no other kind of inspiration. If the words are taken from us, the exact meaning is of itself lost."

Bishop J.C. Ryle pointed out the danger of assuming anything less than full inspiration: "We corrupt the Word of God most dangerously when we throw any doubt on the plenary inspiration of any part of the Holy Scriptures. This is not merely corrupting the cup, but the whole fountain. This is not merely corrupting the bucket of living water, but poisoning the whole well."

In his early ministry, Billy Graham confessed his doubts about the inspiration and authority of the Bible. He spent much time in prayer and came to a firm conviction that the Bible is the authoritative, inspired Word of the living God. After that experience he testified that the Bible became a sword in his hand. Pentecostals, like the Thessalonians, have "received the Word of God ... not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

A PERSON IS PENTECOSTAL WHOSE HERMENEUTIC IS INFORMED BY HIS EXPERIENCE

Jesus put an expert in the Law on the spot when he tried to test the Lord concerning Scripture. Jesus asked him two questions: "What do the Scriptures say?" and "How do you interpret them?" (Luke 10:25,26). These continue to be the two most important questions for anyone studying the Bible. We must know what the Bible says, and we must know how to interpret what it says.

The Pentecostal hermeneutic unashamedly brings the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit into its system of interpreting Scripture. We reject the accusation that Pentecostals are unbiblical because they except their own experience rather than Scripture. Those who claim the gifts of the Spirit no longer exist are doing what they are accusing Pentecostals of doing — excepting their own non-Pentecostal experience.

Pentecostals agree with Roger Stronstad: "It is proper to affirm that only the redeemed, only those whose faith is the same as the apostles, can do biblical exegesis and theology. In other words, saving faith is the necessary experiential prerequisite for understanding the biblical message."⁴ Stronstad added: "Pentecostals bring a valid experiential presupposition to the interpretation of Acts … which enables them to understand the charismatic life of the apostolic church as Luke reports it, better than those contemporary Christians who lack this experience"⁵

The Pentecostal believer in the 21st century relies on the Holy Spirit in the same manner the disciples did in the first century. Luke recorded how Jesus, after His resurrection, "opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). Prior to His death He promised that in His absence the Father would send "another Comforter" (John 14:16), the Spirit of Truth, who would "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

Today, the Pentecostal believer looks to the Holy Spirit for the essential guidance and illumination necessary to truly understand the Word of God — the same Holy Spirit who inspired holy men of God to prophesy as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). For the Pentecostal, to surrender the interpretation of Scripture to the modernists and secularists who have no faith, no salvation in Christ, and no Holy Spirit baptism – and yet profess to be religious scholars — is to surrender biblical hermeneutics to unbelievers and heathen who have no acquaintance with the Author of the Book. This is like asking a blind man to paint a picture of a sunrise he has never seen and never can see.

The Pentecostal hermeneutic is governed by the truth of 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This means the Book of Acts is as didactic as the Epistles and teaches believers to expect a normative experience in the Spirit. Pentecostals understand that Luke in Acts 2:4 is setting forth a pattern for Spirit baptism in the New Testament church. Peter understood this when he validated the Gentile Spirit baptism (Acts 10–11) before his Jewish brethren by comparing it with the Jewish baptism on the Day of Pentecost. Peter said first, "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15), and second, "God gave them the like gift as he did unto us"

(Acts 11:17). Luke noted that the Jewish brothers who accompanied Peter to Cornelius' house agreed that the Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:46). This prompted Peter to affirm that they "have received the Holy Ghost as well as we" (Acts 10:47).

The pattern for Spirit baptism in Acts 2:4 is simple and yet profound. It

involves three elements in the following order: the infilling of the Spirit, the enablement (utterance) through the Spirit, and the speaking by the Spirit. The infilling of the Holy Spirit always precedes speaking in tongues. Enablement always accompanies speaking in tongues, and speaking always requires infilling and enablement. "Infilling" speaks of the coming of the Spirit in fullness and empowerment "upon" the believer (Acts 1:8). "Enablement" speaks of the Spirit's ability to provide a means of vocal expression; a language for the believer to speak what he would be incapable of speaking by his own ability.

"Speaking" refers to the believer's full surrender of his human speech capacity (voice, tongue) to the Holy Spirit. The believer's thought processes are bypassed, allowing the "speaking" to issue from the mind of the Holy Spirit. This experience of Spirit baptism identifies Pentecostals, and along with their faith, informs their understanding and interpretation of Scripture.

A PENTECOSTAL IS A PERSON WHOSE DISCIPLESHIP IS MOD-ELED AFTER THE EARLY CHURCH

Jesus' followers were first disciples before they were apostles. It was from following Him, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me" (Matthew 11:29), that they became fishers of men (Luke 5:10). Luke identified the characteristics of discipleship when he stated: "They (the 3,000) continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Pentecostals have experienced an enduement of power for life and service just as Jesus said they would (Luke 24:49). They have also found, as the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths has stated, that, "With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37–39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20)." These are the traits of a New Testament Spirit-filled disciple.

The characteristics of a Spirit-filled life are often absent in the lives of believers attending Pentecostal churches because a dynamic life in the Spirit is not always taught, understood, and modeled to them.

> Pentecostals seek to follow the Early Church disciples' example in the stewardship of their time, talents, and treasure. In their disciplines we learn the secret of their success. A mark of the Early Church was their commitment to truth. To maintain the purity of the truth they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). A grave concern of Pentecostals today is to remain true to apostolic teaching. We recognize in the Old and New Testaments the teachings of the prophets and the apostles. These teachings are the foundation of the household of God, and Jesus Christ himself is the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

> Pentecostals reject the spurious teachings that declare the Bible to be an old, outdated revelation. They also reject those who declare that the church has received new revelations through newly appointed apostles and prophets to replace

the revelations found in Scripture. Regarding the revelation of the Word of God, a Pentecostal believes, "If it is new, it is not true; and if it is true, it is not new."

Like the Early Church, Pentecostals seek to congregate around the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and build a fellowship based on His teachings and commandments, His ordinances, and the instructions of His apostles and prophets. Luke used a word that is translated "with one accord" (Acts 2:46) nearly a dozen times. It speaks of the close relationship the disciples had with one another and with their Lord. This "accord" came through the presence of the Holy Spirit as they met continually in the temple to worship, pray, and preach to the masses, and from house to house (Acts 2:46) where they partook of the Lord's Supper and discipled believers through teaching and mentoring. Pentecostals seek to replicate and emulate this discipleship model today.

A PENTECOSTAL IS A PERSON WHOSE MINISTRY DEPENDS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT'S GIFTS

Pentecostals understand that Spirit baptism is an anointing to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord and to confront the powers of darkness that control this world. Peter said of Jesus: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). Our Lord was exalted to the right hand of God to minister His Spirit to His church (Acts 2:33) so we might operate in the same anointing He operated in when He was on earth.

A Pentecostal believes that Spirit baptism is the source and headwater for many of the gifts and ministries described in



"Here's my RX. Get a sitter for the weekend, take your wife out to dinner, sleep in 'til noon, and I guarantee those bags under your eyes will go."

1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and Romans 12. The powers of darkness launched a strong offensive against our Lord at His first coming and repeatedly manifested their wicked control of the human race. In these last days prior to His second coming, we see the increased activity of satanic power endeavoring to hinder the purposes of God and halt the advance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Jesus gave His disciples authority and power over the enemy. The church has been equipped through Spirit baptism with the gifts and ministries of the Spirit to counter the powers of darkness on an even larger scale since Jesus' resurrection and exaltation (John 14:12).

Jesus is our model for Pentecostal ministry. Luke records that Jesus was "full of the Holy Ghost" and was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness" to confront the devil (Luke 4:1,2). His victory over Satan was accomplished through the Holy Spirit. His preaching was powerful and effective because the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, anointing Him to preach, to heal, to proclaim liberty, to give sight to the blind, and to set the oppressed free (Luke 4:18). The world we minister to is in the same condition — poor, brokenhearted, imprisoned, blind, oppressed, and in need of a Jubilee — a day of release. Pentecostals believe the same Spirit that anointed Jesus is promised to us to do His will and work.

What does it mean to be Pentecostal?

- It means allowing our Lord to carry out His heavenly ministry in us through the promised gift of His Spirit (Acts 2:33).
- It means being allowed to participate through the Holy Spirit in the purpose for which the Son of God was manifested: "that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).
- It means being empowered by the Holy Spirit to exercise the Pentecostal gifts and ministries.

When we see how God has blessed and used the Pentecostal movement since the turn of the 20th century, we should be grateful that our Lord has given us the privilege of being a part of this Pentecostal outpouring.



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* Scripture references are from the King James Version.

ENDNOTES

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vitt Talmage

What a Name To Live Up To

My first name is Charles. There are conflicting stories why I received such a distinguished Mname. When I was born early one morning (in the parsonage), my much-older brother David was awakened by my first "sermon." When he was told that the "preacher" was his new baby brother, he proceeded to jump out of bed and insist I be named "Little Charlie." Another explanation for my name is that I arrived before the doctor could get to my mother's side. He said, "You should call him 'Charles' after Lindbergh because he flew into this world."

My second name is Talmage, which has caused some unkind responses and bemused looks. "Where did that come from?" From all accounts, my parents wanted to memorialize my "Uncle Tal" who unfortunately died in the Klondike seeking his fortune.

BY CHARLES T. CRABTREE

Some years later a preacher who was a devotee of Charles Spurgeon and Dewitt Talmage learned of my full name. He turned to my parents and said with awe in his voice, "What a name you have given this boy to live up to."

Whenever I am introduced to a Pentecostal preacher, the words, "What a name to live up to," often come to mind. To live up to the title of "Pentecostal preacher" is to strive to succeed beyond a Lindbergh, Talmage, or Spurgeon.

BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS

It is important to go back to Scripture to reaffirm truth, values, and divine perspective. It is critical today when truth is deemed relative, values are a moving target, and a worldly view is the only view many people have.

The Pentecostal preacher must never allow the secular world to define who he is. When that happens, it is not long before he begins to perform to satisfy the world, whether it is the secular world or the church world. "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Proverbs 29:25*).

The question we always need to ask about any subject touching ministry is not "What do people think?" but "What does God say?" Questions such as "What is a Pentecostal?" or "What does a Pentecostal preacher look like and act like?" are incomplete. The right question should be "What is a Pentecostal preacher, and what does he act like from God's point of view?" In the long run, God's view is the only view that matters. (See the sidebar "The Pentecostal Preacher.")

To define spiritual truth, it is imperative to establish the biblical definition; otherwise, we will interpret truth based on human interpretation. A Pentecostal believer needs to

To live up to the title of "Pentecostal preacher" is to strive to succeed beyond a Lindbergh, Talmage, or Spurgeon.

listen to unregenerate people only a short time to understand their total inability to grasp spiritual truth. A brilliant person with a Ph.D. and an IQ of 180, without the new birth and the revelation of the Holy Spirit, is not qualified to comment on spiritual truth. "But the natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14, emphasis added). May a Pentecostal preacher never be intimidated or influenced by the best minds in the world, if they are of the world.

There is little argument when establishing a biblical definition for the word *preacher*. A preacher is one who proclaims biblical truth, including the gospel. An ordained preacher is one set apart and appointed by supreme authority to proclaim the whole counsel of God. This is truly an awesome appointment and responsibility.

When we place the word *Pentecostal* next to the word *preacher*, we are dealing with a title of great importance in the kingdom of God. There are, however, few words in the church world under more scrutiny, creating more controversy and utter confusion than the word *Pentecostal*. There are reasons why.

Pentecost, by its nature, can only be expressed in supernatural terms. It is a promised gift from God, first evidenced by a language that usually cannot be comprehended by others, followed by spiritual power demonstrated in special enablements, and spiritual character with miraculous results. It is no wonder people have difficulty defining such a divine complexity.

Pentecostal practice is demonstrated through imperfect people. The result is an uncomfortable tension between the natural man and the Spirit of God. It is easy and even tempting to fall into the trap of deciding the validity of Pentecost by its imperfect demonstration rather than the promise of God. We may try, but we cannot understand revelation through empirical evidence and logic.

People will never understand Pentecost. It is not our task to understand the words and works of God. It is our responsibility, however, to believe God's Word and obey His directives. If the Pentecostal church ever gets to the place where it will not proclaim the supernatural because it does not understand its demonstrations and results, it will no longer be a Pentecostal church.

Divine healing is one of the greatest examples of a decreasing emphasis on supernatural gifts. It is tragic to see many ministers stepping back from preaching on the subject

> because they cannot figure out why some are healed and others are not, especially when they pray with the same faith and proclaim the same truth. To be honest, some of them are embarrassed because they do not see the results they expect. Pentecostal preachers are not

responsible to perform miracles; they are only responsible to preach the Word of the Miracle Worker. "These signs shall follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17), not "These signs shall follow them that figure it out." Pentecost is a supernatural designation that functions within the sovereignty of God, not the understanding of man.

I belabor the point of defining the word *Pentecostal* because the truth of a definition will determine its value and that in turn will determine performance by those who are identified with it. If we cling to the biblical definition of what a Pentecostal preacher is, our expectations will rise to the level of the supernatural. If we define a Pentecostal preacher from a carnal perspective, our expectations will sink to the level of human performance. Every relationship comes with a set of expectations. Honest, sincere people will perform based on what they perceive those expectations to be. For instance, if a pastor hires a youth pastor, he needs to clearly explain what he expects from that youth pastor. Otherwise, the youth pastor will perform according to what he learned from others. I have watched good people on a staff work hard but not please the pastor because the staff person had a different perspective and performed according to his own definition of the job. The expectations, descriptions, and responsibilities of a Pentecostal preacher must be raised to the biblical paradigm. Only then will both the preacher and the hearer perform according to God's expectations. Believe me — they are high.

A Pentecostal person is identified with the Day of Pentecost in experience and practice. The Day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of Christ's promise to endue every believer with divine power. It is a transcendent power (from on high). The disciples were commanded to wait until they had received that power before they went into the world for ministry.

The Day of Pentecost established the physical evidence for all who would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the wisdom of God, He chose the most unruly member of the body — the tongue — to prove an individual had been filled or was under the control of the Holy Spirit. It is an oxymoron to say that a person who has never spoken in tongues is Pentecostal.

The problem with many Pentecostals (including Pentecostal preachers) is after receiving the Baptism with the initial physical evidence, their testimony is "and they stopped" rather than the testimony of the New Testament disciples that was "and they continued" (Acts 2:42).

Pentecost gets a bad name because too many people who have received the Baptism look on the experience as an end in itself instead of the beginning of a new life and ministry. The results are devastating. There is no continuing evidence of supernatural power and character. Like the Galatians, they begin in the Spirit and try to be perfected in the flesh (Galatians 3:3). A true Pentecostal preacher receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit and then proceeds to live in the fullness of the Spirit.

To be a Pentecostal preacher in the truest sense is to emulate the lives and ministries of the New Testament apostles. We can examine the words, works, and habits of the apostles and know what it means to be a Pentecostal preacher — a great name to live up to.

A PENTECOSTAL PREACHER MAIN-TAINS A DISCIPLINED SPIRITUAL LIFE

Any serious student of the New Testament church is deeply impressed by the spiritual character and behavior of the New Testament believers and apostles.

The Pentecostal preacher must be continually filled with

THE PENTECOSTAL PREACHER

The proof a preacher is truly Spirit-filled and Pentecostal can be outlined in five dimensions:

A SPIRIT-FILLED CHARACTER

The Pentecostal preacher maintains a Spirit-filled character. Without the fruit of the Spirit, all of the other characteristics of a Pentecostal ministry are nullified and the operation of the Spirit's gifts undermined.

A SPIRIT-FILLED MIND

The Pentecostal preacher has a Spirit-filled mind. This vital dimension is often overlooked, especially in the areas of sermon preparation and delivery.

The Spirit-filled mind will be in self-analysis with the mind of Christ. The Spirit will constantly remind preachers that their role is that of a servant, not of a lord or ruler over God's heritage. High-minded preachers are a danger to their flocks flocks put under their care by the Lord. A true shepherd is willing to lay down his life for his sheep; he knows his role from the perspective of the mind of Christ.

A SPIRIT-FILLED COMMUNICATION WITH GOD

The Pentecostal preacher enjoys Spirit-filled communication with God. The gift of tongues in the life of Pentecostal believers should be one of the most treasured, divine resources to be exercised day by day. If that is true of believers, it is doubly true of preachers. Their need for intimate communication with God is obvious, to say the least.

A SPIRIT-FILLED DIRECTION

The Pentecostal preacher is given Spirit-filled direction. The Spirit's promise to guide us into all truth is not limited to one or two functions. It seems obvious that if a person is under the total control of the Spirit, he will constantly be given direction in all circumstances.

EXPECTANT OF SIGNS AND WONDERS

Pentecostal preachers can and should expect signs and wonders to be part of their ministries. This emphasis should be woven throughout the fabric of a Pentecostal ministry. From the opening pages of the New Testament to the last, the Word is full of preaching and teaching on the supernatural. If ministers of the gospel want to present themselves as New Testament preachers, their message will include a heavy emphasis upon a miracle-working Jesus. They will believe that if Jesus is alive, then the days of miracles are not past.

CHARLES T. CRABTREE is assistant general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri. Adapted from *Pentecostal Preaching* (Gospel Publishing House: Springfield, Mo., 2003. Used by permission.) the Spirit. A daily spiritual regimen is required for the Holy Spirit to keep Jesus alive through a human vessel. A great mistake is made when a Pentecostal preacher is satisfied with the supernatural acts of God but not with a Christlike life. We are to judge a person's spirituality by fruit, not gifts.

The disciples learned firsthand that the Holy Spirit had come in His fullness to supernaturally change their character and persona. Peter is the prime example. Before receiving

Q & A WITH IVAN M. SATYAVRATA

IN YOUR CONTEXT, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PENTECOSTAL PASTOR?



SATYAVRATA: A Pentecostal pastor has:
an intimate relationship with God. He knows God. His ministry is grounded in an encounter with God through the Holy Spirit.

- heard the call of God and has been led into ministry because he has heard from God.
- a burden for a particular kind of ministry. A Pentecostal pastor should be active in ministry because he has a burden for either a place or a people.
- 1. God has called him to a place either through a vision or through the impetus of the Holy Spirit to plant a church to meet a specific need.
- 2. God has called him to people often in a cross-cultural situation who have never heard the gospel or have had no credible Christian witness.
- a daily walk with God. He is someone people come to because he is a man of God; they may come to a woman who is in touch with God. A Pentecostal pastor can speak for God to someone in need, can connect the person with God's presence, can speak God's Word from the pulpit, in counseling, or in a one-on-one situation. He can speak God's will and Word for a person's situation.
- a responsibility to lead a church to know God's presence clearly and powerfully through the signs of the Kingdom.
 Spiritual manifestations should be evident — both the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit. The love, the unity, and the worship in the church should create an atmosphere where the presence of God — evidenced by the signs of the Kingdom — is so powerfully manifested that the church is an authentic witness to unbelievers. That is the challenge of every Pentecostal pastor — to bring people face-to-face with God's presence through the Spirit's manifestation of the signs of the Kingdom among God's people.

IVAN M. SATYAVRATA, PH.D., president of Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore, India, and chairman of the Asian Theological Association. He earned his Ph.D. through Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, U.K. the gift of the Holy Spirit, he was shot through with character flaws and carnal behavior. The reason for his dramatic change was not that he had lived with Jesus; 3 1/2 years in that relationship did not seem to work. Only after receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit and allowing Jesus to continually live in and through him did Peter become a rock and a true Pentecostal leader.

Far too little emphasis is placed on the role of the Holy Spirit in changing the character and lifestyle of the believer after receiving the Baptism. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ lived out through the believer. It is the indwelling of the Spirit. The fullness of power is necessary to realize the full potential and expression of the fruit of the Spirit.

A Pentecostal preacher should be judged more by character and spirituality than by preaching ability and miracles. It is the duty of Pentecostal preachers to "show and tell" Jesus first by their lives and then by their ministries.

It is not by chance that the Assemblies of God and other American Pentecostal groups can trace their roots to Holiness movements. Spiritual people have always emphasized holiness, purity of life, and sanctification. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, those who seek to live a holy life either try to fulfill the law in the flesh resulting in a most unpleasant legalism, or they give up and live a carnal life undergirded with excuses.

The Pentecostal preacher will live a sanctified, holy lifestyle because he renews his inner man through a devotional life that includes praying in the Spirit and with understanding.

A great attraction to Pentecost, apart from supernatural acts, is the expression of love and joy that accompanies a Spirit-filled life. In analyzing New Testament believers, the dimension of joy is always present. The disciples were "joy-fully holy," not "miserably holy." In spite of insurmountable barriers and great suffering, the joy of the Lord and love for others are hallmarks of Spirit-filled saints.

When I teach ministerial students, I stress the need for people skills because we are in the people business. Preaching and teaching are the means to change people, but not an end in themselves. Some people love crowds but dislike people on a personal level. The desired effects of the greatest sermons can be canceled with a carnal or selfish spirit.

One of my acquaintances asked a well-known and articulate preacher to visit his church and preach. On Saturday night the pastor took his guest to a five-star restaurant. The pastor was excited and honored to host this famous minister. When the server brought the food, the guest preacher proceeded to throw a fit about the food. He sent back the plate and with a loud voice demanded the meal be "comped." The poor server was mortified.

When she left the table, the pastor quietly said, "When she comes back, I want you to witness to her and invite her to church tomorrow." The visiting preacher hung his head in shame and said, "I can't. I have nothing to say." "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

The inescapable lesson for the Pentecostal preacher is the fact the ultimate proof of his spirituality is the ability through the continued infilling of the Spirit to love difficult people, keep patience in frustrating circumstances, possess peace in trouble, and joy in sorrow.

THE TRUE PENTECOSTAL PASTOR WILL BUILD A STRONG PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

The Book of Acts and the Prison Epistles clearly explain the fundamental components and operations of a true Pentecostal church.

Great comfort can be derived from knowing that God has not changed and that human beings have not changed constitutionally. The relationship between God and man is not cultural but spiritual, not temporal but eternal; therefore, the church of Jesus Christ is not the victim of any generation or the slave of passing fads.

Too many Pentecostal preachers are being tempted to move away from a biblical Pentecost because they do not want some of the extremes of the past. They are doing what non-Pentecostals have done for years — pointing to misuse instead of seeking biblical teaching and application.

Emphasis on the Pentecostal experience and the demonstrations of the Spirit has declined. This decline began when pastors did not want the obligation of correcting those who misused tongues and interpretation of tongues. It was easier to excuse themselves by saying that sinners might not understand. They did not realize that tongues are effective in reaching the unbeliever and edifying the body of Christ.

When a Pentecostal pastor does not allow the gifts of the Spirit to operate in the church, he is robbing the Body of supernatural benefits. Furthermore, I have not met a pastor who did not desire public demonstrations of the gifts of the Spirit, leading his congregation in earnestly coveting the best gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31).

A large and growing number of people are being called into Pentecostal ministry. It is their duty to be Pentecostal themselves and to lead their churches in a Pentecostal example.

The title, *Pentecostal*, is challenging to live up to. It has an even greater significance when a person is called a Pentecostal preacher or pastor.

What does it mean to be Pentecostal today? What does a Pentecostal church look like? What are the characteristics of a Pentecostal preacher? More important, why should we want to be Pentecostal and why should a pastor want to build a Pentecostal church? The answers to these questions are found in the Scriptures.

A PENTECOSTAL PREACHER WILL:

- 1. not attempt to minister until he has received power from on high — the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues (Acts 1 and 2).
- 2. preach and proclaim the baptism in the Holy Spirit for the purpose of revealing Jesus accurately (Acts 2).
- 3. provide ways and means for new believers to be baptized, taught sound doctrine, have fellowship, Communion, and prayer meetings, and receive teaching on stewardship (Acts 2:41–47).
- 4. be used of God to perform mighty miracles (Acts 3) for the purpose of preaching Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- 5. stand boldly against those who want to have "church as usual" (Acts 4).
- 6. deal decisively with sin in the church (Acts 5).
- 7. proclaim Pentecost to those who have not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11).
- 8. contend for the faith and not allow legalism to detract from the grace of God (Acts 15).
- 9. prepare others for Pentecostal ministry through example (1 and 2 Timothy).
- 10. preach and live a holy lifestyle (Titus 1:7-11).

A PENTECOSTAL CHURCH WILL:

- 1. believe and wait on God until every member receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues (Acts 2).
- 2. be strong in stewardship and financial generosity (Acts 2:45).
- 3. be strong in personal witness and support home and world missions (Acts 15:25; 1 Corinthians 16:1–3).
- 4. have spiritual gifts in operation (1 Corinthians 12) as powerful agents for unity and miracles.
- 5. recognize all the ministry gifts and gifts of the Spirit for their unique contribution (1 Corinthians 12:28–31).
- 6. multiply in numbers and plant churches (Acts 6; 16:5).
- 7. be known for praising God (Acts 2:47) and singing with the understanding and with the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Now is the time — more than ever before — to be thoroughly Pentecostal in faith and practice. Our culture may change. The world may never be fully receptive to the Pentecostal message. But millions of lost souls condemned by the devil, confused by religion, and dissatisfied with materialism are waiting for the true gospel. This message must be proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit with attending signs and wonders by a Pentecostal preacher. A Pentecostal preacher; what a name to live up to.



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*Scripture references are from the King James Version.



a waterline of another kind

SIX MARKS OF A PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

During my early teenage years I lived in a small, southern Indiana town that backed up to the Ohio River. Giant levees protected the area from flood stages on the Ohio, but over the decades the river had overrun the levees and inundated the town several times.

I remember looking at the interior walls of my junior high school. Near the top of the first floor you could see the distinct, thin, brownish residue left over from the greatest flood that ever hit the town. The intensity of future floods was measured against that waterline.

BY GEORGE O. WOOD

Acts CONTROLOGIES AND C

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CONVERTS

CORE VALUES

First, the 120, plus the 3,000 added on the Day of Pentecost, were devoted to the apostles' teaching — the core values of the Early Church.

The use of the word "devoted" describes the commitment of the early Christians to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayers, and breaking of bread lays to rest the idea that spiritual growth is automatic. Devoted means to persist obstinately with strength or adhere firmly to. The same word describes the persistence of the 120 in prayer in the 10-day time prior to Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Thus, these early believers made it a priority, a firm and fast discipline, a set commitment to give themselves to the apostles' teaching. Let those who minimize doctrine note that the first priority in the Early Church was devotion to the apostles' teaching. Every fad and heresy must be judged by the test: "Was this a core value for the apostles?"

The Pentecostal church ardently proclaims the "faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3, KJV).

Note that the noun is plural — "apostles" "teaching, not "apostle" teaching. In other words, what the Early Church devoted itself to was the collective affirmation of those entrusted by Jesus to proclaim His gospel. Scripture is not a matter of private interpretation. If an individual apostle was not at liberty to proclaim some "truth" that only he had discovered, then there is no warrant for a modern-day preacher or teacher setting forth his own peculiar idea of doctrine.

Obviously, the central theme of apostolic teaching or doctrine was the lordship of Jesus (Acts 2:36; 5:42). Core apostolic values centered on Jesus proclaimed Him as Savior (He rescues us from sin), Healer (He cares for our physical bodies), Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (He sends the Helper to empower us for witness), and soon-coming King (He rescues us from death).

There is yet more to proclaiming Him as Lord. It is one thing to assent to a doctrinal statement that says, "Do you believe Jesus is Lord?" and "Do you proclaim the cardinal truths of a Pentecostal church: Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer, and sooncoming king?" It is quite another thing to inventory our possessions, relationships, time management, lifestyle, and recreational outlets. Is Jesus truly the Lord of my attitudes, my time, my checkbook, my home, and my emotions?

Unfortunately, some view doctrine from the mind-set that doctrine or truth involves only a propositional set of beliefs. A Pentecostal church consists of people who are devoted to Christ living in them. That Christ-centered life is reflected in apostolic core values that regulate what we think (belief) and how we live (behave). Our watchword is "Jesus Is Lord" over thought and deed. No less an authority than the apostle Paul articulated "sound doctrine" as that which shapes our conduct (1 Timothy 1:9–11).

CONNECTED

The second mark of the first Pentecostal church was its focus on relationships. "They devoted themselves to ... the fellowship (*koinonia*), to the breaking of bread, and to prayer."

There is a tremendous difference between building an audience and building a church. When I go to a basketball game, it does not matter to me who is in the stands. I am watching the players. But the church must never be a group of spectators watching platform participants. Pentecostal churches may have great crowds, but they must produce great Christians. An indispensable ingredient for producing great Christians lies in building the relationships that shape spiritual life.

Think for a moment. What has influenced you the most

toward Christ? A particular sermon or song, or a believer whose life deeply impacted you? Most of us would answer the latter. While we thank God for anointed sermons and songs, we must recognize that we were not meant to live the Christian life alone — it is life together in Christ that nourishes the development of strong Christians.

The Early Church grew from 120 to 3,120 in a single day. How would you like to plan that kind of new member absorption?

Let those who minimize doctrine note that the first priority in the Early Church was devotion to the apostles' teaching.

It is obvious that 3,120 members could not have all known each other personally. There were simply too many of them. So, how did the *koinonia* (or fellowship) happen? Acts 2:46 says, "They broke bread in their homes." I would not be surprised to learn that the 120 were the home group leaders for the newly arrived 3,000. Had there not been small group venues, the culture of the 3,000 would have swamped the Pentecostal culture of the 120 — the majority would have shaped the minority. But give the church a Pentecostal core, and the minority will shape the majority.

I doubt that you can truly experience the church of Jesus Christ until you have shared Him together in a small group, ministry task force, or home setting. The churches that realize this are vital bodies the Lord is using to impact culture. They are soul-winning churches, for people are largely won through relationships.

Churches where people only come once a week to worship and then watch everyone go his or her own way do not incorporate new believers into the life of Christ well. Members do not share their needs with one another and people go unsupported in times of burden and crisis. This kind of church is full of unconnected Christians and lacks the dynamics necessary for a growing apostolic church.

Fellowship or *koinonia* does not happen by itself — you must be devoted for it to happen.

So, the Early Church devoted itself to fellowship — to connecting with one another. In fact, the word for "one another" *(allelous)* is used 59 times in the New Testament. We are to love one another, encourage one another, strengthen one another, and a host of additional admonitions dealing with "one another."

True Christian fellowship involves far more than getting together or simply developing mutually satisfying friendships. Other components of that fellowship include the breaking of bread, prayer (Acts 2:42), and the exercise of spiritual, motivational, and ministry gifts for edification of all (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11,12).

The breaking of bread in the Early Church involved more than a brief moment of crackers and grape juice. It was part of the meal. In the midst of eating together — which is time consuming — the early believers carved out moments to reflect on and give thanks for the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. The bread reminded them of His broken body, and the cup reminded them of His shed blood. The center of their

> common mealtime was Christ, and no time of fellowship was complete without devotion to prayer.

The modern-day Pentecostal church can learn from the Early Church. Too often our prayer meetings become a collection of individual believers gathered in the same

place praying their own prayers in their separate places of kneeling, standing, or sitting. I sense from the New Testament that early believers prayed in a more dynamic way. They prayed together, and during prayer they would pray in unison and then pray by turns. The praying "in turns" or spontaneous interaction provided an opportunity for focused agreement and common intercession.

A Pentecostal church consists of individual believers who not only pray as a collective whole, but pray together within smaller units gathered for fellowship and the breaking of bread. The Early Church "ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46,47).

Why were they glad at mealtimes? Were they getting better food since they became believers? I doubt it. Their attitude toward food was different because their mealtimes bound them closer to Jesus and one another.

This should cause us to stop and reflect on our own eating



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habits. We often eat food in a hurry, in argument or silence, or with our minds distracted by reading material, phone calls, or television.

The most necessary and ordinary event of our daily routine — eating — can also be a time when the Spirit affects our relationships with those who share our meal.

From eating food with gladness to the supernatural exercise of charismatic gifts — the Early Church shows us that life in the Spirit ranges on a continuum from the very human to the very divine. Therefore, a Pentecostal church welcomes the Spirit himself and the gifts He bestows.

The connectedness of the Pentecostal church is also seen

on regular occasions when believers come together in larger groups. The First Church met daily in the temple courts (Acts 2:46), and the writer of Hebrews admonished believers to not forsake regularly assembling together (Hebrews 10:25). In a Pentecostal church, it is common for people to say, "I do not want to miss a single service" or "I felt the presence of the Lord."

CONFIRMING

Several weeks ago I preached in a large Assemblies of God church in a Middle Eastern country. When the building emptied of believers, the pastor explained to me that hundreds of

PRESERVING PENTECOST IN THE SMALLER CHURCH: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Gifts often come in small packages. This is true in pastoral ministry. Fostering spiritual life in small to midsize churches requires understanding God's greatness.

When my ministry began at Bethel Assembly, Sunday attendance was 50. I emphasized where God could take us if we would follow His leading. This year is our 10-year anniversary. Attendance is now 300.

Pastors of smaller congregations can experience God's greatness when they promote and seek His presence. If the word Pentecostal appears on our church sign, people must experience what that word implies.

Three prerequisites must be met for the church to operate in the Holy Spirit: Pentecost must be emphasized; the service must allow and expect spiritual manifestations; and time must be spent at the altar.

EMPHASIZE PENTECOST

At Bethel, many people have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must be emphasized for this to happen. We must share the message of salvation and Spirit empowerment.

If you never preach on walking in the Spirit, you limit people's spiritual growth. Believers need to know the Pentecostal experience. We have a mandate to keep Acts alive. Pentecost drew crowds and Peter's message saved thousands. I choose to preach that same message.

ALLOW FOR AND EXPECT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT

Differing opinions on church music divide many churches. My wife, Lauri, is my minister of music. We work together to ensure our worship service leads people to wait on God and hear His voice.

Worship can be an end in itself, but our worship must prepare us to wait in God's presence. People need the opportunity to be still and know that He is God.

SPEND TIME AT THE ALTAR

In the Bible, revival was birthed when the altars were rebuilt.

In Pentecostal churches, the altars must remain open.

We sometimes end services quickly so people can get home or beat the dinner crowd. But we cannot rush the Holy Spirit. God moves when people wait in His presence.

Canceling Sunday night services is becoming a trend. But great altar services will improve Sunday night attendance. We still have 200 people on Sunday night because they expect a move of God at the altar.

God does not change, and neither should our emphasis on worship and time at the altar. I am thankful our church believes in God's power.

Five years ago, we learned that my wife, Lauri, had a tumor on her brain. The doctor said an operation could cause paralysis, severe brain damage, blindness, or death. The negative prognosis, however, did not change our belief in God's power.

Lauri's surgery lasted more than 7 hours. The surgeon explained that her brain had swelled and the operation had to be terminated.

As they rolled her into ICU, she was singing and praising God. In 10 days she was home, in 3 weeks she was in church, in 4 weeks she was leading worship, directing the choir, and running 3 miles a day. Signs and wonders follow those who believe.

LET THE FIRE FALL

A minister said, "Do not be afraid to let the Spirit move in your church."

There should be nothing more alive than a Pentecostal church. Do not settle for a cup of pottage. We have a birthright. Allow God to move your church in a powerful way.

Big things do come in small packages. Do not look at where the church has been, but look to where God can take it. Our mountain is God's footstool and our obstacle is God's opportunity to reveal His power.



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Muslims were at that moment gathering outside for the doors to reopen. Why were they coming? Because they knew the Christians prayed for the sick and cast out demons.

In that church the question of whether we need or do not need the baptism in the Holy Spirit does not even come up. When you are confronting powerful, evil forces, invading hostile, enemy territory, confronting situations individuals have no human answer for, and where positive thinking and self-help techniques do not work — you must have a power that comes from God.

Jesus had warned His disciples, "Don't you dare go out and try to represent Me until you have received power from on high." They obeyed Him and walked through the doorway of the supernatural by experiencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit and then measuring their own or one another's spiritual depth by relegating the work of the Spirit to a past tense event. The Baptism was the gateway into experiencing the miraculous.

The third mark of a Pentecostal church is found in this sentence: "Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:43). This apostolic action is reiterated in the closing words of Mark's

Gospel, "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that accompanied it" (Mark 16:20).

Years ago David du Plessis addressed

the chapel at Union Theological Seminary. Union was known for its Bultmannian neo-orthodox approach to the Bible namely, the task of the biblical interpreter was to "demythologize" Scripture. Bultmann believed the miracles reported in the Gospels were myths. They were invented stories told to illustrate spiritual truth — thus, one must strip the husk (demythologize) off the story to get to the kernel of truth.

Du Plessis, knowing the bias at Union, startled the faculty and students by beginning his address with these words, "People have asked me what I do. My answer is this: my main task is to demythologize the Scripture."

The audience was stunned. They wondered, *How could* this Pentecostal leader be a Bultmannian?

Du Plessis went on to say, "There are two ways to demythologize the Bible. One way is to do what Bultmann and the neoorthodox have done. The other way is to demonstrate that God does the supernatural today. When we demonstrate that, then we show that the Bible stories are not a myth after all. Let me tell you some of the things the Lord has done recently." Du Plessis then described the present-day acts of God.

That is what a Pentecostal church does. It continues not only what the Lord began to teach, but also what He began to do (Acts 1:1). Jesus continues His words and acts through His church. In our American culture, it is possible we have gone overboard on methodologies. We have many books and conferences on church growth, on leadership techniques, and on successful ministry. We all want to replicate the seven habits of highly effective churches in our own environment. There is nothing wrong in sharpening our skills and learning all we can from those whom God is using. The danger lies in thinking that the church can prosper if we can just do the right things.

Something deeper drives the growth of the church. We see it when Paul and Barnabas finished their first missionary journey and reported back to their sending church at Antioch. They did not talk about their missionary strategy, their powerful preaching, their suffering, or the implementation of church governance through the appointment of elders. All those things had happened, but they were not the focus of Paul and Barnabas. "They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).

A Pentecostal church talks insistently and incessantly about what God is doing. The apostle Paul tells us the key to effective Pentecostal leadership: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demon-

Pentecostal churches may have great crowds, but they must produce great Christians.

stration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthians 2:4,5).

The Pentecostal church must avoid the great danger of thinking that church work can be done solely by human power and ingenuity. Our Pentecostal forefathers did not have funds to lend for church mortgages. They had little or none of the resources we have today. Thank God He has given us far more resources in the present hour. But these resources are tools. We are to use them, not rely on them. Our reliance must be on the power of the Spirit to break through the strongholds in our communities. It is not by our power, or by our might, but by His Spirit.

One of my heroes is now with the Lord. He died last year at the age of 96. My parents helped lay the foundation of a church in northwest China, and Pastor Mung took the work when they left. Ultimately he was arrested and spent long years in prison. Afterward, he was permitted to preach again and reopened the church in 1983. It had been closed 27 years. He was 75 years old at the time, and the church only had 30 elderly people when it restarted. At his death, 20 years later, the church numbered 14,000 adult, baptized believers.

When I first talked with him again in 1988, the church was at 1,500. I asked him, "Pastor Mung, how did this happen?"

He probably thought that, as an American, I was looking for an answer that would give me a transferable technique. We are great at that in the West — "If I can figure out how they did it, I can do it too."

He smiled and gave me an answer I will never forget. "Well," he said, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Then he added, "And we pray a lot." He then went on to describe what the Lord had done in that town. A Pentecostal church lives in the midst of the supernatural and describes its progress by "what the Lord has done." It expects the Lord to confirm His Word with signs following.

CARING

Why is the Pentecostal movement the fastest-growing segment of the Church? It is because Spirit-filled people care about reaching the lost and helping the found. No other seg-

PRESERVING PENTECOST IN THE LARGER CHURCH: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As senior pastor, I must be the prime facilitator of the Spirit's moving in my church. I must be the pacesetter and then expect my staff to follow. If large churches are to be spiritual powerhouses, evidenced by the Holy Spirit's presence and manifested through Spirit baptisms, salvations, healings, and the charismatic exercise of the gifts, then it must come through the direct, intentional efforts of the senior pastor. I have instituted five areas of intentional focus at Cornerstone:

BY PREACHING

A pastor once told me, "No one is being saved in my church."

I asked, "Are you preaching on salvation?"

He answered, "No, I am preaching to believers."

I replied, "There is your answer."

Until we preach on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, people are not going to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. We underestimate the power of proclamation: "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Holy Spirit baptism is not only something that is taught, but is also imparted. Faith ignites the Word that is in the heart of the believer. We must constantly preach on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for dynamic Christian living.

BY PRACTICING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PRIVATELY

The power of the Holy Spirit must be experienced privately. With all the resources we have access to, we must be careful not to neglect the Holy Spirit's resources at the expense of man-made resources. As pastors, we cannot lose the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If He is not the source of inspiration — the fuel for passion in our personal lives — we will never truly demonstrate His power to our congregation.

BY PRACTICING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PUBLICLY

Pentecostal ministers must practice the presence of the Holy Spirit publicly. I must show my dependency on the Holy Spirit to the leaders I influence and the congregation I lead. My staff must know that a servant of God should not be led by his or her own knowledge or abilities, but by the Spirit. The leading of God's Spirit is the greatest commodity I have. If the leaders in my church do not see me practicing that publicly, they will not understand my dependence on the Holy Spirit and will never see their need for Him.

BY PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MOVE

I facilitate the Spirit's moving in my church by providing opportunities for people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pastors must regularly preach on the Baptism if they want their people to be filled. If people are not getting saved, pastors need to preach more evangelistic sermons and give more altar calls. If people are not receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, pastors must preach more on the Baptism.

BY ALLOWING THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OPERATE

We must give opportunity for our people to develop spiritual gifts in their lives. We spend time preaching about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but we must spend even more time teaching on the gifts of the Spirit and how they work in the life of the church and believer. If we teach that the Baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used only in church, we have missed the biblical mandate. If our people believe spiritual gifts are only used for an hour on Sunday morning or night, they will not have much use for them. Our congregants must see the gifts of the Spirit as pertinent to everyday living.

Pastors of large churches face the challenge of providing opportunity for the Holy Spirit to move in the lives of believers at every level of church ministry. At Cornerstone, we encourage all departmental ministry leaders — whether lay or staff to allow the Holy Spirit to move in and through individuals in their meetings, whether they work with men, women, youth, or children. In these smaller services, believers are taught to overcome their fears and are encouraged in the use of spiritual gifts. The fires begin in smaller areas. When these same people come to our main services, it becomes natural for them to minister in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The main service is not merely consumed with expressions of the Holy Spirit, but is a synergy of empowerment in the lives of all believers.

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ment in the contemporary body of Christ can match Pentecostals in their financial generosity toward missionary and compassion enterprises.

Acts 2:44,45, tells us that the first expression of caring in the Early Church came in their financial generosity toward one another. Someone has said they practiced communism with a small "c" — those who gathered little had no lack and those who gathered much had nothing left over.

In reading Acts we must always apply the question as to whether a particular incident is meant to be unique or normative for the entire church. It is obvious from the balance of the New Testament that the Jerusalem experiment in communal living did not become a pattern for the rest of the church. There is no command in the New Testament that believers should live out of a common pooled fund; there is no example of other churches doing so; and within the early Jerusalem church the practice of pooling assets was voluntary, not conscripted.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact even though the particular form of generosity practiced by the early Jerusalem church did not become normative — generosity itself is normative.

Something happens to the wallet of a Spirit-filled person and a Spirit-filled church. Show me a church that has no compassion for the poor in its midst, does not seek to meet needs within its community, and gives little or nothing of its substance to missions, and I will show you a church that is not Pentecostal. It may have the name Pentecostal on its marquee, or even Assembly of God on its sign — but in reality it is a functioning non-Pentecostal church.

Unfortunately, a limitation of the early Jerusalem church is that it did not use its resources for missionary endeavor outside its own cultural boundaries. Over time, the Spirit corrected that mistake through establishing sending churches like Antioch.

A Pentecostal church cares deeply about the needs of people. First, their spiritual need — that is why we send those called to plant churches and do the varied work involved in home and world missions. Second, we care about the needs within our own local body and our community. In recent years we have witnessed the Spirit birthing a multitude of compassion ministries to meet the physical, social, and relational needs of those without their own resources.

The Pentecostal church generously responds to the demands of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) and the compassion commission (James 1:27).

CREDIBLE

In the days after the outpouring of the Spirit, the church in Jerusalem enjoyed "the favor of all the people" (Acts 2:47).

The approval of the church by the watching world ranges on a continuum from favor, to neutrality, to marginalization, to outright persecution. It does not matter where the church falls on that continuum, it must be credible.

The Early Church enjoyed favor because the lives of its people were consistent with what it proclaimed. Behavior matched belief.

The community is watching how we treat one another and how we serve in our localities.

A friend of mine has a brother who is in his sixties and recently went through serious heart surgery. He had been away from the Lord all his adult life, but through the witness of my friend, his brother has now given his life to Jesus. My friend informed the local, small Assembly when the brother and his entire family came to the church. One month later no one from the church had called on these new converts. The pastor's excuse was that he had been "too busy." That one incident tells me why that church is not growing — it has no credibility. The pastor himself is simply not credible because his actions toward the lost and the newly found do not square with his preaching about reaching the unsaved.

Effective Pentecostal churches take care of business. Their facilities sparkle even if the building is simple. The sign outside is attractive and the grounds look inviting. The phone is answered and calls are returned. Bills are paid on time. But more than that, the surrounding community is served. The Pentecostal church looks for needs within its locality that it can address. It remembers that Jesus healed people without first asking if they believed in Him as the Messiah.

Both the New Testament and the contemporary church illustrate that even when the church does its best to win the favor of those around it, opposition and persecution may come. But the body of Christ should always operate with integrity so the world would not have an opportunity to discredit the church.



"So you're that pastor. I was wondering how your wife earned all those crowns."

CONVERTS

The primary purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is empowerment for witness (Acts 1:8). Therefore, a Pentecostal church without converts is one in name only. The first Pentecostal church grew as "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

Perhaps the time has come for us to look more carefully at the nomenclature in American churches and recognize that there is a vast difference between reporting the number of souls "saved" and the number of actual "converts." A convert is one whose life is truly changed and who is indeed "added to the church."

Earlier I mentioned Pastor Mung in northwest China and the growth of his church. I asked him the process the church used when a person came to faith and was being added to the church. He told me that most conversions were through personal witness, and that the doorway of entry for most "seekers" was not in their main services but in their many group meetings throughout the city during the week. These home or rented-hall meetings were really evangelistic preaching points in addition to serving as fellowship centers for believers. Once people came to Christ, they were enrolled in a new converts class. To my surprise, he indicated that each new convert had to pass two exams to complete that class. When the new convert course was completed the people, if they desired water baptism, were interviewed by the elders.

The convert had to bring a friend to the interview who knew him before and after his conversion and could attest that since coming to Christ there had been a real change in that person's life. Then, Pastor Mung explained to the convert that following baptism he would register them at the city office as a Christian and that could have implications for their employment or future schooling. In 20 years, over 14,000 people have gone



through this process. The number of "souls saved" and the number "added to the church" is the same number.

That is a great model for us in the American church. We often fall under the spell of "cheap grace," "easy believism," and "no-cost gospel" where the number of those praying the "sinner's prayer" outnumber those added to the church by no less than 10-to-1.

In the truly Pentecostal church, people are being saved regularly and added to the Assembly. By its nature, the church is missions oriented — first at home and then abroad — to fulfill the Great Commission throughout the whole world. Evangelism and missionary endeavor is the natural fruit of a Spirit-filled church's life and witness for Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

I have used the description of the church in Acts 2:42–47 as a template for describing what a Pentecostal church should be. Certainly there are more characteristics than these that could be given — qualities that must be present if the church is Pentecostal.

Paul writes in Romans 12:2 that we are not to be conformed *(schema)* to this world, but instead we are to be transformed *(metamorphe)*. The two Greek words, *schema* and *morphe*, describe the difference between the temporary and the permanent. For example, my *morphe* is male whether I am 6 or 60. My *schema* changes — the photos prove it. I do not look like I did 30 years ago.

Many good people get hung up on this because they confuse *schema* and *morphe* when assessing whether or not a church is Pentecostal. For example, 50 years ago my father preached from notes. For many people, true Pentecostal preaching was "high, loud, and fast." Preachers operated without notes and by spontaneous inspiration. Therefore, to some people Dad did not qualify as a Pentecostal preacher. However, we must never confuse style with substance. The *schema* of preaching or worship does not make it Pentecostal. What makes worship and preaching Pentecostal is that it exalts Christ by the Spirit's empowerment and anointing, edifies the church, and effectively bears witness to the unbeliever.

The schema of Pentecostal singing may include hymns or choruses. It may employ the electric guitar, organ, saxophone, harmonica, piano, or bass drums — that is all schema. The Early Church did not have these instruments, so these things cannot be morphe. Morphe is what stays the same from generation to generation. The morphe of Pentecostal services is whether God is worshiped in Spirit and in truth — with heart, mind, soul, and strength. The schema of Pentecostal meeting times may be Sunday morning, Sunday night, or some other time. The morphe of Pentecostal worship is Presence — did the worshiper come into vital contact through the Spirit with Jesus? (See the sidebar; "The Tune and the Transition: a Pentecostal Legacy.")
I have dealt with the Acts 2:42–47 account of the first Pentecostal church because, except for its communal experiment, the characteristics are all *morphe* — essential, unalterable components for a Spirit-filled church. We are never told by Luke what songs they sang or did not sing, what musical instruments they played if any, what format their services followed — all these are *schema* — forms that change from time to time, generation to generation. What we are told by Luke is that the Early Church demonstrated the universal, essential qualities (*morphe*) of a Pentecostal church. And no matter what the century, country, or culture — when these non-negotiables are present, you have a Pentecostal church characterized by:

• Core values

• Caring

- Confirming
- Connectedness
- CredibilityConverts

As Pentecostal leaders we take seriously Joel's prophecy,

reaffirmed by Peter, that, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17). In October 1906, the second issue of *Apostolic Faith*, the official publication of the Azusa Street Mission, put the present-day outpouring of the Spirit alongside that of the original Day of Pentecost: "When the Holy Ghost fell on the 120 it was in the morning of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. As it was in the morning, so shall it be in the evening. This is the last evangelistic call of the day."

Friends, we are at the evening. There has never been an hour when a vibrant Pentecostal church is needed more than right now.



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THE TUNE AND THE TRANSITION: A PENTECOSTAL LEGACY!

I believe in legacy. I am the beneficiary of godly, Spirit-filled parents and in-laws. And I have been the recipient of sound counsel from deeply spiritual Pentecostal senior pastors.

High on the list of pastors whose mentoring I have internalized is Jack Hayford. Hayford taught me to view a worship service first from the spirit realm before thinking of a service from the perspective of calendar or tradition. Our concern was always discovering the agenda Jesus had for the service we were planning.

Hayford wrote that every worship service existed "to serve two objectives: 1) to serve God with our praises, and 2) to serve the congregation with His sufficiency." Each service I participated in with Hayford — over a period of 8 years was about carrying a prophetic utterance from the prayer closet to the pulpit. Convening a worship service was about revelation, not information.

Hayford believed a pastor had five primary teaching opportunities in each service. Most pastors only concentrate on one of those five strategic pastoral moments. Consequently, many Pentecostal services are characterized by a well-planned sermon and poorly planned transitions.

My West Coast mentor taught me that the minister is responsible to bring prophetic insight to the:

- 1. invocation;
- 2. introduction to the worship songs;
- 3. closing the worship songs;
- 4. taking the offering, and
- 5. preaching the morning message.

Hayford believed the Holy Spirit's ideal for a Pentecostal worship service was to first breathe a living word to the pastor privately so the important transitional elements of a service had life publically. That way, the prophetic edge of the service — our Pentecostal legacy — would contain a thread of spiritual revelation throughout the service.

Similarly, he taught me as worship leader to configure worship songs into a medley that had a focus — a point. Hayford always strategized our worship encounter, not from a perspective of cool or contemporary, but from a standpoint of Holy Spirit elucidation. When reviewing my list of songs, Hayford always wanted to know what the Holy Spirit was saying to me rather than asking about extraneous details like: "When did we last sing a new song?" or "What's the latest trend in worship repertoire that we should quickly grab?"

Songs entreat presence. Songs welcome Holy Spirit activity. What's more, songs create the atmosphere for the supernatural. The songs we chose were tantamount to the words he scribed for the message. Both the aesthetic of the song and the potency of the words were thought of as ammo in the arsenal of the Holy Spirit.

My legacy from Hayford centers on a conviction that praise is a pathway into the presence of the Lord. As a worship leader, my greatest objective is to disappear so Jesus can appear. I clearly recognize that my song list, properly prepared, can usher a congregation from the natural into the supernatural, where "mountains melt like wax" (Psalm 97:5).

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BAPTISM HOLINTHE INITIAL EVIDEN AND A NEW MODE

Traditional Pentecostals have a potential problem with their position on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and their claim that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence for this experience. It is not that they are wrong. Their position is correct. But the way some have articulated the position, or have failed to adequately answer the questions raised by those who disagree, makes them assailable from a number of different angles.

BY GORDON L. ANDERSON

it Comes at



The charismatic and Third Wave movements, for example, have taken different positions and have attacked the traditional Pentecostal view. I contend that a truly Pentecostal position on the issue of initial evidence — that is not vulnerable to these attacks — can be espoused. It deals with the problems raised by others in such a way as to retain the Pentecostal position while providing answers for the accurate observations that they make.

THESIS

Some Pentecostals have overstated the benefits or results of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They claim that some elements of the Christian life are only available to the believer following this Baptism. Since they believe that speaking in tongues is the necessary initial physical outward sign for this experience, they argue that these benefits can only occur after a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit and has spoken in tongues. In its simplest form, then, tongues must precede a number of other spiritual benefits. This overstated position

cannot be supported exegetically or experientially. As a result, the Pentecostal position is often rejected and the importance and value of speaking in tongues are lost.

Specifically, some Pentecostals have claimed, to a greater or lesser extent, that power for ministry, gifts, spiritual leadership, and holiness are experienced only after the baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues. Since compelling evidence

against this claim can be adduced from the Bible and from experience, this argument fails.

A truly Pentecostal position avoids the error of overstatement, but still claims that some important things in a person's spiritual life and ministry follow only after the baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, and that these blessings can be received in no other way. It also recognizes that there is significant spiritual activity in the life of every believer apart from the Pentecostal experience. By identifying the necessary elements in the Pentecostal experience, as well as those elements that are not included by necessity, a truly Pentecostal position can be maintained. It is, in fact, strengthened and clarified by making a place for the assertions of those who see this issue differently than some Pentecostals have.

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

A strong case for an experience called the baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation can be made from the New Testament, and the Book of Acts in particular. This experience is known by a number of different terms including *the Baptism*, *a filling* or *infilling*, and *the Spirit falling* or *coming on a person*. It is evident that speaking in tongues was a common experience in the first century. After the apostolic period, however, this phenomenon seems to have diminished, or to have occurred more frequently only among fringe groups.

Augustine argued that tongues ceased after the first century. Since that time, many have held this "cessationist" position, including some conservative evangelicals and most dispensationalists. Nonetheless, there are numerous examples of this experience through the centuries. In the last 200 years, the frequency has increased. The 19th century Irvingites in England, the Pentecostal revival at the turn of the century in America, the emergence of Pentecostal denominations, the Latter Rain revival, the charismatic movement, and the current rise of evangelicals who hold quasi-Pentecostal positions (Third Wave, for example), all make some kind of claim

While Pentecostals need to add to their own experiences the helpful elements of exegesis and hermeneutics ... they should not in the process give up the very thing that has made them so effective in the work of the ministry.

> for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the issue of speaking in tongues. The problem for Pentecostals is that some of these positions differ significantly from the traditional Pentecostal view, and the arguments are substantial.

> Traditional Pentecostals believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is primarily an enduement of power for service and that the initial physical evidence is speaking in tongues. Evangelicals commonly believe that the Holy Spirit is given at justification and there is no subsequent Baptism. The charismatics hold that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience subsequent to salvation, but that tongues while usually accompanying the Baptism — is not necessarily the initial evidence; any of the gifts may serve as evidence. Further, they claim that tongues are primarily a prayer language and they de-emphasize the Pentecostal emphasis on power. The newer Third Wave groups sound a familiar Pentecostal ring by claiming that additional power can be gained for ministry and service, but they are intentionally vague as to whether or not this is a specific experience — the

baptism in the Holy Spirit — and they minimize the role of tongues. These different positions have challenged Pentecostals, largely because they are based on biblical and experiential evidence that seems to be more coherent than that offered by some Pentecostals.

THE OVERSTATED PENTECOSTAL POSITION AND THE ATTACK AGAINST IT

Some Pentecostals have made extravagant claims for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some have argued that a person must speak in tongues to be saved. Using the lamp oil obtained by the wise virgins in preparation for the bridegroom as a symbol for the Holy Spirit (Matthew 25), they claim that a person must have the Holy Spirit to be ready or saved. Since, in this camp, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is always accompanied by speaking in tongues, one must speak in tongues to be saved. This is preposterous and can be dismissed. But it serves as an example of the exaggerated evidence of the nature of the problem.

Others, however, have done the same thing in a milder form. Some claim that the baptism in the Holy Spirit follows sanctification. Stemming, in part, from the Wesleyan Holiness tradition, this position falls into two camps. One claims that there are two distinct spiritual experiences in the life of the believer: salvation and sanctification, sometimes called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The other camp has three experiences: salvation, sanctification, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Both forms of this position are untenable exegetically, and the life experience of believers refutes it. Sanctification is not the primary result of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Others have claimed that all power and all ministry gifts follow the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Again, this cannot be supported exegetically or experientially. Those who oppose this claim rightly point to the lives and ministries of great Christians who both did not or do not speak in tongues.

Because of these overreaching claims for the effects of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostal position has been attacked. The argument is: If the evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a supernaturally gifted life and a significant ministry, then Hudson Taylor, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, Billy Graham, and many others must have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, even though they have not spoken in tongues. They all have demonstrated powerful and effective ministries. Or, the gifts needed for ministry must be included in salvation and other spiritual activities, as many in the non-Pentecostal camp contend. Furthermore, since Pentecostals insist that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by speaking in tongues, the example of these great people proves that Pentecostals are wrong. This argument is perfectly coherent and has been found to be compelling to many in the charismatic, Third Wave, and non-Pentecostal world.

THREE PROBLEMS THIS ARGUMENT HAS CREATED FOR PENTECOSTALS

First, this argument has the effect of repudiating the entire Pentecostal position. Many have followed this line of thought, rejecting the Pentecostal view entirely, following instead, one of the other schools.

Second, even among Pentecostals there has been an erosion of certainty about their own claims. There seems to be a serious unwillingness to face the issue head-on, fearing, perhaps, that to even open it for discussion might unleash forces that would significantly alter the traditional position. The result, however, of this paralysis is that fewer and fewer people attending Pentecostal churches speak in tongues. David Barrett claims that only 35 percent of Pentecostal church members speak in tongues. Moreover, there is an erosion of commitment to this doctrine among ministers. Long before an issue like this is presented for public debate at General Council, it has already become an issue in the churches and among the ministers. I believe there is a significant amount of prepublic speculation that indicates a large erosion of certainty.

Another evidence of change is that increasing numbers of Pentecostal pastors now rely on special ministries — camps for the teenagers (the camp evangelist had better get them Spirit baptized on Thursday night), or special camp meetings and seminars — to accomplish this dimension of ministry. Baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues are decreasingly evident as a normal part of many Pentecostal churches.

Third, the way Pentecostals form their Pentecostal doctrines has come under scrutiny. Some of this has been good and has evinced a good response from Pentecostal scholars. But this is not enough. Because of the growth and influence of charismatic, Third Wave, and other quasi-Pentecostal churches, pastors on the local level need to be increasingly astute at demonstrating the credibility of the Pentecostal approach. By what hermeneutic can it be demonstrated that speaking in tongues is normative, and not, rather, normal, but unnecessary? This is a critical issue and failure to answer it adequately will result in a continued decline in certainty among Pentecostals and the transfer of members to other groups.

NINE ELEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE, GROWTH, AND MINISTRY

To solve this problem we can start by identifying the major spiritual elements of Christian life and set them out in an orderly way. It seems many spiritual activities can be readily identified. I have made a list of nine elements that model the spiritual activity in the life of any Christian. This list could be shortened, expanded, or reorganized. Furthermore, the results of one set of activities and experiences may overlap with others. Still, there are definite distinctions that are unique because they are achieved through the various activities and experiences believers have with God. The goal is to try to understand what is involved in spiritual life and how it is accomplished. The nine elements are:

- 1. Justification: the experience of forgiveness, adoption into the family of God, being made spiritually alive, receiving the potential for growth and development, and enjoying fellowship with God.
- 2. The Word: the source of direction for life, conviction of sin, encouragement, and doctrines to live by.
- 3. Prayer and fasting: the source of strength, power, growth, and discipline for an overcoming Christian life.
- 4. Community (or the church): where a person receives the help, support, correction, rebuke, encouragement, and fellowship needed to live a successful Christian life, and the opportunity to minister to others.
- 5. Water baptism: a symbolic rite that signifies the reality of the Cross in the life of the believer. This experience symbolizes the spiritual crucifixion that takes place in our lives, where death to self is established, and we are made alive to God and dead to sin.
- 6. Sanctification: the ongoing, progressive work of purifying and perfecting the believer.
- 7. Suffering: the divinely ordained trials and tests; the chastening that produces strength, character, obedience, and perseverance.
- 8. Ministry: the call of God to service that is accompanied



by empowerment, ministry gifts, and the ability to get the work of God done.

9. The baptism in the Holy Spirit: the experience subsequent to salvation where more power for ministry, more gifts, more miracle-working ability, and many other added dimensions of spiritual power are given. This experience includes the ability to have noncognitive communication with God by means of speaking in tongues. In addition, more passion and emotion for ministry are conveyed.

This list shows there are many significant spiritual activities in the life of any believer. We all know people who strongly disagree with the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (No. 9), but who demonstrate a godly life and ministry because of their rich experiences in God in the other areas (No. 1 through 8). For example, there are many non-Pentecostal ministers who have not had a Pentecostal experience and do not speak in tongues, but have, nonetheless, wonderful ministries by virtue of their knowledge of the Word, the sufferings they may have endured, and the discipline of a rich prayer life.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT

Most Christians agree that the above list represents the critical areas of spiritual life, but other groups would organize the spiritual life of the believer and the experiences that go with it in different ways.

Evangelicals collapse No. 9, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, into No. 1, and eliminate the charismatic gifts and speaking in tongues. Charismatics are satisfied with the list, but they eliminate tongues as the essential item in No. 9 - the baptism in the Holy Spirit — and emphasize its value as a prayer language. They also believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for personal edification and spiritual growth more than an empowering for service. Third Wave Christians probably agree with the elements in the list, but de-emphasize the unique experiential quality of No. 9 - the baptism in the Holy Spirit — and see it rather as a gifting that occurs apart from a specific and concrete experience. Also, they eliminate the necessity of tongues for this enabling to occur. Over-reaching Pentecostals see No. 8, ministry, as following from the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Some even include No. 6, sanctification, as a part of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD POSITION

The official position of the Assemblies of God is found in its Statement of Fundamental Truths. This statement is explained and amplified in a position paper entitled, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Initial Experience and Continuing Evidences of the Spirit-Filled Life." A clear distinction must be made between these documents and anything that Assemblies of God people may have said or written, or whatever general sense may be gotten from stereotypical practices of Assemblies of God pastors and churches.

Article VII in the Statement of Fundamentals Truths sets out the Assemblies of God's position on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It says:

"All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect

A strong case for an experience called the baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation can be made from the New Testament, and the Book of Acts in particular.

and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 1 Corinthians 12:1–31)). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12–17; 10:44–46; 11:14–16; 15:7–9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37–39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:24), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20)."¹

There is one potentially problematic sentence in this statement. It is the sentence, "With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry." If this means that *all* power and *all* gifts for ministry follow the baptism in the Holy Spirit (and speaking in tongues), then a problematic claim is made. This would mean that non-Pentecostals nontongues speakers — have *no* power or gifts for ministry. If *all* gifts follow, then *none* precede. It cannot be any other way. This can only mean that non-Pentecostals do their work in the flesh and not the Spirit. This cannot possibly be the meaning of the authors of this statement.

Help in understanding this issue is provided in a position paper on initial evidence produced by the Assemblies of God in 2000. In addressing the question of the ministries of those who are not Pentecostal it says: "8. What about truly born-again people who have accomplished great things for the Lord but who do not speak with tongues?

"Without question, some believers who do not speak in tongues have accomplished great things for God."

"13. Can believers who have not experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit minister with supernatural signs following? As the question is stated, the answer must be yes.

"The question might better be asked, 'Is there any difference between the frequency and effectiveness of the super-

> natural gifts of the Spirit in the life of a believer after being baptized in the Holy Spirit?'

> "The Bible records many miraculous demonstrations of the supernatural in the lives of Old Testament individuals, and the lives of New Testament believers before as well as after their Baptism experience. When Jesus sent out the pre-Pentecost 70, they returned report-

ing with joy, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name' (Luke 10:17).

"But there was definitely a higher incidence of spiritual gifts operating through Spirit-filled members of the Early Church than there were prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon yielded believers. Miracles were wrought through

Q&A ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Q. WHAT ABOUT TRULY BORN-AGAIN PEOPLE WHO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED GREAT THINGS FOR THE LORD BUT DO NOT SPEAK IN TONGUES?

A. Without question, some believers who do not speak in tongues have accomplished great things for God. However, every student of Scripture must determine whether to base doctrine on God's Word or on experiences of even the most devout believers. Because the Bible indicates that all may speak with tongues in private prayer, if not in the congregation, every believer must determine whether to accept or reject this provision of God's grace.

Scripture makes clear that believers must recognize their accountability to God and not evaluate Christian experience on the basis of human comparison. Paul wrote: "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12). Doctrine must always be based on the Word of God, not on personal experience.

Abridged from The General Council of the Assemblies of God official position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

people like Stephen and Philip who did not have apostolic positions. (Acts 6:8 and 8:6,7). The full range of gifts was everywhere seen after the Day of Pentecost. It was as if a high-octane fuel additive propelled the Church to incredible growth and outreach. Activity after the Day of Pentecost was not just an extension of activity before the great outpouring. The Church had experienced a major empowerment for more effective ministry. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, for ministry, increased emotion and passion, and an enhanced awareness of the experiential dimension of God's presence in the life of the Pentecostal believer. The baptism in the Holy Spirit does not and cannot take the place of the other necessary spiritual experiences that God has provided for His believers.

Now, a critical question. If the baptism in the Holy Spirit confers additional power for ministry, how much additional

Because of the growth and influence of charismatic, Third Wave, and other quasi-Pentecostal churches, pastors on the local level need to be increasingly astute at demonstrating the credibility of the Pentecostal approach.

with the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues, is the doorway leading to a greatly empowered church of Jesus Christ."

The last sentence in the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths also reveals the Pentecostal understanding of the results of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The language here is important. It speaks of something extra, something added on.

"With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come ... *overflowing* fullness ... *deepened* reverence ... *intensified* consecration ... *more active* love ... " (italics, mine).

The authors do not claim that *all* fullness, *all* reverence, *all* consecration, and *all* love come from the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but that *something more is added* to what God has already done. With this in view, a clearer model of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit can be fashioned.

A PENTECOSTAL DEFINITION OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

What do Pentecostals mean by the baptism in the Holy Spirit? I think that a definition can be set out that does not claim to be comprehensive, but identifies the major elements in this Pentecostal experience. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is significant additional power for life and ministry given by God subsequent to salvation. The Baptism is characterized by a deep sense of the immediacy of God's presence. By virtue of this, a deep sense of mystery and emotion is often experienced. It is also characterized by speaking in tongues.

Speaking in tongues establishes a noncognitive and nonrational communication with God. It is not antirational. It is an immediate contact with God that does not include human words, nor can it be expressed in human words. This experience results in added faith in God, increased power and gifts power is gained? A little? Quite a bit? A dramatic amount? Considerable evidence indicates that the baptism in the Holy Spirit confers a dramatic amount of power for ministry on the believer who receives this experience.

On November 20, 1998, Pentecostal scholar Vinson Synan presented a paper to the Evangelical Theological Society entitled, "Policy Decisions on Tongues As an Indicator of Future Church Growth." Synan demonstrates in his paper that Pentecostals have been dramatically more successful in planting and growing churches than those who have rejected the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the necessity of speaking in tongues. His statistics are drawn from the development of Pentecostal missions in the 20th century. In Chile, the Methodists grew to approximately 5,000 members, while the Pentecostals grew to 2,371,000. In Brazil, the Baptists grew to 1,050,000, while the Pentecostals grew to over 21 million. Worldwide, the Christian and Missionary Alliance grew to 1.9 million, while the Assemblies of God has surpassed 25 million. More current year statistics (2003) show that Assemblies of God worldwide members and adherents have grown to nearly 48 million, not including the nearly 2.7 million adherents in the U.S.

These statistics cannot be ignored. These accomplishments are the reason that Fuller Seminary undertook a study of Pentecostal missions that has drawn attention to the spectacular success of Pentecostal ministry. Other scholars are drawing similar conclusions. Philip Jenkins, distinguished professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, recently wrote a book, *The Next Christendom*, in which he demonstrates that the growth patterns of the Pentecostals will make the 21st century a Pentecostal century. Pentecostal ministry is not slightly more effective. It makes a dramatic difference. The baptism in the Holy Spirit provides a significant amount of power for supernatural ministry resulting in striking accomplishments for the Kingdom.

A CLARIFIED PENTECOSTAL MODEL OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

All that is needed to clarify the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and its relationship to other schools of thought is the fact Pentecostals do not believe *all* power and gifting for ministry occur only after the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Non-Pentecostals are certainly spiritually enabled for ministry. But the baptism in the Holy Spirit confers dramatically more power for ministry, especially in the supernatural realm of miracles, signs, and wonders; ministries that promote the apostolic or missionary call to plant the church and minister in the supernatural. This *additional* power, enablement through spiritual gifts and passion, is added along with the miraculous and spiritually profitable practice of speaking in tongues; first for personal edification (1 Corinthians 14:1), and when interpreted, for public edification (1 Corinthians 14:13, 26,27).

This clarification of the Pentecostal position has many salutary effects. First, it gives the nine elements presented above their rightful, important places. Pentecostals can learn from others who have found the greatness of God's provision and spiritual grace from No. 1 through 8. Some Pentecostals give too little attention to these issues in their emphasis on No. 9, the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Second, it puts the baptism in the Holy Spirit into proper perspective. It is not the only important experience in the life of the believer.

Third, it retains the importance, uniqueness, and subsequence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals do not need to protect this doctrine because it is their own unique distinctive. If it is biblically unsound, it should be discarded. The desire to retain it is due to the fact it is biblical and to lose it — or have it diluted by including some of it in other categories and dispensing with the rest — does great harm to the church, especially in a day when the church needs all the power available, not less.

Fourth, it clarifies the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is given primarily to add significant supernatural power for ministry and to enhance a noncognitive and experiential relationship with God.

Fifth, it retains the vital importance and value of speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence for the unique experience called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The noncognitive, nonrational character of speaking in tongues is spiritually healthy when it is in balance with the other elements of spiritual life. The liberty to escape the cognitive dimension and enter into edifying communication with God, connecting in a different way — heart to heart, rather than head to head with the words of human language — should not be undermined. And, by giving the other elements their proper role, it provides safeguards for the legitimate fear that this nonrational experience could result in fanaticism. Read the nine areas of spiritual activity again to see how important it is to have the balance provided by the other eight elements.

Connected to this are the vitality, energy, and passion that the baptism in the Holy Spirit can produce. Pentecostals have discovered anew that the nonrational, even the highly emotional and passionate, are helpful to a Christian who is greatly concerned about the salvation of the world. This is not to say that others do not care; they certainly do, but Pentecostal

Q&A ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Q. IS SPEAKING IN TONGUES THE ONLY EVI-DENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE?

A. Tongues are not the only evidence of a Spirit-filled life, but they are always the initial, or first, evidence that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit as the entrance into a Spirit-filled life. One purpose of baptism in the Spirit is to empower the believer for witness; therefore, enthusiasm and boldness in witnessing, divine guidance and enabling in the presentation of the gospel, and miraculous manifestations of God's power before unbelievers all may serve as additional evidences of baptism in the Holy Spirit, though not as substitutions for speaking in tongues.

The Spirit-filled life should also demonstrate progressive development toward a complete Christlike character. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) should be developing in the life of every believer. It has been observed that some who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and claim to be living Spirit-filled lives demonstrate less evidence of the fruit of the Spirit tha n some who have not received the Baptism experience. Such a fact does not destroy the truth that the Spirit takes raw material and, if given the opportunity, helps develop Christlike character traits in every believer. Yet development of the fruit of the Spirit can, and should, be enhanced in those who have been filled with the Spirit.

Other supernatural gifts of the Spirit (besides speaking in tongues), though sometimes seemingly evident in the lives of believers who have not been baptized in the Spirit, do not in themselves give evidence of having been baptized in the Spirit. The manifestation of supernatural gifts in the life of a believer who has not been baptized in the Holy Spirit is possible, but being baptized opens the door to a more dynamic, more effective manifestation.

Abridged from The General Council of the Assemblies of God official position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

missions speak of the fruitful effects of a highly passionate ministry corps that function in the miraculous. A leading non-Pentecostal missiologist once told me that Pentecostals in their search for approval from the broader evangelical community are about to lose the very thing that has made them effective — their emotional and passionate approach to life and ministry and their emphasis on speaking in tongues. While Pentecostals need to add to their own experiences the

helpful elements of exegesis and hermeneutics, along with other spiritual disciplines, they should not in the process give up the very thing that has made them so effective in the work of the ministry.

Finally, this approach provides non-Pentecostals an explanation why they would be empowered and helped by the Pentecostal experi-

ence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Pentecostals do not need to assert that these people would be moving out of the flesh and into the Spirit as the overstaters have claimed, but rather that they are adding another element of spiritual vitality to their lives and ministries, one that would enable them to function consistently in supernatural ministry.

In this connection I am reminded of the response given by a non-Pentecostal after hearing me lecture the essence of this paper to a seminary audience. He said if Pentecostals would be willing to admit that non-Pentecostals have vital and powerful spiritual ministries without speaking in tongues, non-Pentecostals would be more inclined to admit that Pentecostals have something unique that the rest of the



t was becoming increasingly more difficult for Pastor Elton to follow Lydia Smeltgorf's special music presentations. Christian world does not have. This would make the claims and benefits of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as Pentecostals understand them, more credible. I think he is right. Pentecostals have much to share, but it must be done within a framework that appreciates the other elements in a healthy spiritual life and the contributions made by the non-Pentecostal world.

This approach helps Pentecostals respond to other

Traditional Pentecostals believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is primarily an enduement of power for service and that the initial physical evidence is speaking in tongues.

> Pentecostals who skip over spiritual activities No. 1 through No. 8 in their haste to get to No. 9 (baptism in the Holy Spirit). Pentecostals need No. 1 through No. 8. It also provides an answer to what I call the Chuck Swindoll argument. Swindoll has a great ministry, but disagrees with the Pentecostal position on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He obviously has experienced the richness of God in No. 1 through No. 8. However, Pentecostals can respond that there is much more (not all, just more) and that this already rich ministry would be significantly enhanced by another spiritual element.

> The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a powerful provision that significantly adds to the life and ministry of any believer. Today, ministries trying to evangelize a lost and dying world face enormous challenges. It behooves every believer to properly understand what God has made available and to take advantage of it, remembering the words of Jesus when He commissioned His disciples: "I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you: but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49, NASB).



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ENDNOTE

1."The Baptism in the Holy Ghost," in Minutes of the 50th Session of The General Council of the Assemblies of God with Revised Constitution and Bylaws (Washington, D.C., 31 July–3 August, 2003) 91,92.

GOD BEGINS TO SPEAK AGAIN

Silence. Not for an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year, or a generation — but silence that reached across the generations. God, who once spoke to the fathers at different times and in different ways, no longer spoke. After the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi died, God withdrew His Holy Spirit from among His people, and Israel was left without prophecy.

THEY SPOKE WITZ

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BY ROGER STRONSTAD

God was still silent. But there were rumors that young John ben Zacharias might be breaking the silence. He had spent the last few years in the wilderness of Judea — a good place to hear from God. After John came down out of the wilderness to the Jordan River, day after day he began crying out: "Bring forth fruits in keeping with your repentance. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise (Luke 3:8,9,11).¹

Zacharias' son must be the prophet about whom Isaiah wrote: "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God' " (Isaiah 40:3).

After these generations of silence, God begins to speak to Israel again. This is good news. One day, a dramatic report comes from the Jordan. While John is baptizing, Joshua ben Joseph from Nazareth comes to be baptized. While He is praying, strange things happen. The clouds separate and some people in the crowd hear a voice from heaven say, "Thou art My beloved Son" (Luke 3:22). Then the Spirit of God descends on Him. Others say the voice from heaven is only thunder and that the hovering of the Spirit is just a dove. But John knows better and does not accept their naturalistic explanations. Can it be that John's cousin, Joshua ben Joseph — this Jesus of Nazareth — is the Lord's anointed, the Christ?

John says very little about his cousin from Nazareth. Once John did what prophets do best — he prophesied. "As for me," he said, "I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His towns and villages of Galilee. But He did not baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. Perplexed, and perhaps filled with consternation and feelings of betrayal, John sends messengers to Jesus. They ask Jesus: "Are You the One who is coming, or do we look for someone else?" Jesus affirms that He is doing God's work: "the blind receive sight, the lame walk ... the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Luke 7:19,22). John neither knows nor understands that the messianic Spirit baptizing he announces will be done, not by the Messiah on earth, but by the Messiah in heaven.

LUKE'S RECORD OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

Luke reports three explicit episodes in which Jesus fulfills John's prophetic announcement that the Messiah will baptize in the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost following Christ's resurrection — for the first time in human history — Jesus baptizes His followers in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–4). Several years later, Jesus baptizes a Gentile household in Caesarea in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:1 through 11:18). Finally, in Ephesus, He baptizes about 12 disciples in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1–7). In every case, those who are baptized in the Spirit speak in tongues and prophesy.²

Promise: The disciples will be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5).

Shortly before the Day of Pentecost, Jesus instructs His disciples to wait for what the Father has promised, "Which, He said, you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4,5). To fully understand

The Spirit anointing of Jesus, the Spirit baptism of the disciples, and the Spirit baptism of Cornelius are all functionally equivalent experiences.

To fully understand Jesus' announcement to the disciples about their being baptized with the Holy Spirit we need to remember that Acts 1:4,5, is the fifth recorded

sandals; He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). This word of revelation is from the Lord.

The Lord's anointed will also be the Lord's baptizer. The One who was first anointed by the Holy Spirit will later baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit and fire. No prophet had ever announced this. It was reserved for John, the first New Testament prophet, to reveal this. One of John's greatest legacies is his prophetic revelation that Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Soon after His baptism by John, Jesus begins His Spiritanointed, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-empowered ministry (Luke 3:22; 4:1,14,18). He teaches in the synagogues, casts out demons, and heals the sick throughout the time Jesus promises the Holy Spirit.

Throughout His ministry Jesus promises: 1) that the Father will "give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him," that is pray (Luke 11:13); 2) the Holy Spirit will speak in their defense when they are brought "before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities" (Luke 12:11,12); 3) the Holy Spirit (implied) will give them "utterance and wisdom which none of" their "opponents will be able to resist or refute" (Luke 21:14,15). After the Resurrection, when Jesus' departure is imminent, and the equipping/preparation of the disciples is urgent, Jesus promises 4) that the disciples "would be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49); and, 5) the disciples will

be baptized "with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). The sixth time Jesus mentions the Baptism He explains its purpose. They will "receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon" them (Acts 1:8).

Jesus fulfills this prophecy on the Day of Pentecost when He transfers the Holy Spirit from himself to His disciples. This happens when, as Luke reports, the disciples "were all

Q&A ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Q. IS THE BOOK OF ACTS INTENDED TO BE HISTORY OR THEOLOGY, AND CAN DOCTRINE BE BASED ON LESS THAN DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS?

A. The Bible itself responds to this question. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Timothy 3:16, KJV). Again Paul wrote, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4, KJV). After recounting Old Testament events that happened to the Israelites, Paul says, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

While doctrine should not be based on isolated fragments of Scripture, it can be based on substantial, implied truth. The doctrine of the Trinity is based not on declarative statements, but on a comparison of Scripture passages relating to the Godhead. Like the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is based on substantial portions of Scripture relating to this subject. It is evident Peter and the Church leaders in Jerusalem established doctrine based on repeated experiences of the Spirit understood to be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. They recognized tongues as evidence of people being filled with the Spirit (Acts 10,11). The weight of the biblical text, both in quantity and frequency, provides a solid base for doctrinal formulation.

Luke's writings (Luke and Acts) clearly present more than just history. While Luke describes his Gospel as a "narrative" (Greek *diegesis* — Luke 1:1) written to be "accurate" and "orderly" (1:3), the way he selects items to include and his editorial and narrative comments reveal an author with an agenda to advance the cause of Christ. Luke is clearly a Christian. In fact, today there is an overwhelming consensus among New Testament scholars that Luke is a theologian, not just a historian. For those interested in learning more about Luke and Acts as inspired historical narratives that also teach theology, we recommend Roger Stronstad's *Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Hendrickson, 1984).

Abridged from The General Council of the Assemblies of God official position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost echoes the transfer of the Spirit from Moses to the 70 elders (Numbers 11:25), but also fulfills Moses' earnest desire "that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" (Numbers 11:29).

In his sermon, Peter reports to the crowd of devout worshipers that what they are observing is the transfer of the Spirit from Jesus to His disciples (Acts 2:33). To the amazed, bewildered, and even mocking crowd (Acts 2:5–13), Peter explains this is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:14–21).

Concerning Joel's prophecy, what did he predict of the gift of the Spirit? In Peter's application of Joel's prophecy, he makes several points about this pouring forth of the Holy Spirit: 1) it is the last days/eschatological pouring forth of the Holy Spirit; 2) it is the gift of prophecy; 3) it is universal there are no age, gender, or economic barriers; and, 4) it is attested by signs, not the least of which is speaking with other tongues. Peter not only explains the pouring forth of this eschatological Spirit of prophecy — that it is the same pouring forth John the Baptist announces, that his successor, the Messiah, will baptize in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16) — but he also offers the same gift of the Holy Spirit to his audience (Acts 2:39). They, too, will be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5) and experience the sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4,19,33).

There is a discontinuity in Jesus' mention of His baptizing in the Holy Spirit with John's announcement. This discontinuity is signaled by the fact Jesus drops the words "and fire." John announces that the Messiah will baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). In dropping these words, Jesus indicates that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a blessing, not a judgment. This is confirmed by the tone or mood of Acts. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is about epiphany/salvation (Acts 2:20,21), times of refreshing (Acts 3:19), and blessing (Acts 3:25,26).

Just as Jesus' own mission inaugurates when the Spirit anoints Him, the worldwide witness of the disciples inaugurates when Jesus baptizes them in the Holy Spirit. Clearly, Spirit baptism for the disciples is directly equivalent to Spirit anointing for Jesus. Therefore, both Spirit anointing and Spirit baptism are functionally equivalent experiences. It is important to understand that both are about mission, not about salvation or judgment.

Pattern: Cornelius' household is baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:1 through 11:18).

After doing the work of a charismatic prophet in Lydda and Joppa (healing the sick and raising the dead), God gives

Peter parallel visions and a direct command by the Spirit to visit Cornelius, an Italian centurion stationed at Caesarea (Acts 9:32 through 10:22). Luke identifies Cornelius' spiritual qualifications. Cornelius is: 1) a devout man; 2) one who fears God; 3) an almsgiver; 4) a man of prayer (Acts 10:2); and, 5) by the time God pours out His Spirit on him, a believer (Acts 11:17). While Peter is telling Cornelius about Jesus, the Spirit-anointed One, Cornelius and his household are baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–46).

The importance of Luke's narrative strategy cannot be overstated. Luke's narrative about Peter and Cornelius — which begins with the first mention of Cornelius and ends with Peter's defense at Jerusalem (Acts 10:1 through 11:18) — rivals Luke's narrative about Stephen (Acts 6:8 through 7:60) as the longest in Acts. In addition, along with the Pentecost narrative (Acts 2:1–41), it is the only report of the activity of the Spirit in Acts that also contains an explanation of the gift of the Holy Spirit (compare Acts 11:15–17 with 2:14–21). This explanation explicitly identifies Cornelius' reception of the Holy Spirit as his being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:16).

Cornelius' baptism in the Holy Spirit is the same kind of experience the disciples received on the Day of Pentecost when Jesus poured forth His Spirit on them (Acts 2:17,18). Luke reports, "the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message" (Acts 10:44). Peter and his companions are amazed "because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:45). Peter and his companions recognize this because Cornelius is "speaking with tongues and exalting God" (Acts 10:46). When Peter hears them speak in tongues — the same sign that had been the evidence of his own reception of the Spirit — he concludes that Cornelius "received the Holy Spirit just as we did" (Acts 10:47).

Luke reports Cornelius' reception of the Holy Spirit by using the same terminology he uses in his Day of Pentecost narrative. This common clustering of terms include: 1) the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:45; 2:38); 2) the Spirit being poured forth or out (Acts 10:45; 2:33); 3) speaking with tongues (Acts 10:46; 2:4); and, 4) exalting God or speaking of the mighty deeds of God (Acts 10:46; 2:11). In light of this common terminology, it is not inappropriate to describe Cornelius' reception of the Holy Spirit as a Gentile Pentecost.

Peter's explanation of the "pouring out" (Acts 10:45) of the Spirit on Cornelius, which he gives as part of his defense for going "to uncircumcised men and" eating "with them" (Acts 11:3), confirms what Luke's terminology implies. The sovereign pouring out of the Spirit places Cornelius and his household in the same position as the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.

Peter reports to the hostile Jewish Christians in Jerusalem: "And as I began to speak [to Cornelius], the Holy Spirit fell

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Q. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF JOHN 20:22 WITH ACTS 1:8 AND ACTS 2:4?

A. John 20:22 is important to understanding the full ministry of the Holy Spirit. This verse records the disciples' receiving the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit before the Day of Pentecost (under the New Covenant founded on the resurrection of the crucified Jesus). The Acts 2:4 experience occurred after the disciples' regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as a separate and distinct work of the Spirit. The regeneration and the Spirit baptism experiences are normative for all believers. Thus all believers receive the Holy Spirit at salvation, or regeneration. After this regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, every believer can experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the enduement of power to be more effective witnesses (Acts 1:8; 2:4; 2:39).

Some have suggested that John 20:22 was merely a symbolic promise of the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost. But the Greek aorist imperative for "receive" indicates that an action took place at that time, not sometime later. John recorded a historical event that had its own significance for the normative experiences of every believer today.

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upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). He then adds, "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit' " (Acts 11:16). Peter concludes, "God 'therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us'" (Acts 11:17). Thus, Peter asserts that God baptized Cornelius with the Holy Spirit and, in identifying it as the same gift, he makes it clear that Cornelius had the same Spirit of prophecy poured out on him as Peter and the others had received on the Day of Pentecost. Moreover, this reception of the Holy Spirit is attested to by the same sign — speaking with other tongues — which is itself Spirit-given speech or prophecy.

Luke's report about Cornelius' receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–48) and his report of Peter's explanation that Cornelius had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15–17) leads to the inescapable conclusion that Cornelius, like the disciples, received the gift of the Holy Spirit for prophetic vocation. The earlier Spirit anointing of Jesus (Luke 3,4), the Spirit baptism of the disciples (Acts 2), and, the Spirit baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10) are all functionally equivalent experiences of the Holy Spirit. All three are about mission. None are about salvation, and none are about eschatological judgment.

Confirmatory example: The Ephesian 12 receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1–7)

Luke reports what he describes alternately as the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2,10) and receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8,10,19) using a carefully formulated narrative strategy. In his Pentecost narrative (Acts 2), Luke establishes the paradigm for being baptized in the Holy Spirit. When he reports Cornelius' baptism in the Holy Spirit, he confirms the paradigm in great detail by using his Pentecost narrative terminology as the basis and by also recording Peter's own explanation with its emphasis on the similarities of these two events of Spirit baptism. Finally, when Luke reports that some disciples at Ephesus receive the Holy Spirit, he gives a further example to confirm this paradigm/pattern.

Paul begins his third missionary journey by returning to Ephesus. He visits this city at the end of his second evangelistic tour and promises, "I will return to you again if God wills" (Acts 18:21). When he returns to Ephesus, he finds about 12 disciples and asks, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2). While discussing their experience, Paul explains that having been baptized into John's baptism they had believed in Him who was coming after John, that is, in Jesus (Acts 19:3,4). Since they had, in fact, believed in Jesus, Paul baptizes these disciples "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Just as Peter and John had laid their hands on the believers in Samaria (Acts 8:17), Paul lays his hands on these Ephesian believers and they "began speaking with tongues and prophesying" (Acts 19:6).

This summary on the disciples in Ephesus receiving the Holy Spirit yields several significant observations. First, Luke describes the Ephesian 12 in characteristic Christian



terminology — they are both disciples and believers (Acts 19:1,2). In spite of attempts by some scholars to evacuate these terms of their normal meaning, these are Christians at Ephesus who receive the Holy Spirit. Second, the disciples at Ephesus experience the Holy Spirit in the same way as the disciples did on the Day of Pentecost - they speak in other tongues (compare Acts 2:4) and prophesy (compare Acts 2:17,18). Even though Luke does not use the "baptized in the Holy Spirit" terminology of John and Jesus (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5, 11:16), the reception of the Holy Spirit by the disciples at Ephesus is the same "baptism in the Holy Spirit" as the receptions of the Holy Spirit by the disciples on the Day of Pentecost and by Cornelius' household (Acts 2,10). Third, the disciples at Ephesus experience the paradigmatic sign of being baptized in the Holy Spirit — speaking in other tongues (compare Acts 2:4; 10:46) — which Luke explicitly identifies as prophesying (Acts 2:17,18; 19:6). Luke's evidence is compelling. By the agency of Paul, who certainly knows about the soteriological function of the Holy Spirit (for example, Romans 8:9), the disciples at Ephesus receive the same vocational prophetic gift of the Spirit that Luke also reports the disciples to have received from first to last throughout his narrative.

HERMENEUTICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Is it possible to go beyond this exposition of Luke's data about being baptized with the Holy Spirit? Traditionally, Pentecostals have done so by utilizing a hermeneutic of affirmation. But there has also been those who, from the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, insist that this 21st-century Pentecostal experience is not proper. They use a hermeneutic of denial to disprove present-day Pentecostal experiences.

Stated with various levels of sophistication and used in various combinations this hermeneutic of denial includes the following principles: 1) the three occurrences of being baptized in the Holy Spirit are not statistically adequate for building a doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; 2) the data on being baptized in the Holy Spirit is merely descriptive, not didactic; 3) it is not Luke's authorial intent to establish a doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism; 4) the terms *disciples* and *believers* to describe those who have not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit cannot convey their usual meaning of "Christians" and; 5) this was for the Church's infancy and is not for the contemporary church.²

Luke teaches, however, a clear, distinctive doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He adopts a variety of narrative strategies, including, but not limited to the following: 1) his reports about Spirit anointing/baptism are followed by reports containing a prophetic explanation; 2) his reports on Jesus' promises of the Holy Spirit are followed by examples of the fulfillment of these promises; and 3) he reports the teaching of both Jesus and His disciples on the Holy Spirit. The discussion that follows illustrates these teaching strategies.

In the promise/fulfillment relationship, Jesus' promises inform the occurrences of fulfillment and the occurrences of fulfillment interpret the promise.

MAJOR SPIRIT — (ANOINTING) BAPTISM EPISODES			
PATTERN: REPORT			
JESUS	DISCIPLES/PENTECOST	CORNELIUS	
The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus. Signs: Visual: bodily form; Audible: voice from heaven.	The disciples were all filled with Holy Spirit. Signs: Visual: tongues like fire; Audible: wind from heaven, disciples spoke with tongues.	The Spirit came/fell on Cornelius. Signs: Audible: Cornelius' household spoke with tongues.	
PATTERN: EXPLANATION			
JESUS	DISCIPLES/PENTECOST	CORNELIUS	
Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah (61:1).	Peter quoted the prophet Joel (2:28-32).	Peter quoted the prophet John the Baptist (Luke 3:16).	

JESUS' SIX PROMISES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT	EXAMPLES OF THE PROMISES FULFILLED
Luke 11:13 — The Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.	Acts 1:14; 8:15 — The disciples devote themselves to prayer; Peter and John pray that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit.
Luke 12:12 — The Holy Spirit will teach the disciples what to say in their defense.	Acts 4:8 — When addressing the Jewish Council, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.
Luke 21:14, 15 — Jesus will give His disciples a word of wisdom for their defense.	Acts 6:10 — Stephen's accus- ers were unable to cope with his wisdom and Spirit.
Luke 24:49 — The disciples will be clothed with power to witness.	Acts 4:33 — The apostles wit- nessed with great power.
Acts 1:4, 5 — The disciples will be baptized in the Holy Spirit.	Acts 11:16 — Cornelius and his household are baptized in the Holy Spirit.
Acts 1:8 — The disciples will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness.	Acts 5:32 — The apostles and the Holy Spirit are witnesses.

Luke reports the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Luke teaches about the Holy Spirit through his reports about the teaching of Jesus. For example, Luke reports that Jesus taught that the Father would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (that is, pray, Luke 11:13). Further, Jesus identified the promised gift of the Holy Spirit as the disciples being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5; 2:1–4). Also, Jesus stated the purpose for the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples — to empower them for a worldwide witness (Acts 1:8). By reporting the teaching of Jesus in his narrative, Luke teaches: 1) disciples can pray to receive the Holy Spirit; 2) their reception of the Holy Spirit is their Spirit baptism; and, 3) this Spirit baptism is vocational — for service/witness.

Luke also teaches about the Holy Spirit through his reports on the teaching/preaching of the apostles. For example, Luke reports Peter's explanation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, making four primary points: 1) this pouring forth of the Holy Spirit is the eschatological (last days) gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:17); 2) it is (potentially) universal — crossing all age, gender, and economic boundaries, and available from generation to generation (Acts 2:17,18,39); 3) it is attested by signs (not the least of which is speaking in other tongues (Acts 2:19).

Further, Luke also reported Peter's explanation of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius' household, making two primary points: 1) Cornelius' reception of the Holy Spirit is after the pattern of Pentecost (Acts 11:17); and 2) Cornelius' reception of the Holy Spirit is a Spirit baptism (Acts 11:16).

By reporting the teaching/preaching of Peter in his narrative, Luke teaches: 1) that Spirit baptism is attested by the sign of speaking in tongues, and 2) that this is the pattern for Christians, even after the Day of Pentecost.

Based on the above exposition of Luke's data and the brief discussion about hermeneutical principles, we can now summarize Luke's teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. First, there is a promise/fulfillment relationship between John the Baptist's prophecy of being baptized "in the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16,17) and the disciple's experience of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4,5). In other words, when Jesus poured forth the Holy Spirit on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33), He baptized them in the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of John's prophecy. He will subsequently also pour out the Holy Spirit on a Gentile household, likewise baptizing them in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–46; 11:15–17).

Second, in the parallel structure of Luke-Acts, the Spirit baptism of various disciples is functionally equivalent to the Spirit-anointing of Jesus, the Spirit baptizer. At the inauguration of His public ministry, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel (Luke 3:22; 4:18); that is, He was anointed for vocation. Similarly, the disciples inaugurated their public ministry on the Day of Pentecost when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit to empower them for a worldwide witness.

According to Peter, Cornelius' experience was identical to the experience of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Therefore, he, too, was baptized in the Holy Spirit to take his place in this Spirit-empowered worldwide witness. The corollary to this is: if being baptized in the Holy Spirit is about vocation, then it is not about salvation — except insofar as it is given only to those who are saved.

Third, baptism in the Holy Spirit, like Jesus' experience of being anointed by the Holy Spirit, is accompanied by an attesting sign or witness (Acts 2:19; 15:8), as the vocational gift of the Holy Spirit had earlier been for Saul (1 Samuel 10:6,7). In the Old Testament this sign was, typically, prophecy (Numbers 11:25; 1 Samuel 10:7–10). But for Luke, this sign is speaking in tongues or other languages (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). This sign is the appropriate physical symbol of their vocation — worldwide witness (Acts 1:8). Twice, Luke explicitly identifies this sign as prophecy (Acts 2:17; 19:6).

Fourth, as a paradigmatic experience, the disciples' baptism in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost establishes the pattern for subsequent believers. Peter makes this explicit when he explains to the disciples in Jerusalem that Cornelius had been baptized in the Holy Spirit just as he and the other disciples had been (Acts 11:15–17). This pattern is reinforced by Luke's report on the reception of the Spirit by the Ephesian 12, which is a one-verse summary of his report on the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4,17; 19:6). In Acts, there is no other evidence. There is no other pattern, either explicit or implicit. There are no recorded exceptions.

Despite the sometimes strident claims to the contrary, 21st-century Pentecostals may with confidence affirm: 1) that in their reception of the Holy Spirit, they have experienced the Messianic Spirit baptism, with speaking in tongues as the biblical sign/witness or evidence of this; 2) that they like the disciples/believers of Acts, have received the Spirit of prophecy; 3) that they have been empowered by the Spirit; and, 4) that his reception of the Spirit is for vocation.

Unless or until Jesus rescinds the Great Commission (Acts 1:8) or, alternately, until the task is completed, He will continue to baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit. Until He rescinds His commission, His Spirit-filled disciples of the 21st century will continue to speak in other tongues — the supernatural sign of being baptized in the Spirit to witness about Jesus to every people, nation, tribe, and tongue. Until Jesus rescinds the commission His Spirit-baptized disciples will not keep silent.



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ENDNOTES

- 1. Scripture passages are in the NASB.
- 2. The phrase, "filled with the Holy Spirit" in the Pentecost narrative, and throughout Luke-Acts, always describes a specific, though potentially repetitive act of prophetic inspiration. It is evident that, for Luke, prophecy has a wide meaning. From the data we can infer three types of prophecy: worship, judgment, and witness. Prophetic worship is of two types: worship spoken in one's native language and worship spoken in unlearned languages (Pentecost). The Spirit is the inspiration behind these types of praise and worship. Not only does the Spirit inspire worship, but He also inspires a prophetic sentence of judgment (Acts 13:11). Moreover, witness, which is inspired by the Spirit, is a prophetic activity (Acts 4:8ff; 4:31).
- 3. The gift of the Spirit is prophetic. Peter explicitly identifies the tongues-speaking of the disciples to be a manifestation of inspired prophecy (Acts 2:17). The content of their tongues-speaking is "the mighty deeds of God" (Acts 2:11). Therefore, Peter interprets their tongues-speaking to be an inspired word of praise and worship. By virtue of their prophetic inspiration, the disciples are constituted a prophetic community.
- 4. These principles carry the weight of the reputations of their proponents, but in any other context would be laughed out of court. For example, the statistical snobbery that demands more than three examples is silly when not one of its proponents hesitates to build his doctrine of Spirit baptism from the one Pauline text in 1 Corinthians 12:13. Further, the descriptive vs. didactic dichotomy so beloved by modern interpreters is a dichotomy that is unrecognized in the narrative literature of the Ancient Near East. In addition, concerning the appeal to authorial intent the cynic cannot help but observe that the first-century author in this case, Luke is always shown to have the same "intent" as his 20th-21st-century interpreter. Finally, the denial that the "disciples" and "believers" of pre-Spirit baptism experience are Christians is at one with the like-minded denial that the Hebrews of the epistle of that name were not Christians. This grab bag of principles is self-discrediting and is beyond rehabilitation.
- Spirit anointing and Spirit baptism are functionally equivalent experiences. The report informs the explanation; the explanation interprets the report.



PRACTICAL EMPOWERMENT

have heard about the power of the Holy Spirit since I was a small boy. As a third-generation Pentecostal, I grew up listening to the passionate preaching of my father, uncle, and pastors — much of it concerning the Holy Spirit's power in the life of the believer. The word *power* is used so frequently among Pentecostals that it is often taken for granted, used superficially, and even misapplied.

In the early days of the Pentecostal movement, God's manifestations of divine healing and other miracles were joyfully welcomed. Today, there remains a tendency to focus on the miraculous aspects of the Spirit's empowerment. Consequently, these aspects are communicated more often and more extensively to people outside Pentecostal circles.

Miraculous manifestations are wonderful, but I believe the greater attraction of Holy Spirit empowerment for nonbelievers and non-Pentecostals relates to practical, everyday living — the Spirit's equipping to live life as we should.

We are not naturally motivated to be what God wants us to be. The Holy Spirit provides the power we need for practical, spiritual living; the power to live a pure life, and the power to have positive relationships with God and man.

Pastors who passionately emphasize the empowering aspect of the Spirit in the life of the believer and who lead and encourage their people to be baptized in the Holy Spirit will find believers motivated to experience this dynamic dimension of the Spirit-filled life.

PRACTICAL POWER

Living a truly Christian life is not difficult — it is impossible. We need help. And God knows it. He created us with certain innate abilities. He also designed us to need Him — to be dependent.

People often think of the Holy Spirit's empowerment only in terms of signs and wonders and spiritual gifts rather than power for everyday living. The word *dunamis* translated power in Acts 1:8 is wonderfully comprehensive. It simply means ability and applies in practical ways to everyday life. The power Jesus promised His followers is for every aspect of Christian living; it enables us to do and be whatever the Lord has purposed in our lives.

Each individual is unique. We struggle with different personal weaknesses. The Holy Spirit knows our hearts, our motives, and our personal flaws. When we depend on Him, He helps us in our uniqueness to live in obedience. The help — the power — that we need varies with each individual. The shy, inhibited person may need courage to speak up. The outgoing, impulsive person may need restraint to be quiet. The Holy Spirit's power will provide the help we need.

We need the Holy Spirit's working, not only in church on Sunday, but every day — in our homes, at school, in our neighborhoods, and in the workplace.

SPECTACULAR OR SUPERNATURAL

When people think of the power of the Holy Spirit, visible, spectacular works usually come to mind. The kind of power we need in everyday life is neither spectacular nor sensational, but it is supernatural. Supernatural living is not always outwardly dramatic.

It is unfortunate, even tragic, that many people mistake the spectacular for the supernatural. Consequently, they have a limited view of the Spirit's empowerment. Not every supernatural working of the Spirit is spectacular. What may be more important to recognize is not everything spectacular is supernatural.

BY RANDY HURST

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts, spectacular miracles took place. The sick were brought into the streets and laid on beds and couches so Peter's shadow might touch them (Acts 5:15,16). Luke records that "God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out" (Acts 19:11,12, NASB).

The greater attraction of Holy Spirit empowerment for nonbelievers and non-Pentecostals relates to practical, everyday living — the Spirit's equipping to live life as we should.

Luke describes these miracles as "extraordinary." Other translations use the words "special" (KJV) or "unusual" (NKJV). Placing the sick where Peter's shadow would touch them or taking Paul's handkerchiefs or aprons were not regular practices of the church. Instead, the sick were to call the elders of the church to pray over them and be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14).

In recent years, much has been taught concerning signs and wonders. Those two words are frequently used in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:19,22,43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36: 14:3; 15:12).

Jesus spoke about signs and wonders only one time. He warned His followers not to be deceived by false prophets in the last days who would perform signs and wonders (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22).

Jesus told the official at Capernaum whose son was sick, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe" (John 4:48, NASB).

Jesus taught His disciples that people would be convinced they were His true followers not because of signs and wonders, but by their love. He said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35, NASB).

One of our greatest personal needs is motivation. The Spirit works in our desires. He moves us to do what we are not internally motivated to do. He inspires our passion.

The Spirit also helps us pray. Paul wrote, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should" (Romans 8:26, NASB). He encouraged believers to "pray at all times in the Spirit ... with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18, NASB). Praying in the Spirit enables us to seek the Lord and intercede beyond our own understanding or wisdom.

The fruit of the Spirit in the believer's life (Galatians 5:22,23) may not seem spectacular. But these are evidence that the Holy Spirit is working in us beyond our natural capacities. When people look at our lives and see love (especially for those who have wronged us), overflowing joy in

sorrow, peace in the crises of life, patience in tribulation, and gentleness in response to hostility, these are evidences that we are not subject to our own natural emotions.

As ministers we are aware of how deep the determination not to forgive someone can be and how tragic unforgiveness is. Paul makes it clear how devastating unforgiveness is to the purposes of God and how forgivingness thwarts the purposes of the enemy: "If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the sight

of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:10,11).

Many do not think forgiveness is a miracle, but in the spiritual realm I believe it qualifies. A person may not be able in the natural to forgive someone who has terribly wronged him. To be enabled by the Spirit to love and forgive that person may not be perceived as spectacular, but it is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in that person's life.

We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a life that pleases our Lord. The work of the Spirit will not always be spectacular or sensational, but it is convincing evidence of the presence and life of the Spirit within us.

A CONTINUING INPOURING

In the Old Testament when the Israelites were fleeing Egypt for the Promised Land, God gave them bread from heaven manna — to feed them during their wilderness journey. It was not a supply to be stored up and carried with them. It was given to them as they needed it.

A Spirit-filled life is much the same. When Paul exhorted the Ephesian Christians to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), the verb he used means "to keep on being filled." The infilling of the Spirit should be ongoing. We must keep praying in the Spirit, loving in the Spirit, and living in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit baptism is not a one-time experience. We need to keep being filled. The Holy Spirit was outpoured on the Day of Pentecost. Now we need a continual inpouring of the Spirit in our lives.

Jesus taught His disciples the nature of the Spirit's indwelling power: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you" (John 14:15–17, NASB).

In this passage, Jesus promised two things: First, Jesus promised His disciples that the Spirit would be with them forever and abide or remain with them — permanence. Second, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be in them — presence.

We do not need signs, wonders, and miracles every day. But we do need the Holy Spirit's help in everyday living. We need the power of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual lives, in our emotions, and in our relationships. We are not naturally capable of being all God wants us to be without His help.

I believe we can see a resurgence of people in our congregations seeking for the Holy Spirit's baptism. A major factor in this happening will be a fresh and greater emphasis on the comprehensive nature — the breadth and depth — of the Holy Spirit's fullness in the life of the believer.



Randy Hurst, director, Media/Advancement, Assemblies of God World Missions, and commissioner of the Commission on Evangelism, Springfield, Missouri.

TONGUES — WHY?

Three dramatic signs accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost: the sound of a rushing mighty wind, tongues of fire appearing on the believers' heads, and speaking with other tongues (languages). The wind and fire were not repeated in Acts, but speaking with tongues continued to occur when people were filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:44–46; 19:6). Scripture reveals that praying in tongues has several purposes in the lives of Spirit-filled believers.

CONFIRMATION

Speaking in tongues is the first outward sign of the Holy Spirit baptism. This is found in Acts 2:4, and also in Acts 10:44–46, and 19:6. Acts 10 is especially instructive because Luke records that the Jewish believers were convinced that the Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Spirit when they heard them "speaking with tongues and exalting God" (Acts 10:46).

ADORATION

Our finite minds are incapable of comprehending and our own language is inadequate to totally express our hearts' worship to God. Speaking in tongues, in what many refer to as a "prayer language," frees us to communicate the worship of our hearts that is inexpressible in our limited vocabulary.

Having been a missionary, I can converse in more than one language, but I still run out of words in worship to God. When I pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit bears witness with my spirit that the worship of my heart, that I could not adequately express, has been communicated with the Spirit's help (1 Corinthians 14:14,15).

EDIFICATION

Praying in the Spirit edifies — builds up — in two ways: It edifies the individual who prays in the Spirit, and if interpreted, it edifies the church. Paul stated that he spoke in tongues more than all of the Corinthians, yet he reminded them that in the church tongues should be interpreted so all could be edified (1 Corinthians 14:3–9).

INTERCESSION

"The Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should" (Romans 8:26). When we pray in the Spirit, He enables us to pray beyond our understanding. Paul said, "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18). God uses us to work His purposes in the lives of others through the ministry of intercession.

Many years ago, my uncle Bud Abbott was leading the regular Wednesday night Bible study and prayer meeting at the Assembly of God in Superior, Wisconsin. During the prayer time, a godly deacon who worked for the railroad began praying quietly in tongues. The group fell silent and listened as he prayed in the Spirit for about 10 minutes.

When he finished praying, a visiting woman stood and gave this testimony. She had been passing through town and had seen a light in the church and slipped in the back. She had been a missionary in Tibet for 20 years. She told the congregation that the deacon had been praying in the Tibetan dialect she knew. The deacon prayed for a Christian in China, by name, who was suffering under tremendous persecution. He had been eloquently petitioning the Throne of Grace on the persecuted Christian's behalf.

The gift of praying in tongues is a significant part of the Spirit's empowerment in the believer's life. Pastor, are you giving your people opportunity to be filled with the Spirit?

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he idea for this article was sparked by a twofold concern shared by many Pentecostal leaders: (1) the high percentage of believers in Pentecostal churches who have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, and (2) the inadequate understanding of some, perhaps many, concerning the purpose or purposes of Spirit baptism. I am suggesting that the remedy for these two problems is largely in the hands of the church's leaders (pastors, evangelists, teachers), who are responsible for teaching and guiding other believers. I will not deal with the matters of subsequence and initial

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evidence, which are stated clearly in the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths; this article is not a defense of the initial evidence doctrinal position. Instead, I offer suggestions that will help leaders guide believers into the experience of Spirit baptism and assist Spirit-baptized believers in realizing the potential of their experience. The leader is strategically positioned to help other believers by precept and example. A clear explication of scriptural teaching is essential, as is a demonstration of the Spirit-filled life.¹

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FOR THE NOT-YET BAPTIZED

The following suggestions are made on the assumption that the believer is not antagonistic to the experience of Spirit baptism and that he is a candidate for the experience. The Scriptures do not give a formula for receiving the initial infilling of the Spirit, but the following considerations should be helpful to the interested seeker.

All believers are candidates.

Joel predicted that the Lord would pour out His Spirit on all His people (Joel 2:28,29). Old and young, male and female, servants — with no distinction as to age, gender, or social status — are included in the promise. This echoes the fervent hope (and prophecy) of Moses that the Lord would put His Spirit on all His people (Numbers 11:29). No longer would prophetic endowment be limited to a chosen few.

Peter picked up this theme on the Day of Pentecost when, first, he quoted the Joel passage (Acts 2:17–21) and then declared that the promised gift of the Spirit was "for you [Jews] and your children [their descendants] and for all who are far off" (verses 38,39).² "Far off" may refer to the chronologically and geographically distant, but it probably means the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:13,17). The interested believer must be assured and convinced that the experience is indeed for him.

The Spirit already indwells all believers.

It is important to stress that the Holy Spirit is not external to a believer not baptized in the Spirit. The Spirit works internally in a repentant and believing person to effect the new birth. He does not then depart from the believer, to come back again at the time of the infilling. Some are confused because of Spiritbaptism imagery that the New Testament uses, such as "baptized in," "poured out," "falling upon," "coming upon." But these are only figurative and graphic ways of portraying an overwhelming experience of the already indwelling Spirit. This is why some call it a "release" of the already indwelling Spirit.

Baptism in the Spirit is a gift.

By definition, a gift is not earned. If it were on the basis of a person's merit, then the unanswerable question would be, "What should be the extent of a person's worthiness?" Or, "How 'perfect' must one be before qualifying for the experience?" It is possible for a sincere seeker to be preoccupied with his own sense of unworthiness to the extent that the Spirit cannot flow freely through that person.

God will not permit seekers to have a counterfeit experience.

In my experience of counseling seekers, it sometimes surfaces that some are fearful that their speaking in tongues will be either self-generated or that it will come not from God but from Satan. Such persons need to be assured of Jesus' words, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" This is in a context that says even an earthly father will not permit a requested fish to be substituted by a snake or a requested egg to be substituted by a scorpion (Luke 11:11–13). These sensitive and sometimes insecure people must be encouraged to give vocal expression to an inner prompting to speak unfamiliar sounds.

Expectancy and openness facilitate reception.

The candidate must be willing to yield to whatever the Lord prompts him to do. While genuine speaking in tongues cannot be self-generated, the recipient must cooperate with or be borne along by the Holy Spirit. The experience of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost is instructive, for Luke says that they spoke in tongues "as the Spirit was giving them utterance" (Acts 2:4). This aspect of expectancy is important; it can serve as an antidote to what some uncharitably call chronic seeking.

Prayer and praise often lead into the experience.

Jesus' teaching on the Father's disposition to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13) follows an extended passage on prayer (verses 1–12) in which He elaborates on and illustrates the aspect of persistence. The Greek verbs for "ask," "seek," and "knock" are in the Greek present tense, suggesting the ideas of "keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking." This should be distinguished from begging in desperation and frustration. Rather, it is more the principle given in the beatitude, "Blessed are those who keep hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6, my translation). We should note that prior to the Day of Pentecost the disciples "were continually devoting themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14).

Persistent petition should be combined with praise. The praying in the Upper Room was complemented by the disciples being "continually in the temple praising God" (Luke 24:53). Spirit baptism seekers should be encouraged to praise as well as petition, for praising God in one's own language often facilitates the transition to praising Him in tongues. We note that the content of the disciples' glossolalic utterance was praise for the mighty works of God (Acts 2:11; probably 10:46). This is especially interesting since the Jewish celebration of Pentecost, a harvest festival, was a time of joy and thanksgiving to God. Even on a personal basis, an individual offering to God the firstfruits of his grain harvest engaged in a recital of God's mighty act of delivering Israel from Egyptian slavery (Deuteronomy 26:1–11).

Special blessings may occur along the way.

The experience of Spirit baptism culminates in speaking in tongues, but one may have very valid and meaningful spiritual experiences along the way. It is not really proper to refer to Spirit baptism as "a second work of grace," for everything we receive from God is by His grace. Consequently, there may be a number of blessings between one's regeneration and one's Spirit baptism, and sometimes these blessings are a foreshadowing or taste of the climactic experience. With respect to the baptism in the Spirit, it is not a matter of "all or nothing at all." Some spiritual encounters with the Lord serve to prepare for and facilitate the receiving of the Spirit's fullness. But seekers must be counseled not to confuse those experiences with Spirit baptism itself.

God's timing may differ from ours.

The Lord certainly responds to believing prayer and praise, but for reasons best known to himself, His timing may not coincide with our wishes. Both in the Book of Acts and in church history, outpourings of the Spirit sometimes occur in unexpected places and at unexpected times. Consequently, a seeker should not be discouraged or get under self-condemnation if the infilling of the Spirit does not take place when expected. But during times of special visitation by the Lord when numbers are filled with the Spirit, the conditions are optimum for the seeker. This was the experience of the youth group in which I was nurtured. For a long time no one had been baptized in the Spirit. Then for no discernible reason, a number of us were filled in a short period of time. My older sister was the first one baptized in the Spirit; not long after that I experienced the infilling while in the privacy of my bedroom, at a time when I was praying in general without specific reference to the baptism in the Spirit.

FOR THE ALREADY BAPTIZED

Several questions are pertinent to a discussion of the post-Spirit baptism experience. Among them would be: What is the role of speaking in tongues in the experience? Is glossolalic utterance the essence of this Baptism? What are the purposes, or the divinely intended results, of the experience? Do some Spirit-baptized Christians believe, at least implicitly, that "once filled, always filled"? Is Spirit baptism a renewable experience? The leader is indispensable in teaching and leading people toward a more expansive and inclusive view of the nature and purposes of Spirit baptism. I suggest that the divinely intended results of Spirit baptism ought to include the following:

Speaking in tongues

Speaking in tongues is the immediate and empirical indication that the infilling has taken place, but it also benefits the speaker spiritually, for Paul says that "one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God" and that "one who speaks in tongues edifies himself" (1 Corinthians 14:2,4). This is the devotional aspect of tongues, which Paul associates with blessing God and giving Him thanks (verses 16,17). It is an element in praying in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20). Tongues is, therefore, a means by which believers edify themselves spiritually. This is why it is often called one's prayer language. So speaking in tongues may be called a means of grace. It is not an experience that occurs only at the time of being baptized in the Spirit; it ought to be a continual, repeatable experience. This idea is implicit in Paul's statement to the Corinthians: "I wish all of you to continue speaking in tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:5, my translation).³

In addition, a number of responsible exegetes understand Paul to mean praying in tongues, or at least to include it, when he says that "the Spirit also helps our infirmities, for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

Openness to spiritual manifestations

Spirit baptism opens the receiver to the availability of the full range of spiritual gifts. This is a natural consequence of having already submitted oneself to something supernatural and suprarational by allowing himself to be overwhelmed by the Spirit. For example, Peter's address to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost was really a prophetic utterance, as is clear from the way Luke introduces the speech

Q&A ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Q. IN TEACHING THE DOCTRINE OF TONGUES AS EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THERE A DANGER THAT PEOPLE WILL SEEK FOR TONGUES RATHER THAN THE ACTU-AL BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

A. Unfortunately this is a possibility, but the abuse of a doctrine does not invalidate the doctrine. Abuses and counterfeits, rather than disproving a doctrine, help to establish the importance of the genuine. While speaking in tongues accompanies the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is important to remember Jesus' command to the disciples was to wait until they were filled with the Spirit. The emphasis must always be on seeking to be filled with the Spirit. Tongues will naturally accompany the experience.

Abridged from The General Council of the Assemblies of God official position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

with the Greek verb *apophthengomai*, a technical term for inspired utterance.

A look at the major lists of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28–30; Romans 2:6–8; Ephesians 4:11) will reveal that most of these gifts had already been manifested in some way both in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. The pre-Pentecost disciples themselves were instrumental in healings and demon expulsions (Luke 10:9,17; see also Matthew 10:8). Furthermore, a study of Church history demonstrates that spiritual gifts in their many forms were manifested by Christians in all ages.

Since the edification of God's people is the overarching purpose of spiritual gifts in the assembly (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:3–6, 12), Spirit-filled believers ought to be encouraged to desire them earnestly (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1).

Righteous living

Spirit baptism must be understood as having implications for righteous living. Article 7 of the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths states, correctly, I believe, that with the baptism in the Spirit "comes the enduement of power for life and service." I take "for life" to mean "for righteous living." If, indeed, Spirit baptism is an immersion in the One who is the Holy Spirit — the most frequent New Testament designation for Him — the experience must impinge on personal holiness. A very basic problem with the believers in Corinth is that they continued to speak in tongues without allowing the Spirit to work internally in their lives. It is at this point that Spirit-baptized believers need to understand that spiritual fruit, and not only spiritual gifts, should issue from the Pentecost experience.

The fire phenomenon on the Day of Pentecost must be related, in part, to the holiness of God (as is common in Scripture — the burning bush, for instance) and consequently to the matter of the recipient's holiness. Spirit baptism does not produce instant sanctification (nothing does), but it gives the recipient an added impetus to pursue a life pleasing to God. In this connection, it is important to see the connection Paul draws between being continually filled with the Spirit and its consequences in the believer's life — a joyful spirit, ministry to others, thanksgiving, mutual submission, and respect (Ephesians 5:18 through 6:9).

It is appropriate at this point to mention that the fullness of the Spirit must not be a one-time experience. In addition to the daily internal work of the Spirit in one's life, there are occasions when He comes upon believers in times of crisis or to meet a special need; those times are also referred to as being "filled with the Spirit" (Acts 4:8,31; 13:9,52).

Power for witnessing

The association of power with the Holy Spirit is common in

the New Testament, and at times the two terms are interchangeable (for example, Luke 1:35; 4:14; Acts 10:38; Romans 15:19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). The ascended Jesus told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they were "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). In Acts, He tells them "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses" (1:8). These themes of Spirit baptism and world evangelization are closely related emphases in the Book of Acts. A cause-effect relationship between the two is obvious, but we should note that Jesus did not say the sole purpose of the power was evangelization. I have indicated already that the Spirit's work in Spirit baptism must be understood in a wider context than that which Acts emphasizes. Yet a Spiritbaptized person who is not concerned about the lost is a contradiction in terms.

Both from a biblical standpoint and from the missionary and evangelistic outreach of the Pentecostal movement, receiving this power must always be understood to include the proclamation of the gospel. This proclamation, of course, is primarily verbal, but the power Jesus promised included the performance of miracles in His name. The Book of Acts records a veritable catalog of occurrences of spiritual gifts vocal gifts, healings, exorcisms, raisings from the dead, etc. — that the Lord used in preparing an audience for the proclamation of the gospel.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

I have attempted to deal with a number of topics: the need for leaders (pastors, evangelists, teachers) to instruct God's people concerning preparation for receiving Spirit baptism; the need to teach a more comprehensive understanding of the purposes and results of this Baptism; the need for the baptized to experience an ongoing fullness of the Spirit as well as periodic enduements in times of special need. Baptism in the Holy Spirit must be more than an enshrined doctrine; it must be a vital, productive experience in the life of believers and their personal relationship with the Lord, their interaction with other believers, and their witness to the world.



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ENDNOTES

- In what follows, I have adapted, revised, and complemented some matrial from my monograph The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective (Logion Press, GPH, 2001).
- Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (Updated Edition, 1997), unless otherwise noted.
- The verb form for "speak" is in the Greek present tense, suggesting continuing or linear action.

The essentials to fostering true life in the Spirit in your church

THE MINISTRY AND

of the

HOLY SPIE TODAY

BY J. LOWELL HARRUP

ILLUSTRATION: RICK WHIPPLE



Vance Havner, speaking at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, said, "When I was young, I embraced modernism — the gospel for the modern mind. I soon found it was neither gospel, nor did it satisfy the mind." Havner had experienced a decline in the power of his ministry as he embraced a deception. When he repented, his testimony was that God restored what he called "the fire," and gave him nearly 50 more years of ministry. The result of that confession was that hundreds went to the altar weeping in repentance. I was with them and also wept.

To paraphrase Dorothy Sayers: "No church, including the Pentecostal church, is immune from the forces that have tamed and declawed the lion of other revival movements and turned him into a housecat."1 These forces include deception, hubris, and acceptance. The deception is that we can do the work of the Kingdom with something less than total dependency on the Holy Spirit by using our skills and accomplishments. The hubris is thinking we cannot be deceived. Acceptance is the carrot for which we have hungered and reached.

Fostering revolutionary life in the spirit in our churches that conserves what God has done and makes the church dangerous to worldly forces in high places is the focus of this article.

DUPLICATING YESTERDAY IS NOT THE ANSWER

I grew up in the Assemblies of God. I am a third-generation Pentecostal, and I have no desire to return to the good old days. We are presently accomplishing many things of which past generations would not have even dreamed. But there is a strategic essential — a treasure — that we cannot afford to abandon or see attrited. This treasure is neither style nor our ideas concerning Pentecostal culture. As precious as our traditions are, this treasure does not even reside in them. To the degree the dynamics of culture and style may take place, we must, with all haste, recover this treasure. And the deliberate duplication of style, culture, and tradition as the answer to our dilemma will not make us more spiritual, but more carnal, because our problem has spiritual roots.

GENUINE AND DELIBERATE DEPENDENCE ON THE SPIRIT

What made the good old days so good? It was our forefathers' genuine and deliberate dependence on the Spirit. When we read Paul's epistles, we are convinced of Paul's total dependency on the Holy Spirit. This was not thrust on him by lack of educational opportunity or inability to perform; it was his deliberate choice and was essential to his effectiveness in the Kingdom. Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers: "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of

speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I *determined* to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, *that your faith* should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1–5, NASB. Notice the italicized intention and purpose.).

In the early days of our Movement, our founding fathers believed this attitude of dependency was necessary. The first wave of Pentecost included men with fine education and training from many other organizations. Even with some abuses, shortsightedness, naiveté, and lack of professionalism, our salvation was in our true dependence on the Holy Spirit. We were not only creating a style and building tradition, but we were also following the Spirit. This generalization may have some exceptions, but it was universal enough that it established a Pentecostal ethos.

AN UNINTENDED DEVIATION: REDUCING THE WORK OF THE INFINITE SPIRIT TO BITE-SIZED PREDICTABLE MORSELS

We have trimmed, shaped, cultured, boxed, and packaged the ethos of Spirit-focus into a special language. (I am not referring to *glossolalia*, though outsiders might think so.) With the taming of the Spirit, we no longer need to tremble in fearing His presence, His searing knowledge of our hearts, or simply what He might do.

As leaders, we desire a level of predictableness. We should not, however, think or suggest that the Spirit — the God of all creation — is predictable. He is dangerous. His ways are not ours. He acts as a sword that none of us can escape, a rushing, mighty wind that does not blow from the north, south, east, or west, but from heaven.

We cannot predict what we might see when we are in the Spirit. John provided a record of what he saw, and this record forces us to reexamine everything we think we understand about this world. John's vision in the Spirit is a narrative of not only the past, but also of the future

This taming of the Spirit has been incremental, but progressive. We put the Holy Spirit in a dated cultural box, analyze His gifts until we understand them, reduce what He has given us to nine influences, and then imply — but never state — that the Spirit is a lesser God, or only part of God. There is no indication that any of this was ever intended. It happened, in part, because we did not believe it could. (Remember the first step of deception?) This is not cynicism. I am merely saying that life in the Spirit is exciting. Churches that promote and seek His presence may demonstrate every possible style, but are more alike than those that are bound together by style. It also says that dealing with the Spirit is forever challenging, exciting, fear inducing, dangerous to the flesh, at times stomach churning, yet healing, encouraging, renewing, and restoring. The list is endless. The Holy Spirit does not reside in the middle of the standard deviation index; He fills the whole spectrum and beyond of any norm we establish.

Paul wrote to the believers in Galatia: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another" (Galatians 1:6, NASB). Our amazement should mirror his when we think not of what we have, but of what we should have — and in too many cases do not have.

Our creeds must be more than shibboleths that identify and separate those who *cannot* from those who *can*. Our creeds are valid descriptions of living, vital experiences, or at least experiences we truly seek. Creeds often begin as exciting discoveries but soon become codified statements seeking to protect life. We parse, analyze, and defend them. In this process, however, we cannot recapture the experience we seek to protect. We must go back to the source — the living,

The deception is that we can do the work of the Kingdom with something less than total dependency on the Holy Spirit by using our skills and accomplishments.

vital experience of the Spirit. The organization of the church demands creeds; the organism of the church does not and, in fact, struggles with them.

Ideas fit into creeds; the Holy Spirit does not. He cannot be defined, restricted, or embodied in a statement. Yet, He is willing to cleanse, fill, indwell, energize, speak through, stimulate, empower, and employ any person who will dare to believe Him, trust Him, and cooperate with Him. Let the creed stand on its own, but release the Holy Spirit to do what He wills.

Release may not have the best denotation, but its connotation is clear. It is this reality of His presence that provides the answer for the post-Christian, postmodern world in which we live. It is also the answer for the animistic third world, and even the world of the not-too-distant future — one most of us will never see but our children will inhabit.

FOSTERING THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT WITHIN THE CHURCH

The Christian life is a Spirit life that does not oppose natural

tendencies, but carnal ones. In our "already, but not yet" experience, we have access to the Father in the Spirit, are fellow citizens with saints, are part of God's household, and are part of the same building as are apostles and prophets — with Christ as the cornerstone. We belong; we truly fit. Together we are the temple, "a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:18–22).

How can church leadership effect a revolutionary change in our churches that conserves what God has done, is not carelessly iconoclastic, and once again makes us dangerous to worldly forces in high places? Gordon Fee, in *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, suggests several essentials if true life in the Spirit is to be fostered in our churches. I have borrowed his suggestions as a basic outline guide, but the content is mine.

Immersion in the Spirit-inspired, life-giving Word

We must take people back to Scripture. This standard begins with the pastor-teacher — God's gift to the church. This is not the duty of a moment, a sermon, or a short series. This must be the regular diet of the church.

When we discuss sermon structure today, we do not necessarily mean classifications such as topical and expository.

> All sermons should be expository, not in the classic homiletic definition, but in the sense of clearly expositing the truth of Scripture and the claim it has on our lives.

> When I came to Northland Cathedral, I wanted to develop a deeper theology of the Spirit. The church was mature and Pentecostal because it had been pastored by wonderful, orthodox spiri-

tual men. I felt, however, that their understanding of the Holy Spirit had areas of disconnect. We did not have a sense that the Spirit in Genesis 1:2, who brooded over the chaos during creation, was, in fact, the same, unchanged, divine Spirit through whom Jesus offered himself to the Father as an unblemished sacrifice (Hebrews 9:14). This was the same Spirit who was poured out on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Had someone asked a yes-or-no question concerning this aspect of the Spirit, all would have answered correctly. But the explosive truth concerning the Holy Spirit was not part of the ethos of the church.

The people understood the gifts, but I sensed their integration could be stronger. I believed if we began, not with the gifts but, with the person of the Spirit as God, we would widen the boundaries of expectation, increase our anticipation, and would cooperate with Him. We began to study the person of the Spirit revealed through different writers throughout the Bible to develop a biblical pneumatology.

Living in Scripture produces the result the Scripture

intends. If we believe the Bible is the Word of God, then it is worthy of serious study, intense focus, and then humbling ourselves before the God of the Word. But before God's Word reaches our people, it must lay its claim on the teacher.

Studying the biblical text is not a purely academic discipline, yet it demands that we bring this discipline to the table with its entire rigor. But the Giver of the text will also be there, leading, illuminating, revealing, guiding, correcting, encouraging, and equipping whose who teach. Far more frightening, He will apply the text as we except it. This becomes an adventure, a journey of discovery that has no parallel.

Focus on the letters Paul wrote to churches and church leaders. These letters not only reveal, but also often distil and apply other biblical truths. These letters take the Lucan power encounters and balance them with the ongoing place of the Spirit in the church. They constructively correct the misapplication of the Spirit. They show the Spirit's exultation of Jesus Christ.

A restored view of our place in this world — the power of the age to come as it addresses the needs of this age

Believers must view the church through a new paradigm that includes how we relate to the world. Scripture repeatedly reminds us of the short shelf life of the world's system. It will pass away; it is already on the decline. It is, in fact, the world system of the dying. We are not part of it; we belong to the world of the living.

When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, "He gave gifts to men" (Ephesians 4:8, NASB). These gifts are post-Resurrection gifts given to pre-Resurrection people. The



Resurrection has already begun, Christ was the first to experience it. It is not yet our turn, but these post-Resurrection gifts are already ours in everlasting supply. Colossians 3:1 says since we have been raised with Christ to "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (NASB).

There is an "already, but not yet" tension in every Spiritgiven manifestation. We have access to the supernatural powers of the Spirit to address the needs of this world. We have been redeemed, yet redemption is still to take place.

The fullness of the Spirit is, in particular, an eschatological reality. Joel, a spokesman for God from the perspective of his present age, said of the age to come, "And it will come about after this that I [God] will pour out My Spirit on all mankind" (Joel 2:28, NASB).

Peter's identification, "This is that" (Acts 2:16), brings together these ages. Peter was still Peter, however, and was later rebuked by Paul "because he stood condemned" (Galatians 2:11).

Yet shortly after the Spirit was poured out on the Church, the Holy Spirit in Peter energized his use of the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6). "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene walk!" (NASB). A man, lame from birth, was instantly healed — the power of the age to come addressing a need of this age. This power operated in a man, though not yet perfect, but nonetheless, a new man in Christ.

We live in this age, but belong to the age to come. Paul said, "This world in its present form is passing away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). Jesus focused on our other-worldliness in John 17. John addressed it in 1 John 2:17, "And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (NASB). The one who does God's will does not just outlast the world; he lives forever.

Restoring this truth will energize the church. While we can preach this, it takes the resident Holy Spirit, active in a congregation, to shift the focus from the ostensible permanence of this transient age to the true permanence of the coming age. The humbling question is what action will the Spirit of God take to accomplish this?

Becoming a people of the presence — not only in word, but also in reality

Spirit activity in the church is discomfiting to many. They wish to proclaim an indwelling Spirit in individuals, and a life-giving Spirit in the church — providing He remains silent, unnoticed, transparent, and inactive, or, will only act in a way no one can identify.

What separated Israel from the nations around her as she traveled through the wilderness was not the Law or the ark of the covenant. The Babylonian king, Hammurabi, developed a code of ethics similar to the ethical demands of the Law. Boxes covered with gold that approximate the ark of the covenant are extant in funerary discoveries in Egypt, including that of Tutankhamen. No other nation, however, had the presence. Whether in a pillar of fire at night, a cloud by day, or one that came down over the tent of meeting, the presence that shook the mountain and covered it with thunder and lightning, or that defeated enemies, or empowered Moses and Aaron — all identified Israel as God's chosen people.

Both friend and enemy were aware of this presence. God may sound benign as a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. His presence, however, was anything but benign to the enemies of Israel. Pharaoh came to know God's presence when he lost his army in the Red Sea. Abiram and Dathan, who should have known better, learned of His reality.

God is omnipresent. When we speak of His presence in the Church, however, we are implying intentionality and purpose on His part. Psalm 24 says everything belongs to God, but that is different from the way the Church belongs to Him. When the church comes together in the name of Jesus, He is present in the person of the Holy Spirit.

INTENTIONALLY RESPONDING TO THE EVER-ACTIVE, ENERGIZING SPIRIT OF GOD

The identifying trait of Pentecostal or charismatic congregations has been the intentionality of the people to be sensitized to and responsive to the Spirit's presence. We have customs, styles, and traditions that have become a part of the culture of these churches. But the identifying dynamic has been the intention and effort by the people to respond to the intention and effort of the Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit came in a new fullness on the Day of Pentecost (He was certainly resident before that), He did not come to be silent, inactive, or dormant, but resident. He came to relate, to energize, to encourage, to convict, to reveal, to advise, to enable memory, and to give insight. Fire, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind, and language were present. Peter's preaching was inspired and effective. Peter established and demonstrated a new Pentecostal hermeneutic in his sermon as the Spirit gave him a proper understanding of Old Testament prophecy.

The Spirit came with gifts — *charismata* — and dispensed them to the Church. There was no preliminary teaching as to what the gifts were, but the Spirit found expression in innumerable ways. These gifts were not intermittent moments of Spirit activity; they filled the substance of the church's meetings — prophesying, healing, leading, helping, serving, and giving. They were not codified; they energized.

THE LISTS OF THE GIFTS: THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG TO ALL THAT THE SPIRIT CAN DO

Fleshly expression, however able it may be, *never* produces spiritual results. It is our hubris that makes us think otherwise. Whether the Spirit anoints learned skills (administration, leading, and serving) or gives abilities untraceable to any human effort (healings, miracles, tongues, and interpretation of tongues), it is equally charismatic. A Pentecostal service should be a continuum of Spirit activity, otherwise, all that is not Spirit is filler.

No writer, including Paul, suggests an exhaustive list of

Q&A ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Q. CAN BELIEVERS WHO HAVE NOT EXPERI-ENCED THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT MINIS-TER WITH SUPERNATURAL SIGNS FOLLOWING?

A. As the question is stated, the answer must be yes. Mark 16:17 speaks of signs following "those who believe." Yet the promise to believers before the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8). The power is a supernatural, divine power consistently doing supernatural things through Spirit-filled believers.

The question might better be, "Is there any difference between the frequency and effectiveness of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit in the life of a believer after being baptized in the Holy Spirit?" The Bible records many miraculous demonstrations of the supernatural in the lives of Old Testament individuals, and in the lives of New Testament believers both before and after their Baptism experience. When Jesus sent out the pre-Pentecost 70, they returned reporting with joy, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Luke 10:17).

But there was definitely a higher incidence of spiritual gifts operating through Spirit-filled members of the Early Church than there was prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon yielded believers. Miracles were wrought through people like Stephen and Philip who did not have apostolic positions (Acts 6:8 and 8:6,7). The full range of gifts was everywhere seen after the Day of Pentecost. It was as if a high-octane fuel additive propelled the Church to incredible growth and outreach. Activity after the Day of Pentecost was not just an extension of activity before the great outpouring. The Church had experienced a major empowerment for more effective ministry. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues, is the doorway leading to a greatly empowered church of Jesus Christ.

Abridged from The General Council of the Assemblies of God official position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

what the Holy Spirit will do through individuals and in the church. He identifies a number of these things in different lists (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; Romans 12). All of these, in the words of Fee, are *ad hoc*. The only factor that is defined is love, and this is not identified as a gift.

Paul's intent was not to codify the gifts so people could limit-by-definition and categorize them, but to remind them, and us, that the Holy Spirit was and is active. He called them ministries, effects, and manifestations. The fact Paul spoke of gifts reminds us of God's desire to freely bless us with treasures from heaven.

It is this reality and awareness that must permeate the church today if we are to recapture the dynamic of the Early Church. It is not the structure of the service that will affect this; it is the awareness of, the desire for, and the cooperation with the activity of the Spirit by the leadership and by the congregation, in whatever form, that ensures this reality. He may refresh like the wind or convict like fire, speak with the tongues of men and angels, or, He may simply brood over the congregation to illuminate the spoken Word.

PREACHING ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The apostle Paul's desire that the church be schooled in the gifts of the Holy Spirit must be a concern of every Pentecostal preacher. If Pentecostals do not preach and teach on the subject, who will?

Sound, biblical, Spirit-filled teaching on the value and operation of the gifts of the Spirit is a classic example of overcoming evil with good. Admittedly the topic has been fraught with so much misinformation, misunderstanding, and misapplication many preachers have thrown up their hands and chosen to avoid it. But if the gifts were not vital to the life of the church, they would not be part of biblical doctrine and practice. The proper use of spiritual gifts is a blessed provision and glorious blessing that far outweighs any possible negative consequences. Contemporary Pentecostal preachers must understand potential dangers and abuses — and then set out to correct them.

FOUR GREAT OBSTACLES

There are four great obstacles the preacher must overcome in the area of spiritual gifts. Paul was very conscious of them, but none of them dissuaded him from recognizing the value of these gifts and insisting upon their being operational in the church.

Ignorance

Sadly, Paul would find a great deal of the same ignorance and misunderstanding about spiritual gifts in the church today he found in the church at Corinth. It would not be difficult to find Pentecostal churches in America that know almost nothing about the gifts of the Spirit or have wrong views about them.

Fear

"No one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed'" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

The Pentecostal preacher of today has to address the same fear Paul addressed in the Corinthian church. People coming into a Pentecostal fellowship hear believers claiming to speak messages by the Spirit of God. How can they know whether what they are hearing is of God or not? Paul is quick to identify one sure test: The Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of truth and revelation, always glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ; God's Spirit would never curse or denigrate the Son.

Wherever the Pentecostal church has endured, it has done

so because its theology and teaching have been Christ-centered, both in spirit and in Word.

Apathy

"Eagerly desire the greater gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31; compare 2 Timothy 1:6). Paul knew the church could become indifferent to spiritual gifts; hence, his admonition to believers to set their hearts upon receiving and exercising "the greater gifts."

There is a clear and present danger in Pentecost of losing focus and intentionality concerning spiritual gifts. One reason is the proliferation of so many good things, which can crowd out the highest and best. The church calendar is full of wonderful programs, wholesome activities, special events, and social action. Therefore, the critical question to ask about the church is not how many activities it contains but the spiritual priorities those activities reflect.

The preacher must protect the pulpit and be proactive in declaring the whole counsel of God — which will include a regular emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit. If the apostle Paul were to visit Pentecostal churches today, would he be pleased to see congregations heeding the command to "eagerly desire the greater gifts," or would he be disappointed and alarmed?

Pride

This is by far the greatest threat to the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit. On the one hand, pride produces the kind of embarrassing behavior that causes most of the criticisms of Pentecostals by non-Pentecostals. On the other hand, pride, a fear of who may be visiting the church, keeps Pentecostals from wanting to demonstrate gifts of the Spirit. They do not realize the large number of people who were brought to God, became Pentecostal, and joined the church because they witnessed the power of God through the proper demonstration of spiritual gifts.

Paul was very much aware of the destructive force of pride and was careful to teach on the subject of spiritual gifts within a context of humility and love, the antitheses of pride.

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COOPERATING WITH THE SPIRIT

There are particular times in our services when the Holy Spirit desires to disclose himself, sometimes through the *charismata*, and always to honor Christ. The disclosure of the Spirit through gifts is not the beginning of His activity in the service, but a particular focus within an otherwise Spiritenergized service. These elements include times of intentional worship, times following the proclamation of the Word, times of intentional ministry in prayer, and times when we give an invitation for the lost to come to Christ or for believers to gather at the altar in His presence.

I make this observation not to analyze the mystery of the Spirit, and certainly not to manipulate Him, but to encourage cooperation with the Spirit. This cooperation is sometimes pursued simply by the leader's patience and sensitivity to the mind of the Spirit.

I recently preached in Zimbabwe at their General Council with missionary Dean Galyen. The first several services were good, but in the third or fourth service, Galyen sensed that the Holy Spirit was seeking a more deliberate role. We waited, but nothing identifiable happened. We finished that reticent to talk to people individually about their ministry in the Spirit, whether it be the content of their messages, or their timing and effectiveness. Effective ministry needs to be encouraged; new ministry needs to be nurtured; improper ministry needs to be corrected so it can become effective. This is done carefully and sensitively, but it must be done. Paul's limiting the number of messages in tongues in a service — without saying that any beyond three are false — indicates there is a spiritual propriety that needs to be understood. (See sidebar "Preaching on Spiritual Gifts.")

Is there cause for apprehension in cooperating with the Spirit? By all means, yes. People have apprehensions about getting married, having babies, and growing up. It is not the fear of evil, but of the unknown. But fear makes adventure adventurous. Fear is the unidentified shadow cast by anything of magnitude as it approaches. The moving of the Spirit can be wonderful; but it can also be frightening when we consider it.

Cooperation with the Spirit does not imply a lack of planning for a service. No service should be planned without the guidance of the Spirit. During the service, however, a leader

What made the good old days so good? Our forefathers' genuine and deliberate dependence on the Spirit.

must constantly be sensitive to the direction of the Spirit and be ready to step in and lead others. We do not quench the Spirit when we

service, and after a break, started another. We were minutes into that service when a powerful anointing came on the congregation expressed through gifts of the Spirit. I am convinced that Galyen was sensitive to the direction of the Spirit, and what he said sensitized the congregation.

In the church I pastor, we take time during each Sunday morning service to minister to people's needs. Between 20 and 30 leaders come to the front, I give a 2- to-3-minute lesson on the ministry of Christ and invite people to come for prayer. The leaders pray in pairs. I have repeatedly observed that as they minister in the power of the Spirit, the nature of the service changes. People are healed, saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, find direction in their lives — every kind of miracle takes place. The time is intentional and planned; the results are Spirit-energized.

Our Sunday evening services are more fluid. As we sing, the staff pastor leading the service is responsible to seek direction from the Spirit. As he senses what the Spirit wants to accomplish, he has latitude — whether we have finished singing the songs that have been scheduled or not — to pursue the direction the Spirit is leading and lead others to respond.

The formation of an unwritten code of propriety concerning the expression of spiritual gifts within each congregation is generally the result of teaching. Leaders should not be make people aware of His presence and guide them in their response. Carnal attitudes and insensitivity to God and His people do that.

God has given leaders (elders, pastors) authority, and they must use it carefully with the awareness that the right of all to contribute must be protected (1 Corinthians 14:26). The role of leadership is not control, but peace. Leadership, rightfully used, should create confidence in people to discover and use the gifts God has given them and to understand their purpose — that is, the intent of the Spirit — the edifying and building up of the church (1 Corinthians 14:12).

The Church is God's mysterious miracle, hidden from past ages, destined for eternity, but entrusted to us for this time. He is in the midst of the golden candlesticks of Revelation 1:12, intentionally, not coincidentally. What He freely gives, we desperately need. And it is available without cost.



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INDNOTE

 Dorothy L. Spears, Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 15.



Pentecostal and charismatic churches across America are facing a new and puzzling trend: postpentecostalization. Reports are frequently heard that some Assemblies of God pastors are pastoring churches that do not accept our pneumatology or allow for the manifestation of spiritual gifts in worship services. At the same time, some churches lament that their pastor neither practices nor encourages others to practice spiritual manifestations.

While reports of declension in Pentecostal worship are not new — as early as the 1920s some Pentecostal leaders were warning that there was declension in our Movement — we may be facing a new wave of declension that is more serious. If so, we must pay serious attention to the renewal of the *charismata* in our worship services across the Pentecostal*charismatic* movement. Not only does our tradition call for renewal, but also faithfulness to Scripture demands it. It is time to consider whether Pentecostalism without expression of the *charismata* is, in the parlance of the Greek New Testament, an *idiotikos* Pentecostalism.

IDIOTIKOS PENTECOSTALISM

The term *idiotikos* is potentially offensive and must be explained. *Idiotikos* is derived from the Greek word *idiotes* and has a different meaning from the English word idiot. I do not wish to apply the English word *idiot* or *idiotic* to any person or religious perspective. The use of *idiotikos* is not an epithet, but a goad to reflection.

The concept of *idiotikos* Pentecostalism is based on 1 Corinthians 14:23, where the apostle Paul warned the Corinthian church that the *apistoi* and *idiotai* would think that the members of the church had gone mad if they should enter the service and find them all speaking in tongues at the same time. To understand Paul's point in this passage, it is crucial to know who the *apistoi* and *idiotai* were. Apistoi clearly refers to unbelievers, but Bible translators do not agree on the identity of the *idiotai*.¹

The King James Version renders *idiotai* as "those who are unlearned."² The Revised Standard Version translates the word as "outsiders."³ The New American Standard Bible translates *idiotai* as "ungifted men."⁴ The New International Version translates the word as "some who do not understand."⁵ What is surprising is that these contemporary translations do not reflect the definition provided in the leading New Testament Greek lexicon.

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, edited by Frederick Danker, offers the idea of "layman, amateur"⁶ for the first defi-nition of *idiotes*. The lexicon explains that this definition is not intended to express the religious division between laity and clergy, but to stress expertise versus inexpertise in many contexts. Thus, the first definition of *idiotes* is the idea represented in the King James Version of a person unlearned, uninstructed⁷ in spiritual gifts.

The second meaning offered by Danker for *idiotes* is a religious novice or catechumen. References are adduced to show that the term was used in religious contexts to refer to people who attended the services of a particular religion but had not yet become full-fledged members. In discussing

Idiotikos Christianity, untutored in the use of spiritual gifts and left to its own devices, would drift into liturgical woodenness and spiritual slumber.

1 Corinthians 14:23, the lexicon states that "the *idiotai* are neither similar to the *apistoi*, nor are they full-fledged Christians; obviously, they stand between the two groups as a kind of proselytes or catechumens."⁸ Thus *idiotai* may refer to people who were new believers but who had not been baptized.

A possible New Testament example of the second definition is the disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1–7. They had believed in Jesus, had been baptized in John's baptism of repentance, but had not been baptized in Jesus' name and had not heard of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 14:23, it seems the first definition applies. The *idiotai* were new believers who had not yet been instructed about the use of spiritual gifts in Christian worship. Paul's concern is that these new believers, as well as unbelievers, may become confused or offended by the unruly use of the gift of tongues in corporate worship.

CHURCH-GROWTH MODELS

This Pauline concern for the welfare of new believers takes us back to our contemporary situation relative to postpentecostal churches. The popularity among Pentecostal churches of church-growth models such as the seeker-sensitive model or the purpose-driven model has led some pastors, perhaps many, to completely reject charismatic gifts in corporate worship.⁹ Yet this approach is clearly against what the apostle Paul intends in the passage. Like the missionaries of the early 20th century who were confronted by Roland Allen's book *Missionary* *Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?* pastors in the United States today must consider whether we are better advised to use our methods of church growth, or those taught by Paul in the Word of God.

Paul makes it obvious in 1 Corinthians 14:23 that he is not opposed to the manifestation of spiritual gifts in public. After warning the church not to abuse the gifts, and especially the gift of tongues that would lead the *apistoi* and the *idiotai* to think the church had gone mad, he sums up his argument two verses later:

"What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be

done for the strengthening of the church" (1 Corinthians 14:26).

From this it is clear that Paul's intention was not to eliminate spiritual gifts from public worship, but to protect them from abuse so they might fully edify believers and convict sinners.

It is important to consider the

opposite of *idiotikos* worship. Manaical worship is the opposite extreme. When Paul said the *apistoi* and *idiotai* will think the church has gone mad, he used the word *mainomai*. *Mainomai* is related to the English word *maniac*. Critics of charismatic abuse have done well to call such worship "charismania." It is the maniacal charismatic expression to which Paul objects. Nevertheless, while it is good to join Paul's position in opposition to maniacal worship, it would be a grave error to forbid the exercise of the *charismata* in the process. Genuine Pentecostal-charismatic worship holds the middle ground.

WHO DETERMINES WHAT MODEL?

Paul's support of *charismata* in public worship raises this question: who is going to determine what we allow in our worship services? Will the Word of God determine it or will it be determined by *apistoi* and *idiotai*? If it is by the Word, then we will need to ensure that our worship is faithful to God (as opposed to *apistos*, faithless) and clearly instructed in Scripture. The abuse of spiritual gifts in Christian worship by the unlearned is not acceptable. This fact obligates pastors to instruct their congregations carefully about the use of spiritual gifts.

It is often said that Pentecostals are more embarrassed by the use of gifts in worship than their unbelieving and non-Pentecostal Christian guests. It would seem this embarrassment comes either from being ashamed of the gifts themselves (which is unacceptable) or being ashamed of untutored exercisers of those gifts. In either case, the answer is

more and better instruction, not shrinking back from the exercise of spiritual gifts.

On the other hand, if we allow the form of Christian worship to be determined by the *apistoi* and the *idiotai*, we must carefully draw out the implications of this decision. First, we allow the unbeliever to define what we can believe in and practice. This is a formula for failure. It is also unfaithful to God who has lavished His grace (*charisma*) on us. Second, such worship will be *idiotikos* — being determined by the *idiotai*.¹⁰

Idiotikos worship is the purposeful decision (if not purpose-driven) to refuse to instruct new believers and unbelievers about the biblical use of spiritual gifts. I recently heard an Assemblies of God pastor talk about his new church plant. About 300 people had been added to his church in a year's time; 150 of them were new believers. He explained he did not want charismatic giftings in his church, since most of the transfer growth was from evangelical churches. He was worried they would be offended by the exercise of spiritual gifts and that new believers could become confused. The answer to this dilemma is apparently to leave everyone in the state he or she was found in. This decision is appropriately termed *idiotikos* since it puts the doctrinal position of the ungifted and uninstructed, rather than Paul's teaching, in the driver's seat of the church.

Another crucial aspect of *idiotikos* worship is that it is a conscious decision to rest on our own abilities rather than on God's power. The word *idiotes* is closely related to the Greek word *idios*, meaning "one's own" or "one's self." The basic concept of *idiotes* is that a person is on his or her own. She has not been instructed by others, but left to her own understanding. He is not empowered by the Spirit, but operating on his own strength.

WHY A PENTECOSTAL MODEL?

One hundred years of Pentecostal experience, coupled with the greatest church growth the world has ever seen church growth that dwarfs that of the Early Church should have convinced us that we need to rely on God's power, not our own, for church planting and growth. Postpentecostalism, or *idiotikos* Pentecostalism, goes against scriptural teaching and against the methods used in the church's greatest period of success. At the same time, when millions of unbelievers (*apistoi*) and ungifted cessationists (*idiotai*) are sailing into the ports of Pentecostal and charismatic churches, the postpentecostals are determining a course that will lead their barks out into the open sea, against the tide and into the storm. The prospects do not seem bright.

In 1 Corinthians 14, the apostle Paul made clear that Christians who are uninstructed about spiritual gifts are not mature (pneumatikos Christians), but idiotai.¹¹ He could not have suspected that within a century most of the church would fit into that category. Idiotikos Christianity, untutored in the use of spiritual gifts and left to its own devices, would drift into liturgical woodenness and spiritual slumber. It would partner with state and empire, substitute its own judgment for that of Scripture, and make that judgment a rigid, unbreakable tradition so tightly tied to the power of a few that it would become a means of oppression. Idiotikos Christian leaders, left to their own devices, would burn other believers (as well as unbelievers) at the stake, kill them with the sword of state and empire, and enforce their power and hegemony over God's little flock and the unbelieving world as well. Great atrocities like the Holocaust would be committed against God, His people, and against the world Christ died to save by idiotikos Christianity.

Then, the greatest revival in the history of the Church would come. Hundreds of millions of believers would turn from *idiotikos* to *pneumatikos*, or spiritual Christianity. Now, at the very hour of the triumph of the Holy Spirit and of the rescue of the human spirit, will we turn back to an *idiotikos* form of Christianity? Having begun in the Spirit will we seek to be made perfect in the flesh? God forbid.



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ENDNOTES

- 1. Idiotai is the plural form of the first declension masculine noun idiotes.
- "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" (KJV).
- "If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (RSV).
- "If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (NASB).
- "So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?" (NIV).
- Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gringrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2d ed., ed. Frederick William Danker, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 370.
- 7. The New King James Version translates idiotes as "uninformed."
- 8. Bauer, Arndt, Gringrich, 370.
- 9. I want to clearly affirm all efforts to reach the lost for Christ. My comments here should not be taken as criticism of evangelicals who are seeking to be faithful to Christ in reaching the lost. Rather, I seek to challenge assumptions made by Pentecostal pastors that using spiritual gifts in worship will result in less effectiveness in evangelism.
- 10. I am aware that I am flirting here with the genetic fallacy, as well as with the possibility of offending some who disagree on this matter. I only ask you to consider the exact sense in which I am using the term *idiotikos*.
- 11. While Paul does not use the adjective *idiotikos* in the New Testament, he does use the adjective *pneumatikos*, which means "spiritual."



M onths ago, God poured out His Spirit during a Pentecostal Messianic conference in New Jersey. Many Jewish believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, four were born again, and two people were miraculously healed. Pentecostal Jews who knew the voice of the Spirit showed the light of Christ to those in spiritual darkness.

Do Pentecostals need to compete with conventional religious practitioners or seemingly religious magical formulas? Has mystical, intuitive knowledge of the divine been the basis of our appeal? No! We are neither religious idolaters nor Gnostics. We understand that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is God's doing and beyond human invention or religious machination.

ISRAEL AS AN EVANGELIZING NATION

All Israel and all Gentile believers are called together (Ephesians 2:11–22) to

New Jewish Competition for Gentile Souls

BY RAY GANNON

heed God's voice and let the power of His name be manifest in the earth. God manifested His presence at Sinai and at Pentecost to awaken a spiritually slumbering Jewish people out of their lethargy and move them into the blessings of God.

When Jesus stood before 500 Jewish believers on the Mount of Olives to issue the Great Commission, Jewish responsibility for Gentile well-being was not a new concept.

The Torah made it clear that Abraham's progeny played an ongoing redemptive role among the nations. The seed of the patriarchs was to be a blessing, functioning both as a corporate priesthood and a holy nation, and spiritually enlightening the world. Israel remains divinely commissioned to proclaim God to all humanity and to demonstrate the social benefits of national allegiance and obedience to Him.

In keeping with modern America's devotion to religious pluralism, pagan and Christian conversion to Judaism is now making a strong comeback.

During the biblical period, pagans were accepted into the Jewish faith providing they were genuinely converted — willing to accept circumcision, water immersion, and full observance of the Jewish law. Judaism was characterized by intense missionary endeavors particularly throughout the intertestamental period and up to the time the Church came to Roman political power in the fourth century A.D. At that time pagan and Christian conversion to Judaism was officially outlawed within Christendom. As a result, the culturally resilient Jewish world manufactured an official nonproselytizing policy in an attempt to legitimize their radical departure from the missionary activities that had always been an important part of Jewish religious practice. Throughout the centuries, Judaism has not pursued Gentile conversions for pragmatic reasons: to avoid legal or religious persecution. Adopting a nonconversionist policy, Jews have since condemned proselytizing efforts as the distinctly imperialistic practice of missionary Christianity.

Contrary to common Christian myth, Jews did not deliberately withhold biblical revelation from honest seekers of the lives of Gentiles with His anointing, some Jews recognized they could spiritually benefit by submitting to God's anointed One, Jesus.

Except for early Judaizing believers in the Book of Acts and Galatians, rabbinical Judaism never maintained that Gentiles must embrace Judaism to have eternal life. Conversely, the righteous of all nations would inherit life eternal. Whereas

by the Torah of Israel for humanity.

Jews were obliged by God to observe the 613 precepts

of the Torah, the Gentile righteous were expected to

keep the seven of the Noachide code — also called the Seven Laws of Noah, a universal code of law prescribed

Thousands of Jews are embracing Jesus every year. Simultaneously thousands of Americans are accepting Judaism, and hundreds of apostate Christians are taking up cabalistic Jewish mysticism.

truth because of supposed ethnic prejudice. The Bible reports pagan conversions since the Exodus and even includes two women in David's ancestry. The intertestamental laymen-led synagogue movement spreading from Babylon throughout the Mediterranean world fostered new congregations as communal sites for Jewish worship. They also served as conversionary centers for Gentiles seeking religious assurance in an uncertain world of pagan adulteries and idolatrous mystery religions.

Paul's apostolic mission to the Gentiles commenced in the local synagogues. He often addressed their members and shared the gospel with them. But after many Jews and proselytes embraced Jesus, others stiffened their resistance. Paul then began preaching among the spiritually hungry Gentiles. As God's grace was given to the uncircumcised, many previously unrespon-

Jews generally regard conversion to Judaism as an unnecessary encumbrance on Gentiles, who could reap the same heavenly benefit without the full measure of earthly Jewish obligations. For this reason, during most of the post-biblical period, Gentiles seeking conversion refused three times before gaining rabbinical approval to

to Judaism have been refused three times before gaining rabbinical approval to convert. Only when an absolutely determined Gentile was under long-term compulsion to convert would the rabbis finally yield.

CONVERSIONS TO JUDAISM TODAY

Today, Christians are not alone in their attempt to convert people of other religious persuasions. In recent decades, Jewish scholars have advocated the biblical Jewish mission. Many Jews are realizing that they are to do more than improve the judicial system or make new scientific discoveries. They are to fulfill the biblical mandate to offer Judaism to all humanity. This God-issued religious alternative will establish a better material and social experience for mankind in the here and now.

In keeping with modern America's devotion to religious pluralism, pagan and Christian conversion to Judaism is now making a strong comeback. Jewish sources report between 185,000 to 200,000 Gentile conversions to Judaism in recent decades. Many of these conversions are due to growing intermarriage where Gentile mates and children are converted. But other new Jews are attracted to the well-defined practices and high ethical codes of Judaism and the communal intimacy in Jewish society. In addition, converts are sympathetic and aggressive Gentile students of Judaism. Like Ruth, their predecessor, they are welcomed to join in the Jewish mission on equal religious footing with the Jewish world.

JEWISH CONVERSIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

Curiously, the modern estimates of the number of Jews accepting Jesus as their Messiah roughly corresponds to the number of Gentile converts to Judaism. The

Pontius Puddle

sive Jews were provoked to spiritual jealousy. As Gentiles experienced Spirit regeneration, Spirit baptism, and God's rich anointing for divine service, many Jews reevaluated their rejection of Jesus. Since God was obviously enriching Assemblies of God has played a significant role in the modern Messianic Jewish revival and Messianic congregation-planting movement since the early 1970s. Jewish anti-missionaries consider the Assemblies of God to be one of the Christian groups most likely to impact Jewish people with the gospel. We gladly wear this badge. God has raised up the Pentecostal movement in part to proclaim the gospel to all Israel with God-supplied signs, wonders, and miracles to confirm His truth.

As national representative for Jewish ministries, I have record of more than 50 Assemblies of God pastors, evangelists, and appointed missionaries who are Jewish believers. I believe there are hundreds more. Everywhere I travel, I find Jewish believers in our congregations. Without exaggeration, it is probable that thousands of Spirit-filled Jews are scattered throughout our 12,000 churches.

Judaism requires converts to adhere to rabbinical Torah-Law, but Pentecostals encourage Jewish brethren to learn to hear the Spirit, who makes known to all the proper application of the Law (Torah) of Christ. Rabbinical authorities have precisely defined and encoded religious practices for Gentile converts, but Pentecostals instruct Jewish believers to work out their own salvation in submission to the Holy Spirit's counsel. Gentile converts to Judaism are expected to fully adopt Jewish culture, but Pentecostals recognize that Jesus is Lord of all nations and wants each culture to be distinctly used to glorify God. In Pentecostalism, Jewish believers are not required to abandon their Jewish cultural expression, but to bring it into conformity with God's fuller revelation in Christ.

Thousands of Jews are embracing Jesus every year. Simultaneously thousands of Americans are accepting Judaism, and hundreds of apostate Christians are taking up cabalistic Jewish mysticism. Sometimes anti-missionary efforts, in league with Satan, persuade former Jewish Christians to return to their former beliefs and they fall away from Christ. In 35 years of Jewish ministry, in America and Israel, I have both rejoiced and wept.

Today, Pentecostals demonstrate the greatest potential for impacting all Israel with the gospel. Sometimes religious platitudes and magical number games partially aid the spiritually devastated. But pristine, first-century Pentecostalism is still God's sign to Israel that the Jewish mission can only be accomplished in Jesus' name and in demonstration of the Spirit's power.



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EDITOR'S NOTE: Enrichment journal is pleased to introduce this new column on postmodernism and the church written especially for Pentecostal ministers and anyone interested in engaging their culture with the gospel. We asked Stanley J. Grenz, one of America's premiere scholars of culture and the church, to write a series of articles on this subject. Grenz is Pioneer McDonald professor of theology at Carey Theological College, Vancouver B.C., and professor of theological studies at Mars Hill Graduate School, Seattle, Washington. He is the author or coauthor of 25 books, including A Primer on Postmodernism, which, since its publication in 1996, has become the standard of this topic. Grenz's full-length treatment of Christian doctrine, Theology for the Community of God, is used in Pentecostal seminaries in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere. He also speaks throughout the world.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: My 26-year-old son, Joel, continually reminds me how much the world has changed since I was his age. For example, I have always dreamed of owning a brand-new convertible (but I am too practically minded to buy one); he, in contrast, thinks that the Matrix is the coolest thing on four wheels.

How can we engage in meaningful ministry in a world that has changed in many subtle and not-so-subtle ways? In the next several issues of Enrichment, I want to engage this overarching question. My goal, however, is not to inundate you with 29 sure-fire tips that will revolutionize your ministry. Rather, my desire is to help you understand more clearly the postmodern world and raise some of the implications of this world for the church's ministry.

What (if anything) Has Changed?: The Postmodern Condition as Deconstruction and Reconstruction

BY STANLEY J. GRENZ

t was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

The most widely used and most wide-ranging nomenclature suggests that our society is undergoing a transition from modernity to postmodernity. We are experiencing what some observers call the postmodern turn.

These well-known opening lines from Charles Dickens' classic novel, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), encapsulate the novelist's perception of the era of the French Revolution and, by extension, the Victorian England of his day. For many people today, Dickens also aptly describes the times in which we live. Like France during the closing decades of the 18th century, our world appears to be in the throes of a grand cultural shift. This shift has many names. Some people speak about the end of Christendom and the beginning of a post-Christian era. Others declare that we are moving from a Constantinian to a post-Constantinian situation. Yet, the most widely used and most wide-ranging nomenclature suggests that our society is undergoing a transition from modernity to postmodernity. We are experiencing what some observers call the postmodern turn.

One commentator has described the far-reaching, all-encompassing character of the postmodern condition by noting that the old 1960s Bob Dylan declaration, "The times they are a-changin' " has become passé. The times are not "a-changin' "; the times have changed. But what exactly has changed? In a sense, everything. Postmodern sensitivities affect most aspects of our society and are evident from academia to pop culture. The breadth of the postmodern turn makes it difficult to condense the phenomenon into a single, concise definition. Yet to get a handle on what has changed, we might speak of the postmodern turn as involving two interrelated impulses: deconstruction and reconstruction.

POSTMODERN DECONSTRUCTION

The postmodern term *deconstruction* has a variety of meanings. Viewed from the widest perspective, it is the idea that everything in society that is a product of human efforts is inherently open to revision. Especially important, however, is the narrower use of the word. Deconstruction denotes the dismantling of what is seen by deconstructionists as the socially constructed world we inhabit.

Whether we believe this is the best of times or the worst of times, the challenge we face is that of discovering what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

According to social constructionists, the world we live in is not a given reality that exists out there. Rather, we inhabit a world that we create by the words we use to describe — and hence to experience — reality and our lives. Some social constructionists declare that people devise different accounts of the world and thereby create differing worlds. Because we lack the ability to step outside our construction of reality, they add, we cannot measure these linguistically constructed worlds by comparing them to a supposedly objective, external world. In short, social construction declares that explanations of reality are constructions; such constructions may be useful, but they are not objectively true.

Social construction is far-reaching when it takes on political overtones. Some theorists assert that linguistically constructed worlds are inculcated in a society by powerful elites. When used in this connection, deconstruction is the realization of how the linguistic world we inhabit has been constructed by those who benefit from the status quo and then, in turn, of dismantling this constructed world. In this sense, deconstruction is a subversive activity.

The primary target of postmodern subversion is the socially constructed world of modernity that arose out of the Enlightenment (roughly the 17th and 18th centuries). The Enlightenment emerged from the aftermath of the Thirty Years War, a debilitating conflict that pitted Protestants and Catholics against each other and left much of central Europe devastated. Many intellectuals blamed the widespread destruction on the confessional rivalries that divided Christendom. They concluded that conflict is the product of ignorance and superstition, that it arises as the inevitable result of beliefs in myths and religious dogmas. This situation, they add, could be overcome and a utopian society could be birthed by the discovery and dissemination of knowledge borne of human reason. Consequently, they set themselves to the task of exploring the world as it really is. For them, this means discovering the universal laws that govern action and comprise the true, objective knowledge of the world. In keeping with this perspective, the Enlightenment intellectuals narrated history as the story of humankind progressively emerging out of the ignorance and superstition characterized by the dark ages (and the domination of the perpetrators of ignorance and superstition) into the fullness of knowledge leading to a utopian civilization.

Postmoderns do not automatically share this perspective. The knowledge that reason purportedly uncovers, they aver, is neither certain nor objective. Furthermore, they realize that the Enlightenment conception of rationality and the modern quest for knowledge is not universal and embedded in the nature of humankind, but is closely connected to, and a reflection of Eurocentric cultural values. In their estimation, the modern approach has not led to the promised utopia. On the contrary, under the banner of Enlightenment reason and the scientific enterprise, modern people have been highly destructive. The insatiable quest to create a modern, utopian society has destroyed non-Western cultures, undermined cultural diversity, and ravished the environment.

Postmoderns, therefore, reject the modern recounting of human history. Although it purports to be an objective narrative of the rise of civilization, they view it as a myth that is used to sanction the triumph of Western, European civilization. As such, it is a social construction - a way of constructing the world — that legitimizes the status quo and serves the interests of those who profit from a dominant Western outlook. This socially conoutlook, structed postmoderns conclude, deserves deconstruction.

POSTMODERN RECONSTRUCTION

At first glance, deconstruction may appear to be negative in tone, but its goal is not limited to dismantling an existing socially constructed world. Rather, this enterprise has a positive intent. Because everything in human society is inherently open to revision and reformation, proponents argue that deconstruction can pave the way for reconstruction. The reconstruction that is endemic of postmodernism originates from values that postmoderns believe are of greater benefit than the unhealthy, destructive values of modernity. For this reason, in many respects the postmodern turn has recently taken a positive dimension. Postmodernism is attempting to bring about a reconstruction in accordance with a new set of values. Four of these are significant.

First, and foundational to the others, postmodernism is a transition from "ratiocentricity" to a holistic understanding of the human person. Postmoderns look askance at what they believe is the modern focus on rationality — the be-all and

end-all of what it means to be human — an understanding that they claim is behind the modern belief that rational discovery by means of the scientific method provides the tools for the construction of a better world. Postmoderns value the complexity of people. To be human, they aver, involves not only rationality, but also other aspects of per-

In contrast to what characterizes modern society in which science ruled, postmodern wholeness gives place to the religious or the spiritual.

sonhood such as emotion and intuition. But postmodern holism goes a step further. Rather than treat each dimension of human existence in isolation, postmoderns see all these aspects as operative simultaneously. They are parts of a single whole.

Second, endemic to the postmodern turn is a transition from individualism and the elevation of the so-called self-made man to an emphasis on community or persons-in-relationship. Perhaps the most widely touted hero of the modern era was the strong, self-sufficient, self-reliant, problem-solving loner. Indeed, the epitome of modern literary fiction was the detective story, and the paradigmatic modern detective was Sherlock Holmes. Through the powers of observation and inductive reason, Holmes was able to show that what appeared to be a great mystery was in fact quite "elementary, my dear Watson." Similarly, in movie after movie, the Hollywood moguls of modernity inculcated in our psyche the idea that the true American ideal was incarnated in the likes of John Wayne and Superman. We were also told that relationships were messy and that living in communities led to



inevitable conflicts that required the expertise of the loner hero to solve or resolve.

The postmodern value of wholeness, in contrast, entails being conscious of the indelible and delicate connection that links each of us to what lies beyond ourselves, where our personal existence is embedded and nurtured. rn wholeness gives gious or the spiritual elevates what is endemic to a particular community, rather than what is deemed true for all societies at all times. Hence, we could say that the postmodern turn involves a transition from the normative center to the celebration of difference or diversity. As one postmodern philosopher suggested, the postmodern turn seeks a heterotopia and a multiverse to replace the utopia and the universe that moderns sought.

This wider realm includes nature (the

ecosystem). But in addition, it includes

the community in which we partici-

pate. As a consequence, postmoderns

value community - the social dimen-

sion of existence. In short, postmod-

ernism has replaced John Wayne with

The postmodern focus on the group

gives place, in turn, to the valuing of

the local, instead of the universal. It

the small circle of Friends.

The celebration of diversity and the elevation of what is local undercuts attempts at establishing uniformity. It also marks the dethroning of the ideal (especially the ideal human) — the single standard against which every particular and every person must be judged. Instead, postmoderns claim that there are a variety of standards. Furthermore, these standards are all local in character and govern what is deemed proper within the particular group that established them.

Finally, in contrast to what characterizes modern society in which science ruled, postmodern wholeness gives place to the religious or the spiritual. Postmoderns deny that the physical dimension exhausts what it means to be human. Nor do they concur with the scientific rationality that attempts to exorcise the world of the sense of mystery. On the contrary, the postmodern turn is characterized by a move away from the hegemony of empirical science in which rational knowledge is viewed as the goal of human existence. In its place, postmoderns have set out on a quest for spirituality.

In many ways, the times aren't simply a-changin'. The times have changed. Values have shifted. This is especially evident among many young people with whom we seek to share the gospel. Often their attitudes and outlooks are baffling to those who have been in the church for decades. In a recent presentation to a leading Christian university, the school's associate vice president for curriculum profiled the students who are now making up college enrollments throughout the United States. She declared that, in comparison to their predecessors, today's college students are more media savvy, have shorter attention spans, are less creative, have had less exposure to the liberal arts, are not as skilled in time management, are less able to engage in long and complex arguments, and are less enamored with final answers.

In part, the changes that are evident among an increasing number of people are tied to a broader cultural shift that is occurring in our society. Some observers are convinced that this transition is leading us into a new dark age. Others find signs of a hopeful future. Whether we believe this is the best of times or the worst of times, the challenge we face is that of discovering what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Therefore, the question we must pose continually (and the one I want to raise in subsequent installments of this column) is: How is the Spirit seeking to lead us into new avenues of ministry to the glory of God? And in this best and worst of times we can take heart from Mordecai's words to Esther, realizing that "for such a time as this" God has called us to be servants of Christ and ministers of the gospel (Esther 4:14).

Coming Next Quarter:

"Does Evidence Still Demand a Verdict? Apologetics and the Postmodern Turn"



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Thomas Cartwright and English Presbyterianism

BY WILLIAM P. FARLEY

P retend that the president of the United States, despite his lack of spiritual convictions, is the spiritual and temporal head of the official church of the United States. This is also the only church allowed in the United States, and it is a compromise between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Last, the President controls this church through stateappointed bishops, all ministers are

Using his prestige and authority Cartwright proposed his biblical model for the Anglican Church.

paid by the state, and no one can minister unless he is willing to swear an oath of loyalty to the chief executive.

This fantasy is foreign to the 21st-century mind; yet it is in this situation that Thomas Cartwright (1535–1603), the father of English Presbyterianism, found himself as a young man in the 1560s. To understand his life and the important contribution he made to church history, we must understand how England came to be in this situation.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Martin Luther began the Reformation when he nailed his 95 theses to the door of his Wittenberg church in 1517. Quickly, the reforming fires spread across Europe, and Henry VIII separated England from the Roman Church (1532–36). Motivated by lust rather than doctrinal purity, he established what was in effect a Roman Catholic church with himself as pope.

In 1547, Henry died and his 10-year-old, sickly son, Edward VI, ascended the throne. Edward vigorously advanced Protestantism. He pointed England away from the Roman Church and embraced the teachings of Luther and Calvin. He installed Protestants in key positions at Oxford and Cambridge, encouraged the preaching of the gospel by men like Latimer, Ridley, and Knox, and instructed

Archbishop Cranmer to reform the Anglican liturgy and doctrine.

In 1553, however, 16-year-old Edward died and his halfsister, Mary, replaced him. Mary was the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, a Roman Catholic who was divorced,

and of Henry VIII, who was Protestant, and who had also mistreated her. As a result, Mary rejected everything Protestant. She re-instituted Roman Catholicism in England. She was gentle and kind. She lavishly forgave her enemies, and often in incognito, left her castle to visit the poor and unfortunate.¹ She was obstinate, rigid, and brutal in only one area — religion. Historians nicknamed her Bloody Mary.

During her 5-year reign, approximately 200 Protestants who refused to convert

to Catholicism were burned at the stake. Among them were Latimer and Ridley. Her brutality abhorred the English people. "Mary's actions ensured that England would be a Protestant country after her death,"² notes Peter Toon. Her death came in 1558 after only 5 years in power. Her half-sister, Elizabeth, ascended to the throne in 1603.

THE ELIZABETHAN SETTLEMENT

Unlike the reigns of her half-brother, Edward, and her sister Mary, the reign of Elizabeth was long, prosperous, and peaceful. However, at the commencement of

her administration Elizabeth faced a tremendous problem. For 20 years England had been on a religious yo-yo — Catholic, Protestant, then Catholic. The populace was tired, divided, and fearful of persecution. Western and northern England was most-

monarch and through appointed bishops. As he studied the Book of Acts, Cartwright observed a decentralized church government.

ly Catholic. To the south and east, especially in the major cities, Protestants held the majority. The nation was a powder keg of religious instability waiting for the right match to blow it into anarchy, or worse, civil war.

Elizabeth offered a compromise designed to preserve the peace and deflate the high-flying tensions. Historians call it the Elizabethan Settlement. It had three pillars: the Act of Supremacy — uniting church and State under Queen Elizabeth; the Act of Uniformity - requiring all clergy to use identical liturgies; and, the 39 Articles, a Protestant and reformed confession of faith, still used by the Anglican Church today.

The Puritans were mostly loyal Anglicans who resented Elizabeth because her compromise prevented them from going all the way with the Bible. Driven by loyalty to Scripture, they sought a simple worship. They abhorred everything that hinted of Catholicism such as vestments, the sign of the cross, and burning incense. Because these were the measures that Elizabeth's settlement tolerated, even encouraged, trouble was inevitable.

THOMAS CARTWRIGHT

Thomas Cartwright³ was an early Puritan whose teaching opposed the Act of Supremacy. He was born 2 years after Elizabeth and died in the same year as Elizabeth. Like Elizabeth, his youth and education took place during the yo-yo years. But unlike Elizabeth, he immersed himself in the Bible. He was a loyal Anglican, but because of his commitment to the Bible he was fiercely dedicated to Puritan worship and theology.

At age 15, Thomas entered Cambridge. He was a brilliant student and advanced rapidly. But when Cartwright was 18, Bloody Mary ascended the throne and Cambridge ejected him because of his Protestant convictions.

When Elizabeth came to power, Protestantism was again in vogue and the political climate became favorable to men like Cartwright. At age 25, he returned to

Like many men who are

was often misunderstood.

Cambridge and advanced rapidly in learning and spiritual power. His preaching began to draw large crowds. In 1564, Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge. Cartwright was selected to preach in her presence. Hagstotz notes, "He is said to

have drawn such a crowd that the windows of St. Mary's Cathedral were removed to permit those outside to hear him. ... A man of genius and one who would have been prominent in any age," he was "an eloquent preacher and a rising theological scholar." He was also "the first one to introduce extemporary prayer into the service."4 Unity of society under one religion was the goal. Despite the Reformation, there had been little change in church government since the days of the

When Cartwright was 34 (1569),

Cambridge gave him the Lady Margaret

chair of divinity. This was a prestigious

position. From it he began a series of lec-

tures on the Book of Acts that were to greatly influence the church. As we have

noted, the English Church was top

CARTWRIGHT AND **PRESBYTERIANISM⁵**

As he studied the Book of Acts, Cartwright observed a decentralized church government. Elders ruled the local church. Although each local church had autonomy, a common allegiance to apostolic authority bound them together. In other words, the Bible emphasized a church government free from State interference.

goal of the Elizabethan The Settlement was to unify society under the Anglican Church, but the effect was a bloated church bureaucracy corrupted with secularism and worldliness - one that gave the common Englishman little freedom of conscience. It also made church discipline at the parish level almost impossible.

Using his prestige and authority Cartwright proposed his biblical model

the Anglican for Church. One of his called by God, Cartwright great concerns was maintaining purity in the church through

local church discipline. He suggested rule by presbytery (the Greek word translated elder). The term Presbyterian stuck.

Roman Church.

heavy. The church was ruled by the

Cartwright's ideas were radical and incendiary to the 16th-century English mind. "He averted that bishops should preach, deacons should look after the poor, and only ministers who knew how to preach should be selected to govern their own churches; that it was the right of the churches, rather than of the state or of the bishops, to elect their own pastors; and only what the Scriptures taught should be sanctioned in a church."⁶

Until now, Puritanism had been a burr under the saddle of the Anglican Church. Cartwright's lectures on Acts upped the ante. His teaching stepped on powerful toes. It threatened the queen's sovereignty.

In the 16th century, control of the nation through bishops was deemed indispensable to the crown. Cartwright's proposal to replace bishops with presbyteries threatened the queen. Cartwright's ideas were a direct challenge to her power to control the State. In his 36th year (1571), Cambridge fired Cartwright, a warrant for his arrest was issued, and he fled to the Continent.

PERSECUTION

Meanwhile, a friend who remained in

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have a bunch of questions. Don't worry, our members have all the answers."

England drafted "An Admonition to Parliament for the Reformation of Church Discipline," requesting legislation that would eliminate bishops in favor of Presbyterianism. Cartwright returned to England to write the foreward. About this

Because of Cartwright, and men like him, the president does not control our congregations, pay our ministers, or stifle our religious convictions.

time the first presbyteries began to secretly meet in southern England. In 1574, Cartwright once again fled to the Continent to escape imprisonment or death. Unable to return, he spent 10 years in Antwerp pastoring an English congregation.

At age 50 (1585), he risked another visit to England and was immediately imprisoned. Powerful friends interceded with Elizabeth for his discharge. After 2 months he was released and allowed to resume teaching and pastoring.

Meanwhile Presbyterianism was rapidly spreading and secret presbyteries were meeting underground. By 1590, nearly 500 pastors had embraced Cartwright's radical ideas. Elizabeth again arrested Cartwright. This time he was imprisoned for 2 years in the Fleet prison. He emerged at age 57, an old man, his health permanently broken. When he died in 1603, bishops were still in full control of the Anglican Church.

LEGACY

Cartwright died without knowing the full effect of his life's work. Although Presbyterianism was never adopted as the official Anglican Church government, it was the preferred form of church government for most Puritans and took firm root in Scotland.⁷

After Cartwright's death the Puritan party grew in status and power. Influenced by Cartwright and Knox, they increasingly petitioned Elizabeth's successors — James I (1566–1625) and his son, Charles II (1600–49) — for liberty of conscience and greater local church autonomy. Unwisely, the crown tightened control. The English Civil Wars (1642–52), a contest for liberty of con-

science and decentralized church and civil government, were the tragic results.⁸

During this conflict Parliament convened the Westminster Assembly to, among other things, complete the work that Cartwright had started in the 1570s. Parliament asked the Westminster Divines to produce a new confession of faith (The Westminster Confession) and a new presbyterian model of church government to replace the episcopal system. However, before the latter could be installed Charles II became monarch. He reinstated the episcopal system, and it has been the norm in England to this day.

But Cartwright did not suffer in vain. The Scottish church adopted the Westminster Confession (they had already adopted the presbyterian form of church government under John Knox), and over the next 200 years exported both throughout the English-speaking world.

LESSONS

What lessons can today's pastor learn from Thomas

Cartwright and the events that took place during his life? First, God is more interested in faithfulness than immediate results. Cartwright did not enjoy the immediate result of church growth, fame, or financial comfort. But he faithfully persevered in the work to which God called him. Ultimately, that is how God measures success.

Second, we should expect faithfulness to be costly. Persecution, financial loss, and career stress affected him most of his life. Like Ezekiel, the Word of God was honey in his mouth, but caused indigestion to his stomach. So it is with many who hear from God and walk faithfully.

Third, like many men who are called by God, Cartwright was often misunderstood. The understanding of church government that God gave him was a tiny seed that slowly grew into a great tree that many of today's religious liberties nest in. Like Cartwright, if we are faithful to the revelation that God gives us, and if we persevere in faithfulness without compromising God's means, God will bless our labors, but the blessing may be long-term.

Fourth, when you become discouraged, remember Thomas Cartwright and the price he paid for his convictions about church government. You have probably not lost a prestigious job, had to flee the country, or spent 2 years in prison for your convictions — at least not yet.

Because of Cartwright, and men like him, the president does not control our congregations, pay our ministers, or stifle our religious convictions. Let us be thankful.

History is His story.



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ENDNOTES

- 1. Will Durant and Ariel Durant, The History of Civilization, vol. 4, The Age of Faith: A History of Medieval Civilization — Christian, Islamic, and Judaic — From Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325-1300 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 588-90.
- 2. J.D. Douglas and Earle E. Cairns, ed., The International Dictionary of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 641.
- 3. Read Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, by Dr. A.F. Scott Pearson (1925).
- Gideon Hagstotz, Heroes of the Reformation (Albany, Ore.: Ages Software, 1998), 44.
- For more details on this crucial period read The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, by Patrick Collinson (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967).
- 6. Ibid., 45
- The Presbyterianism form of church govern-7. ment was brought to Scotland by John Knox, not Cartwright. Both Knox and Cartwright borrowed their church government model from the church in Geneva under John Calvin.
- 8. See previous columns on Cromwell and Bunyan.

* PREACHING THAT CONNECTS *

What is a Pentecostal Preacher

BY CRAIG BRIAN LARSON

What does it mean to be a Pentecostal preacher? This question may bring to mind a certain style of preaching, but since style is not my concern here, I will rephrase the question. How will we preach — in any culture, at any time — if we receive everything Scripture teaches about the Holy Spirit?

While the style of Pentecostal preaching varies, its historic strengths come from a biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit and His work, which do not change.

TAKE OUR RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY

First, we take seriously the responsibility of speaking God's Word. We believe Scripture is fully God's words, written by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking of the Old Testament, Peter writes, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

If we highly regard the Holy Spirit,

we will highly regard His words in Scripture.

Writers are touchy about their words. I am an editor, and at times I have offended writers by changes I have made. Altering a writer's intent and meaning makes a writer feel violated.

So it is for the Holy Spirit, the writer of Scripture. He frowns if we play loose with His words, using them for our own purpose, taking them out of context, changing their intent.

We sense how intensely the Holy Spirit feels about His words: "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to

Another nonnegotiable characteristic of Pentecostal preachers is they treat the words of the Holy Spirit in Scripture with utmost respect.

them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." (Revelation 22:18,19; See similar warnings in Deuteronomy 4:2 and Proverbs 30:5,6.)

TREAT THE WORD WITH RESPECT

Another nonnegotiable characteristic of Pentecostal preachers is they treat the words of the Holy Spirit in Scripture with utmost respect. They see the ministry of the Word as a sacred responsibility to be taken seriously.

Most important, we take care not to distort Scripture. The words, distort

Scripture, send shivers down the spine of anyone who reveres the Holy Spirit. Can there be a greater indictment of anyone called to speak God's words than to say that we have edited God for our own purposes? Is God using us, or are we using God?

Consider the apostle Paul's words in this regard: "We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2). Those are the watchwords of the truly Pentecostal preacher.

Of course, no sincere preacher begins writing a sermon and decides, *Today I'm* going to distort Scripture. No, the danger is that in our necessary role of interpreting

Can there be a greater indictment of anyone called to speak God's words than to say that we have edited God for our own purposes?

and applying the Word to people who do not like everything it says, we will be swayed to shape the message to protect ourselves or please our hearers.

Certain desires make even sincere preachers liable to distorting Scripture: If in our heart of hearts, we want most to be popular, liked, accepted, we are vulnerable. If above all else we want our church to grow, we are vulnerable. If we fear hurting people's feelings, we are vulnerable.

The only safeguard against the subtle temptations to water down Scripture, or to ignore its hard subjects, is to commit ourselves to proclaim with compassion, wisdom, and boldness the whole counsel of God, come what may. We cannot control Kingdom results; we can only control what we choose to proclaim. Those who revere the Holy Spirit seek to please only the Author of Scripture.

Paul wrote that only by this commitment did he fulfill his duty and escape guilt: "Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God" (Acts 20:26,27).

With this reference to blood, Paul was not just being dramatic. He was alluding

to God's words to Ezekiel: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself" (Ezekiel 3:17–19).

Clearly, the role of the preacher is serious business with eternal consequences. The Lord has entrusted us with His words and holds us responsible for proclaiming the whole message. A consistently one-sided message is a distorted message. In addition to good news, comfort, and hope, we must warn people about things their sinful nature does not want to hear.

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17). The Holy Spirit loves the truth and seeks only the truth. His words in Scripture are pure truth. "And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). Those who love and follow the Spirit are unconditionally committed to truth in general, and in particular to truth in Scripture. They speak the truth in love.

Those who revere the Holy Spirit do not use Him as an excuse to say what the Scriptures do not say, or to teach whatever ideas come into their minds. Spirit-honoring preachers are bound by the truth of Scripture. They devote their lives to interpreting it properly. They run from the temptation to gather a crowd by teaching what is novel but false, what tickles the ears but misleads the soul.

The days are evil. The Word of God is becoming ever more odious to those who love this world. Spirit-filled preaching is for the brave and the bold.



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* FINANCIAL CONCEPTS *



A s America continues its war against global terrorism, it is appropriate to pause and consider the sacrifice that is made on our behalf for peace and human rights. War always involves sacrifice. The more sacrifice that is made, the higher the chance of success.

In the months after the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, our entire nation in unison rose to sacrifice its resources — human and financial. In the months since September 11, 2001, our nation has again been asked to sacrifice its resources — human and financial — for the cause of peace and freedom.

When it comes to living a life of biblical stewardship, we must consider our own level of sacrifice. God calls us to adopt a wartime lifestyle, not a simple lifestyle. Our goal should be to increase the resources available to fight the war (Ephesians 6:10–18).

Wesley K. Willmer, vice president of university advancement and professor at Biola University, La Mirada, California, writes, "The goal is to maximize resources for Kingdom work. Here is a formula: (1) Make all you can (God desires to bless you). (2) Live as inexpensively as possible (with contentment). (3) Provide maximum resources to God's kingdom work."

MAKE ALL YOU CAN (GOD DESIRES TO BLESS YOU).

In the Parable of the Steward

(Matthew 25:14–30), Jesus made it clear that profit is important — we are not to break even in our endeavors. The steward who didn't make a profit lost his resources to the one who knew how to show an increase.

Sterning Personal

God is a God of increase. There can be no increase without a profit. Profit is the increase that results when we are good stewards of our time, talent, and treasures. This means hard work and diligence. Proverbs 21:5 says, "The plans of the diligent lead to profit."

When it comes to living a life of biblical stewardship, we must consider our own level of sacrifice.

A number of years ago I counseled with a couple who struggled financially. They had decided to tithe from their meager unemployment check and the small salary Mom made, only to find themselves deeper in debt. Dad was always between jobs, not finding the job that paid him what he was worth. (To put it bluntly, he was lazy.)

When confronted with the concept that hard work was as much a part of stewardship as tithing, the deeply religious man took the first menial job he could find, and God's blessings began to flow, as did job opportunities.

"Sitting there wishing

Makes no person great.

The Lord sends the fishes,

But you must dig the bait!"

—Author unknown

Proverbs 14:23 challenges us: "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads to poverty."

God never intended stewards of His creation to live for leisure. In his book, *I Inherited a Fortune*, Paul J. Meyer observed:

- "Work polishes silver and gold and refines character."
- "Work rows life's boat upstream."
- "Work weeds the garden and cultivates the mind."
- "Work lifts weights and spirits."
- "Work overcomes adversity and defect."
- "Work is love in action."

God made us to work. In Exodus 20:9,10, the Lord commands: "Six days thou

shalt work." Unfortunately, we tend to only look at the rest of the verse regarding resting on the Sabbath.

The challenge for many Christians is they do not possess a passion for their work and are afraid to start over or can't afford to quit. Stewards need to find work that uses their unique talents and inspires them with intensity and love for their life's labor. Our focus on using resources to fight spiritual battles will help turn apathy into commitment.

Perhaps God has not opened a door to your dream job. Maybe God wants you to change your attitude and heart where you are right now. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart" (Colossians 3:23).

LIVE AS INEXPENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE (WITH CONTENTMENT).

In a society and world where moderation is a virtue of the distant past, we need to resurrect a teaching that a life of moderation and contentment applies in any culture or economy. Contentment seems to be the bedrock of biblical stewardship (Matthew 6:25–34; Philippians 4:10–13; 1 Timothy 6:6–8). Lack of contentment destroys stewardship, so modeling contentment marked by moderation is important in pouring a strong foundation for biblical stewardship in any church, home, or business (1 Timothy 6:9,10).

What is moderation? Let me suggest some alternate definitions that should fit everyone: (1) not buying something you want and can afford, or (2) spending less than you make. Pick the one that fits you and practice **Profit is the increase that results** moderation.

your church or ministry would include the following elements:

• Communicate the cause — the mission. Impotent goals result in impotent stewards.

The essence of contentment is found in letting go.

- Plan your strategy of attack. Never go into battle without clearly articulated plans, including contingency plans. What resources can be leveraged in the war?
- Ask people to sacrifice. Wartime stewardship means that there is a worthy cause on which to sacrificially dedicate our resources. As Christian stewards, we are called

to a battle — one greater than that of

My father and mother recounted to me their sacrifices during World War II. Not taking trips and rationing gasoline and food were actions that involved dramatic

lifestyle changes. These lifestyle changes were not focused on denial, but on allocating the collective wealth of a nation to the battle we as a nation were forced to fight.

Christians in a materialistic world struggle and almost wear themselves out trying to be content, only to become discontent with all their efforts. The difficulty for most Christians lies not in the desire to be content, but in how to experience true contentment.

Christ puts it this way, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29).

The essence of contentment is found in letting go. The process of letting go is easy when we are focused on a cause that captures our hearts and our minds.

PROVIDE MAXIMUM RESOURCES TO GOD'S KINGDOM WORK. stewardship Any

emphasis must focus on the battle. People will rise together to sacrifice financial and human capital only when they understand the urgency of the hour. A wartime stewardship strategy for



when we are good stewards of our time, talent, and treasures.

> my parents in World War II — one with greater eternal impact than my family members currently serving in the Middle East. May God give us the urgency, wisdom, and insight to multiply our resources and pour them into Kingdom purposes.



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✤ WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH



Any Given Sunday: The Preparation – Presentation Correlation

BY TOM MCDONALD

P laying football and leading worship have one obvious parallel: preparation affects presentation. Football stars are tough-minded, disciplined athletes who possess a love for the game and a tireless dedication to strategy. Coaches who can correlate strategy into winning make millions of dollars and acquire celebrity status in our culture. Similarly, worship leaders who master both musicianship and servant leadership earn the respect of a congregation and develop a friendship with God.

Worship is close to the heart of God. Those who enable others in worshiping God will incur a favor that money cannot buy. Still, many in our ministry profession fall short.

Numerous worship leaders omit steps in the preparation process. As a result, frustrations mount, and they tend to quit before their time in a church is over. They think the grass will be greener elsewhere, but it rarely is.

It is in the preparation phase of a worship leader's week that he will hear from God about the Sunday run sheet as well as grow in God in issues of conflict resolution, purity of heart, and personal discipline. Longevity in a church is directly related to a worship leader's developing a vital, vibrant devotional life.

As national director, my passion is the stewardship of your potential. I don't want you to fail because of a misunderstanding relative to the importance of preparation. It is one of the secrets to surviving — even thriving — as a church musician.

The means (the way we prepare) is as important as the end (the way we lead). God places such a high value on relationship that the preparation of our heart is more significant to Him than the preparation of our art. What's more, planning worship encounters is as spiritual a task as leading worship on Sunday.

Re-examine the priority you place on getting alone with Jesus before you step to a podium to lead worship so you are not guilty of either mimicking a CD and calling that worship, or just winging it all the while thinking that the congregation is being fed by your constant extemporaneity. In reality, the faithful often see right through your poor planning. Winging it will expose flaws and redundancies. And if the congregation is bored with your leadership, they won't draw close to God while you sing, and they will exit the worship encounter frustrated.

Congregants want to feel the presence of God when they sing. Worship leaders who cheat on preparation often distract a congregation or dilute the process of encountering God's presence.

Preparation for a worship encounter has three components:

A PUZZLE TO DISENTANGLE

The weekly discipline of preparing songs for a worship service involves two phases and two questions. Regarding the two phases of preparation, the worship leader needs to 1) disengage the world before 2) engaging the spirit realm.

Getting our spirits quieted before the Lord means coming away from the media and acknowledging our dependence on Jesus. Before He can speak we must be tuned in and ready to listen. Engaging the spirit realm is the stuff of spiritual formation. We cannot hear His voice if we are entertaining secret sins, harboring unforgiveness, or ignoring the lists of commandments in Scripture. (See: Exodus 20:3–17; Proverbs 6:6–19; Matthew 5:3–11.) There is a discipline required to lead worship that begins internally before it manifests externally.

Once quieted, ask the Lord two questions before putting pencil to paper:

- 1. What will please You in worship this weekend, Lord?
- 2. What will the congregation need from Your hand?

These questions form the grid of my focus. Jack Hayford has written, "A worship service exists to serve two objectives: to serve God with our praises, and to serve the congregation with His sufficiency."

A PURPOSE TO DISCERN

Once I have inquired of the Lord, a motif, a hymn tune, or a spiritual concept will burst into my mind. Then, like a whirlwind, companion songs will flood my thinking. I program these songs into a medley that will allow the congregation to worship freely. My goal is to release them into His care — to disappear so Jesus can appear.

Tom Brooks, the prominent Hosanna Integrity artist, originally piqued my interest when he wrote a list of guidelines for programming worship songs. Brooks suggested a four-prong model:

- 1. Don't repeat what you have done in the past.
- 2. Choose songs that flow together conceptually.
- 3. Choose songs that flow together musically.
- 4. Don't be afraid to linger in His presence.

When I ask the Lord for direction, He always responds with a theme for praise and worship. Planning the worship sequence - under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and having asked the two key questions - gives a worship leader the initiative needed to contend for breakthrough in the lives of hurting individuals. Authentic worship begins on the worship leader's knees — in the prayer closet alone with God.

A PRIZE TO DISCOVER

Once I have disciplined myself to inquire of the Lord before planning songs for a service, I sense a release in my spirit that propels me into the rehearsal and presentation mode(s) with joy. The release about which I write has three specific components:

- 1. I now have an order of worship that should be spiritually motivated, congregationally sensitive, and stylistically inclusive.
- 2. I now have a confidence when appearing in public that I have something to say;

somewhere to go.

3. I now have a permanent record obliterating spiritual amnesia and creating a launching pad for the future.

What a prize it is for a church musician to plan carefully and then place the plan into the Master's hand - where there is no fear. A wise leader once said, "We should plan as though the service depended on us and then pray as though the service depended on Him."

Planning releases an effective presentation. It is true of football and it is true of a transformational worship encounter as well.



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Power With Power

BY SOBHI MALEK

was in a large Islamic capital. God had called me to go there and share the gospel. The people there were heavy on my heart. I was building friendships, and a few people had committed their lives to Christ.

One day I needed to take care of some business in the downtown area. As I was walking and praying, a man was coming toward me on the outside of the sidewalk. I was on the inside. The sidewalk was wide enough for two people to pass

with no trouble. Our eyes met for a second. As we walked closer and closer, I did not

notice or feel anything different; I was just praying. We were about to pass each other, when he stumbled. He then stepped down to the street and nearly fell. He managed to regain his balance as we passed each other. He then stepped back on the sidewalk and continued on. I didn't think much of that incident. Maybe the man had just stumbled. The whole scenario, however, was repeated

the same day with another person. This time it was a young lady. A few days later it happened again, and then again ... and then it happened again in another Islamic capital.

I began wondering: What is going on?

I would never make a doctrine of this, but here is a possible explanation. I was praying in the Spirit for people who were steeped in beliefs and practices that are satanic. Could it be that the power of the Holy Spirit in a simple, unassuming servant of the Lord hindered these satanic powers from approaching any closer? It is possible.

When we evangelize Muslims, we engage in tremendous spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness. Only the power of the Holy Spirit is able to defeat these forces.

I do not believe the Islamic system will be broken through human genius or military power. It can only happen through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

I have been a student of Islam my entire adult life and a missionary to Muslims for more than 30 years. I do not believe the Islamic system will be broken through human genius or military power. It can only happen through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit intervenes, He demolishes walls, destroys barriers, and brings people out of the kingdom of darkness into the light of Christ — from distress to joy, from war to peace and love.

Islam brutalizes the spirit of its subjects and shackles their imaginations. In Muslim societies, whether in the West or in Islamic countries, schools teach hatred; contempt for and violence against non-Muslims is preached in the mosques; and the media glorifies killing for the sake of their god. I feel empathy for Muslims; they are in dismal slavery. Most Muslims are nice people who are kind and decent, but they are under a cruel and ruthless taskmaster.

Muslims are lost not because they are fundamentalists, fanatics, liberals, or even because they are Muslims. They are lost because they are away from Christ, the only Savior.

Islamic cultural traits and theological misconceptions often seem to be insurmountable obstacles that impede the progress of the gospel. Muslims see Christianity as implied criticism of their religion.

The main teaching found in Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians is that God justifies humans on the basis of faith in Christ, not because of our good works. This contradicts the Quran which teaches that people please God by their good deeds. Muslims are lost not because they are

Furthermore, Christianity declares that Jesus Christ is God's final revelation to humanity; the Bible is God's complete, perfect Word and guide for humanity; Christ is God incarnated; God is three Persons in one Godhead; and Jesus died on the cross to redeem sinful humankind. These doctrines contradict the

Quran, and therefore Muslims reject them. They see these beliefs as a serious threat to the fabric of Islam. Adherence to them is viewed as outright dissatisfaction with and rejection of Islamic religion. Muslims react by refusing the message of the Cross with even greater fervor.

How can we overcome these misunderstandings and hurdles to reach Muslims for Christ? The message of the Cross is the power of God unto salvation. We cannot replace that message with anything else. But some listeners turn a deaf ear to the gospel because of their prejudice against the basic tenets of the Christian faith. What should we do?

find a job. Well, Lord, is that it? Should I pray with him about that? And Jesus said yes.

I prayed in the name of Jesus for the young man to get a job. I encouraged him to give his life to Christ and he did. We exchanged addresses and went our ways.

The next morning I received a call from a screaming young man. They were screams of joy. "Jesus is true. He is Lord. I got a job, and I start tomorrow. Thank you for helping me."

The Holy Spirit knows no barriers, hurdles, or closed doors. When Muslims

are lost because they are away from Christ, the only Savior. see the power of Christ demonstrated

fundamentalists, fanatics, liberals, or

even because they are Muslims. They

in mighty acts and miraculous works, they will come to Christ.

An Asian foreign worker in a Muslim country was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Although his host country had banned preaching the gospel, this new believer started to share the good news with others. The

REACHING ISLAM THROUGH THE MIRACULOUS

Christians can surmount these obstacles through the miraculous. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to minister to people who are needy, who live in spiritual vacuums, and who do not accept the Word of God. When I share the good news with a Muslim, I usually pray at the same time. I ask the Lord: How can I minister to this person effectively? Lord, show me how to help him in a persuasive and dynamic way by the power of Your Spirit.

On one occasion, I met a young Muslim man on the street and began talking to him about Christ. I did not have a theological debate or a discourse on comparative religion. Rather, I told him a story about Jesus. As I was sharing, I said: Lord, does he need a miracle in his life? Would You allow me to minister to him through a miracle?

The young man said he was looking for a job. For months he had called, searched, and pleaded, but still he could not



Lord gave him power to heal the sick in the name of Jesus.

About that time, a girl from the country's royal family was diagnosed with leukemia. The doctors gave her family no hope for her recovery. A princess in the royal family had heard about the Christian foreign worker who prayed for the sick. She contacted him to come pray for the girl. He did. The little girl was healed, and the princess who had made the contact accepted Christ. She began talking about what had happened, quietly and wisely, with other members of the royal house. As a result, a small, but growing group of believers are in that family. Miracles get the attention of Muslims and open doors for proclaiming the gospel.

Fadila, a Muslim young lady with a Ph.D. in architecture, came to our house to ask questions about the Christian faith. My wife and I shared God's love demonstrated in Christ with her. She had already attended a few Christian meetings. I asked her what impressed her most about them. I was not surprised when she answered, "The music ... and people speaking in languages they did not learn." Today, Fadila is serving Christ.

When enslaved people hear the good news, they sense freedom. When they accept the message, those groping in the darkness see the light. The overcoming church will go on victoriously, and the kingdom of God will prevail over Satan.

The Word of God changes lives. The Holy Spirit convicts people and draws them to the Christ of Calvary. But miracles get their attention by ministering to people's everyday needs. Miracles demonstrate the power that is in the name of Jesus.

Speak the Word of God to Muslims with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Be filled

with the Spirit. Also, allow the Lord to use you in the miraculous.

The church in America can meet the challenge of Islam within its borders and around the world. We cannot ignore one-fifth of the world's population.

We can be on the cutting edge of evangelism and bring Muslims in our communities to the kingdom of God. When we are clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit, we will go forward in the name of Christ and minister to them. They are needy. They are dying without Christ. We have the message of life.



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THE COMFORT OF CHRISTMAS ISAIAH 40:1-11

INTRODUCTION

What must a person do to be ready for Christmas? (Interview members of the congregation for answers.)

Proposition: Christians should find comfort in Christmas since God has done the necessary work.

MESSAGE

- 1. The payments for Christmas have been made (Isaiah 40:1,2).
 - a. From one viewpoint, the payment for trouble has been made (Isaiah 40:2). "Speak tenderly (Hebrew, "to the heart") to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for." They had been disciplined and had repented.
 - b. From another viewpoint, the payment of double has been made (Isaiah 40:2). "She has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins."
- 2. The preparations for Christmas have been made (Isaiah 40:3–5). "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord" (by repentance). Note: John the Baptist preached

repentance. "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8). How has the way of the Lord been prepared?

- a. The way has been made straight, which means without diversions (Isaiah 40:3). "Make straight in the wilderness (the exodus) a highway for our God" refers to our salvation.
- b. The way has been made smooth, without difficulties (Isaiah 40:4)."The rough ground shall become level" refers to the believer's sanctification.
- c. The way has been shown, which means without darkness (Isaiah 40:5). "The glory of the Lord will be revealed" refers to the believer's glorification.
- d. The way has been made sure, without doubts (Isaiah 40:5)."For the mouth of the Lord has spoken" refers to the believer's assurance.

3. The proclamations of Christmas have been made (Isaiah 40:6–8).

a. People on earth live for a short time (Isaiah 40:6,7). "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field."

- b. The promises of God last for a long time (Isaiah 40:8). "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." (See 1 Peter 1:24,25.)
- 4. The presentation for Christmas has been made (Isaiah 40:9–11). "Say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!' "These words present the heart of the gospel. How does it come?
 - a. The presentation comes with power (Isaiah 40:10).
 - b. The presentation comes with payment (Isaiah 40:10).
 - c. The presentation comes with passion (Isaiah 40:11). He is sensitive to them (John 10:7–16).

CONCLUSION

God has done all the necessary work; we should be able to comfort others this Christmas. "Comfort, comfort my people" (40:1).

> —Steve D. Eutsler Springfield, Missouri

FAMILIES ARE FOR LOVING JOHN 13:34,35

INTRODUCTION

The family that loves serves as a model of Christian community. A built-in absolute should be: "You will find love in the Christian family."

MESSAGE

1. Loving families provide security (Ephesians 6).

- a. Material (1 Timothy 5:8,16).
- b. Physical (Joshua 2:12,18).
 - (1) Rahab was concerned about her family's safety.
 - (2) Child abuse is a physical offense in a Christian home.
- c. Emotional
 - (1) A support group (Psalm 68:6).

- (2) A team (Psalm 133:1).
- (3) A child should be protected from emotional abuse.

d. Spiritual

- (1) Joshua 24:15
- (2) Matthew 18:20
- (3) Let parents not only tell of the Christian life, but also model it.
- e. Threats to family security are drugs, pornography, and incest.

2. Loving families practice hospitality (1 John 3:16–18).

- a. To family (Proverbs 17:17).
- b. To strangers (Hebrews 13:2).
- c. To the fallen (James 5:19,20).
- d. To neighbors (Leviticus 19:18).

e. To the church (Galatians 6:10).

f. To the needy (Matthew 25:31-40).

3. Loving families point to Christ.

- a. By displaying their love (John 13:35).
- b. By laying down their lives for each other (John 15:9–17).
- c. By living as Christ would (1 John 4:7–12).

CONCLUSION

Let us show God's love in our families. Dedication is necessary.

> —J.D. Middlebrook Bartlett, Tennessee

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT LUKE 11:5-13

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes people believe God is reluctant to give them the desires of their hearts. In Luke 11:5–13, Jesus teaches that God is not only willing, but is eager to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13).

At least three important implications in Luke 11:5–13 should cause people to come to God with confidence.

MESSAGE

1. The willingness of God.

- a. The friend who was approached at midnight with an emergency request for bread responded, "Don't bother me" (verse 7).
- b. This attitude of reluctance is in contrast to the willingness of God to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.
 - Jesus indicated that everyone who asks would receive (verses 9,10).
 - (2) God was so eager for the household of Cornelius to receive the gift of the Spirit that He sent an angel with instructions for Cornelius and directed Peter through a vision to respond to Cornelius' invitation (Acts 10).

2. The kindness of God.

- a. Jesus recognized that human fathers graciously give good gifts to their children (Luke 11:13).
- b. Jesus then indicated that our Heavenly Father will graciously give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.
 - (1) There is a difference between gifts and rewards. A reward is payment for something the recipient has done. A gift is given not on the basis of merit, but on the basis of the kindness of the donor. The Holy Spirit is given to those who accept Christ, not because they are holy but to help them be holy.
 - (2) Peter made this clear in Acts 2:38: "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - (3) The 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost did not have time following their conversion to perform works of merit to earn the gift of the Spirit. They simply asked and received. The same can be said for Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:17).

3. The generosity of God.

- a. Human fathers have limitations as to what they can do for their children.
- b. When Jesus said, "How much more" (Luke 11:13), He indicated the generosity of God's giving. Our Heavenly Father can do more than any human father.
 - (1) Peter referred to Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:17. The term "pour out" indicates the copiousness of God's promise.
 - (2) On the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus spoke of the Spirit as streams of living water (John 7:38,39). This artesian-well experience indicates the generosity with which God gives.

CONCLUSION

God desires to fill all believers with His Holy Spirit.

—Hardy W. Steinberg

THANKSGIVING BRINGS COURAGE ACTS 28:15

INTRODUCTION

The fact Paul took courage implies his spirits may have been low. But the sight of concerned brethren brought a prayer of thanksgiving to his lips and new courage to his spirit. This passage suggests several thoughts about thanksgiving.

MESSAGE

1. We can be thankful under the pressure of trial.

- a. Jesus told us to be of good cheer in the midst of tribulation because He has overcome the world (John 16:33).
- b. For us whose true citizenship is not in this world, trials at the

hands of the world system should not be unexpected. When they happen, we can thank God and take courage that trials or the world cannot defeat us.

2. We can be thankful for unexpected blessings.

- a. God often puts concern for our well-being in the hearts of fellow Christians as He did for Paul on this occasion.
- b. Nothing is so refreshing as God's surprises that He, as a loving Father, often brings across our pathway.
- 3. We can be thankful for evidences of God's never-failing control of circumstances.

- a. By sending these brethren to encourage Paul, God was showing the apostle he was not in the battle alone.
- b. God understands the limits of our ability to handle trials, and He allows only what He knows we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).

CONCLUSION

A spirit of defeat weakens our spiritual stamina. A spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving renews our courage and strength.

-Kenneth D. Barney

MEETING THE NEEDS OF AN AUTONOMOUS GENERATION

Years ago, quality versus quantity time was hotly debated. Busy families discovered how difficult it was to manage career and family, so quality time seemed to be a valid answer. Unfortunately, strong family bonds are not forged in 15minute appointments, and modern-day families have discovered that they are increasingly autonomous. In today's society, youth are given increased self-sufficiency at precisely the time they need the most adult support and guidance. Many teens feel alone as they negotiate choices that come with approaching adulthood.

Many churches have adjusted their methods to address the needs of today's teens by ministering to the entire family. These churches recognize the importance of connecting family and teens through youth ministry. It might seem impossible to reach every teen in only 3 hours a week, but if an entire family is impacted the ministry extends far beyond a Wednesday night service.

Family-oriented youth ministries keep parents informed through newsletters, the Internet, or quarterly meetings. This allows parents to be aware of — and possibly involved in activities and outreach. Visiting a teen's home allows the staff to understand the environment the teen lives in and offers a more complete picture of his needs. Some youth ministries offer mini-cell groups for parents, sharing helpful resources such as *Reaching the Heart of Your Teen* by Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, or *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers* by Gary D. Chapman.

Whatever method you chose, youth ministry focused on teens and their families meets one of the greatest needs of today's teens — the need to connect to family.

T. Suzanne Eller, Muskogee, Oklahoma

CHRISTMAS YEAR ROUND

We encourage our congregation to use their Christmas cards as reminders to pray for the friends and loved ones they send them to. During the year, as our members visit with the people on their Christmas card list, they let them know they are praying for them. This is an encouragement to people who may be going through difficult times. A telephone call to ask how the person is doing and a reminder they are being prayed for spreads the Christmas spirit far into the new year.

David Hammerle, Fallentimber, Pennsylvania

HELPING OTHER PEOPLE EXCEL

I invited a group of at-risk students to visit the elderly at a nursing home. These at-risk students were humbled to be among people who were hurting, lonely, and sometimes abandoned by family members. They identified with the elderly residents because they had often experienced the same feelings. Bonding began the instant the students introduced themselves to the elderly residents. The students' visits made the elderly residents happy. The students also needed someone to listen to them. That gave the elderly residents a sense of purpose.

Students visited the elderly residents for 30-to-45 minutes twice a month throughout the school year. Students read, conducted interviews, sang, played musical instruments, and shared artwork. The teachers and nursing home program director recognized that the students and elderly were being blessed. The students and the elderly broke down generational barriers and thereby built up their self-esteem. The elderly remarked how the students restored their feeling of youth and vitality. The students improved in their behavior, social skills, reading skills, and communication skills. A longrange goal is for the students to develop lifelong habits of caring for the elderly.

Since our first group of students in 1996, we now involve five schools and five nursing homes. The students participating are in grades 3 through 12. The transforming blessing that occurs as a result of sharing our lives is astounding.

Submitted by Earnestine Blakley, founder and president, H.O.P.E. Outreach Ministries, Inc., St. Joseph, Missouri.

LET THE CHILDREN COME

"Let the Children Come" is an object lesson that demonstrates how important children are.

Invite the children to the front of the church and have them face the congregation. Ask the church, "Do you know the names of these children?"

Encourage the people to learn the names of the children they do not know. Then, emphasize how the church is responsible for the eternal welfare of each child. The attention we give children today will help determine the priority they place on church attendance 10 or 15 years from now.

Interview each child. Ask, "What grade are you in school? What are yours hobbies? What would you like to be when you grow up?"

Now ask the children, "Do you know the name of each person sitting in the church?"

Explain to the children that the people sitting on the pews are the church family. The church family is available to them. They can turn to the church if they should ever need anything.

Have everyone stand and pray, asking God to bless and help the children and young people in school. Pray for God's protection and guidance for their lives.

Marie True, LaGrande, Oregon

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER

In 1996, Jim Hebert and his family were vacationing near Grand Coulee Dam in eastern Washington State. While Jim was having his morning devotions by the lake, a man running up the dock interrupted him. The man frantically told Jim what he had seen through his binoculars. Two fishermen, clinging to a cable, were caught in the swift current above the dam's spillway.

Jim dropped his Bible, jumped in his ski boat, and raced to their aid. As he sped across the lake, he recalled a boyhood incident when he had been rescued from a waterfall. He mentally planned his approach using the same strategy that had saved his life 40 years earlier. After two failed attempts, Jim was able to pull the two fishermen to safety.

Back at the dock, Jim Hebert thought about the way God had orchestrated circumstances to answer the foxhole prayers of the two fishermen. If his friend George had not led him to Christ, Jim would not have been on the dock having his devotions. If his friends had not persuaded him to buy a motor with more power, his boat would not have handled the strong current. Had his cousin not saved his life 40 years earlier, he would not have known what to do and would not have been there to do it.

Jim Hebert readily affirms Paul's encouragement to the first-century Christians in Rome: "God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois

SENTENCED TO THE QUARRIES

Dionysius I ruled one of the richest and most powerful cities in fourth-century Greece. He was unscrupulous, treacherous, and vain. Despite his faults, he was one of the most able administrators of his time and fancied himself to be a poet.

In his search for validation as a poet, he asked the poet Philoxenus for his opinion on the royal verses. When the poet pronounced them worthless, Dionysius sentenced him to the quarries.

But that night the king had a change of heart and repented of his actions. The next day he gave a banquet to honor the pardoned poet. At the end of the banquet, however, the king read Philoxenus more of his poetry and asked him once again to judge it. Without hesitation the poet asked the king to send him back to the quarries.

Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ must be willing to "go to the quarries" because of unpopular opinions. We may even face persecution for our beliefs. Too many times we choose pardon and acceptance when our beliefs are challenged by the world.

T. Lee Stephens, Coppell, Texas

HE'S MORE ALIVE

A small country church had set up a Nativity scene on the front lawn of their church for the Christmas season. The pastor happened to be watching through his study window when a young family drove up to get a better look at the scene. Out of the car piled Mom and Dad and three little ones. They scurried about looking at the entire setting.

The pastor reached for his coat to walk outside to greet the family. As the pastor made his way toward the family, he noticed the smallest of the children, a little girl standing and looking a long time at the manger scene. She looked at the figures of the shepherds, then at Mary and Joseph, but particularly she was drawn to the face of the doll that had been laid in the straw to represent the Baby Jesus.

The pastor spoke with the parents and children. All the while the little girl looked at the manger scene.

When the family was finished, she was still standing at the manger. The mother called, "Come on, honey, we must go."

Then in a voice of finality and quite loudly to the others who were in the snow getting ready to leave, she turned and said, "He's a lot more alive than that!"

She saw what I wish all of this world could see in the great Christmas story — that Bethlehem is now and that He is here just as much as He was in the stable of the inn that night, waiting for us to come ... to give of ourselves ... to acknowledge Him and to receive Him.

> Robert Strand, Springfield, Missouri. Adapted from Moments for Christmas. Used with permission.

JUST AS WE ARE

Money was scarce during the Depression. An artist was about to go bankrupt. If he could paint an unusual picture it might save his business.

While walking the streets of the city, he found a hobo leaning against a vacant building. The hobo was bearded, wearing dirty, tattered clothes, was grasping a broomstick cane loosely in one hand, and had a battered bag at his feet containing all his worldly possessions. It was the exact picture he needed.

The artist offered the hobo \$15 to come to his studio where he would paint his picture. The hobo agreed with one stipulation: that he be able to arrive at 2 p.m. The artist agreed.

When the hobo arrived, the artist was displeased. The hobo had bathed, shaved, and was wearing a new shirt, tie, suit, and shoes. The inspiration for his painting and the hope for his business were gone. He cried out in disappointment, "No, no, no. I wanted you to come just as you were. Now you are like every other man." In a similar way, when we come to God we cannot clean up ourselves to make us presentable. God wants us to come to Him just as we are.

-Lorie Vannucci, Martin, Kentucky

SPIRIT AND POWER:

Foundations of Pentecostal Experience William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies (Zondervan, 233 pp., paperback)

n Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience, William and Robert Menzies present a call to evangelical dialogue on issues foundational to Pentecostal beliefs.



"Thoughtful questions" about the experience of the Spirit, asked by sympathetic, but critical, evangelical friends, "call for equally thoughtful responses." William Menzies sets the scene with a survey of historical backgrounds and writes a brief conclusion; the rest of the book is by Robert.

Approximately half of the book discusses the baptism in the Spirit, its subsequence to conversion, and initial physical evidence. The traditional case of a repeated pattern in Acts, though still satisfying to many Pentecostals, has not fared well under rigorous evangelical-hermeneutical scrutiny. Menzies addresses the issues in ways that cannot be so easily dismissed by evangelical hermeneutics.

Menzies' approach to subsequence is not based on biblical analogy or on the historical precedent of a few events in Acts. Rather, he focuses on Luke's presentation of the work of the Spirit and on the nature of the Pentecostal gift throughout Luke-Acts. Menzies presents Luke's distinctive perspectives on the Spirit and His work.

Admitting that the question of initial physical evidence is still being discussed in evangelical and Pentecostal circles, Menzies argues that it is a perfectly valid topic in the arena of systematic theology. The theological insights of both Luke and

Paul are brought to bear on the topic. Spirit and Power presents one of the strongest cases for the Pentecostal position on subsequence and initial evidence yet published.

In the final chapters, Menzies outlines further topics: signs and wonders, healing in the Atonement, spiritual gifts, and the fruit of the Spirit. *Reviewed by Donald Johns, Ph.D., professor of Bible and theology, Global University, Springfield, Missouri.*

PREACH THE WORD: A PENTECOSTAL APPROACH Aldwin Ragoonath

(Agape Teaching Ministry of Canada, Inc., 239 pp., paperback)

Aldwin Ragoonath is a Canadian Pentecostal scholar who travels widely teaching in institutions and churches. He writes from a strong academic and practical ministry background. *Preach the Word*, is written to help Pentecostal preachers prepare and deliver sermons. Ragoonath has captured the ethos of Pentecostal worship and ministry. He understands the context of Pentecostal ministry, something the reader will quickly detect from perusing the text.

Ragoonath provides a strong foundation in hermeneutical issues confronting the Pentecostal preacher, and he demonstrates the uniqueness of Pentecostal proclamation. The book incorporates practical illustrations to demonstrate how the theory he bases his work on is lived out. This book will enhance the library of any



Pentecostal preacher. It will also be a useful resource for college courses in homiletics.

I do not know of a similar volume that combines the theological underpinnings

of Pentecostal ministry with the practical application of theory to the preaching ministry better than *Preach the Word*.

Reviewed by William W. Menzies, Ph.D., longtime Assemblies of God educator and missions consultant, Springfield, Missouri.

THE SPIRIT IN THE GOSPELS AND ACTS: Divine Purity and Power Craig S. Keener

(Hendrickson Publishers, 304 pp., hardcover)

Keener's book completes the biblical topic of the Holy Spirit for Hendrickson Publishers. The others, Gordon D. Fee's God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul (1994), and Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God (1996) cover well the Spirit in Paul — the first in a more technical format, the latter written more for pastors. Wilf Hildebrandt's An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God (1996) covers the Old Testament teaching on the Spirit.

Keener's book was originally part of

SOOK REVIEWS

his dissertation — "The Spirit in John's Gospel" — but was enlarged to include the four Gospels and Acts. Keener focuses on certain texts in the narrative portions of the New



Testament. This provides a sampling rather than an exhaustive analysis. Moreover, as he notes, he engages the Jewish and Greco-Roman

writings in the environment of these texts more than in the narrative structure of the Gospels or Acts itself.

Herein is its great contribution. For those who like to mine other sources for light on the Bible, like Josephus, Philo, Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls), or the rabbis, this book is a gold mine. When commenting on John the Baptist in Mark 1, for instance, the reader will find more on John's dress and habits than in many other sources. Also, Keener brings out two dominant themes found in both Judaism and Early Christianity: purity, and the Spirit of prophecy.

Reviewed by Ben C. Aker, Ph.D., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri. Springfield, Missouri.

SAVEONE: A Guide to Emotional Healing After Abortion *Sheila Harper* (SaveOne, 146 pp., hardback)

Statistics reveal that 40 percent of all women have had an abortion by age 45. Post-abortive women are sitting in our churches each week. From guilt and anger to depression and dysfunction, they carry the emotional baggage of abortion. The church must have practical tools for mending these wounded souls.

SaveOne is such a resource. It is a thorough and biblically focused book

that identifies God as the source for healing. The author provides a platform from which to embark on a journey of emotional healing, forgiveness, God's grace, renewing of the mind, and living in the present. This book is written in bite-sized chapters that guide the reader through biblical study and self-examination. It also devotes space for writing reader reflections, prayers, and goals.

SaveOne can be used by individuals or groups. For those struggling with a past abortion, the greatest challenge will likely come well before discussing the issue with a pastor. Pastors must open the door to this difficult subject and educate their members about abortion, post-abortion stress, and God's plan for postabortion recovery. By doing so, they



pave the way for women to face these feelings of guilt. Because of the intense nature of the recovery process, it is suggested that pastors encourage

pastoral counseling and/or group accountability as a part of the healing process.

Reviewed by Cindi Boston, executive director, Pregnancy Care Center, Springfield, Missouri.

GOD'S WOMEN – THEN AND NOW

Deborah M. Gill and Barbara Cavaness

(Grace & Truth, 238 pp. paperback)

God's Women — Then and Now is one of the best handbooks on women in ministry. Divided into five units, the book engages significant exegetical, theological, historical, and practical questions. "A Biblical Approach" explains the importance of correctly interpreting Scripture; "Old Testament Foundation" discusses women in creation and emphasizes their importance in Old Testament ministry; "New Testament Foundation" examines Jesus' regard for women and their importance in the Early Church; "Specific Issues in Local Churches" responds to the prohibitions against women in Corinth and Ephesus;



and "Practical Applications for Today" gives counsel for current issues in home and church.

Gill and Cavaness trace the significance of women from Eve, to Jesus'

resurrection announcement to women, and to Paul's female colleagues Phoebe and Junias (Romans 16:1,7).

The author's carefully analyze theological issues, offer careful evaluations of historic interpretations, and give plausible explanations to show that the concept of male headship (1 Corinthians 11:3,7-9), and the two perplexing passages often quoted to forbid the ordination of women (1 Corinthians 14:34,35 and 1 Timothy 2:12) need not be sweeping prohibitions. Moreover, the gifts of the Spirit — the tools of ministry — are granted equally to both men and women.

God's Women — Then and Now is an excellent resource for a sermon series, a Sunday School class, a college or seminary classroom, or a special study on women in ministry. Reviewed by Edgar R. Lee, S.T.D., professor of spiritual formation and pastoral theology, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

Enrichment reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books.

NEW LOGION PRESS RELEASE — THEY SPOKE FROM GOD



They Spoke From God, A Survey of the Old Testament, is the latest book published by Logion Press. William C. Williams and the contributing authors present a clear and concise look at the Old Testament.

The Old Testament vividly lays out the foundation of Christianity. Many people, however, find the Old Testament to

be difficult and enigmatic. Some people have dismissed its relevancy to modern Christianity. *They Spoke From God* addresses these problems and misconceptions by offering a basic grasp on relevant passages, while relating biblical text to historical, theological, and ethical questions. *They Spoke From God* also shows how the Old Testament reveals God consistently working to redeem His people.

To order *They Spoke From God, A Survey of the Old Testament,* call 1-800-641-4310, and ask for item 020411 (\$39.95).

EVANGEL'S 10TH ANNUAL SUPER BOWL OUTREACH EDITION

Nearly a decade ago, the *Pentecostal Evangel* began using one of the most popular spectator events in the United States as a springboard for a special evangelism edition of the magazine. As a result, while the Dallas Cowboys prepared to meet the Pittsburgh Steelers for the NFL championship on Jan. 28, 1996, the *Evangel's* first Super Bowl Outreach Edition rolled off the press.

Published for the same Sunday as Super Bowl XXX, the special *Evangel* carried a salvation message and features on San Francisco 49er Steve Wallace and Minnesota Viking Cris Carter. As the NFL's 32 teams strive to reach the Feb. 6, 2005, title game, the *Evangel* now prepares its 10th annual Super Bowl Outreach Edition for release on Sunday, Jan. 30.

"We envisioned the first outreach edition as a tool for sharing the gospel with those who were interested in an event like the Super Bowl, but did not know Jesus Christ as their Savior," says *Evangel* Editor in Chief Hal Donaldson. "The positive feedback we've received during the past 9 years from readers sharing the issue with unsaved loved ones and friends has reinforced our purpose for winning souls."

Not only have believers made it a practice to give away the Super Bowl Outreach Edition, but during the past several years many churches have ordered extra copies for distribution. For the past two Super Bowls, a Louisiana church purchased enough copies of the *Evangel's* outreach edition for community distribution through its local newspaper.

"It's certainly a great evangelism tool," says *Evangel* Associate Editor Kirk Noonan, who oversees production of the issue. "Churches definitely need to buy extra copies. We have received hundreds of salvation decision forms from readers who came to the Lord through the testimonies published in the Super Bowl Outreach Edition."

Past issues have included the testimonies of such football greats as Shaun Alexander, Raymond Berry, Peter Boulware, Mark Brunell, Dennis Byrd, David Carr, Randall Cunningham, Tony Dungy, Darrell Green, Napolean Kaufman, Jon Kitna, Tom Landry, Ray Nitschke, Deion Sanders, Pat Summerall, Kurt Warner, and Aeneas Williams.

Bulk orders for the *Evangel's* Jan. 30 Super Bowl Outreach Edition can be made by calling GPH Customer Service at 1-800-641-4310 and requesting item #69-7505. The cost is 25 cents per copy for orders of 50 or more. Churches purchasing at least 400 copies of the outreach edition by Friday, Jan. 7, can receive free customized imprinting on their entire order.

EVANGEL IN PRISON: HUNDREDS OF INMATES COMMIT TO CHRIST

By the end of 2004, it is projected that more than 1,000 incarcerated readers of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* will have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior during the preceding 12 months. If the projection holds true, the annual total will be one of the highest since the periodical began regularly carrying a salvation response form in Jan. 1997.

Readers use the salvation coupons to indicate they have made decisions for Christ. It is anticipated that the publication will receive salvations responses from more than 1,700 individuals this year.

Currently, more than 13,000 copies of the weekly *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* and approximately 7,400 copies of the quarterly Spanish-language *Evangelio Pentecostal Hoy* are provided to more than 500 U.S. correctional institutions through the Key Bearers outreach. As the ministry completes its ninth year, donations will have provided at least 4.6 million *Evangels* to the incarcerated.

It is estimated that at least five inmates typically read every Key Bearers-sponsored *Evangel*. The demand for additional copies is obvious since there are more than 2 million incarcerated men and women in this country.

To get involved with the Key Bearers outreach, please call Light for the Lost at 1-800-988-0292 or visit the *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* secured website: www.pe.ag.org. More information on Key Bearers can be obtained by sending an e-mail to: lftl@ag.org.

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY WEBSITE

Global University has established a gold standard in communications and education that will enhance the future of world missions through globalreach.org, a website providing quality evangelism and discipleship resources to believers everywhere.

Language, distance, strict government oversight, finances, and limited time factors are barriers frequently encountered by missionaries. These barriers, however, are rapidly disappearing thanks to globalreach.org.

Twenty-four of Global University's basic evangelism and discipleship courses are now available fast and free via the Internet in four major languages — English, Spanish, French, and Chinese — in portable and media formats. A separate site for the Arabic language will soon be available. Global University staff — working through many national offices in 180 countries — is attempting to make as many as 100 more languages available on globalreach.org within the next several years.

"Once our courses are available in these languages on globalreach.org, believers everywhere can train for evangelism and church ministry without encountering the barriers of distance and cost," said Ronald Iwasko, Ph.D., Global University president. "The possibility of reaching the entire world for Jesus Christ was never as real as it is today."

Believers with Internet access can visit globalreach.org and read or download individual lessons or entire courses and use them for ministry in their communities. Hundreds of people throughout the world have written to say they are excited to finally have quick, cost-free access to training resources that

help them in personal evangelism. Many of those even report making a first-time commitment to Christ.

"Globalreach.org is more than just a website," said Mark Barclift, vice president for Internet and media communications at Global, "[It] is a strategy for using Internet and media communication technologies for the fulfillment of Global University's vision of winning the lost and training Christians everywhere."

Global University is an international distance-learning institution affiliated with the Assemblies of God. The school serves more than 645,000 students studying evangelism, discipleship, and ministry training programs worldwide and is headquartered in Springfield, Missouri.

PASTORAL COUNSELORS

The Chaplaincy Department is building a relational and professional network among ordained Assemblies of God ministers who are serving full time in the counseling field. People who work in a counseling setting may feel isolated due to the nature of their ministry. This network will provide opportunities for counselors to develop collegial relationships.

If you are a full-time counselor or know someone who is, please contact the Chaplaincy Department at 417-862-1447, ext. 3260, or e-mail chaplaincy@ag.org.

2005 BENEVOLENCES CHILD CARE CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE

Brighten the walls of your church classrooms and the homes of your congregation with the beautiful



Benevolences 2005 Child Care Calendar.

Each month this 10 1/2- by 9 1/2-inch calendar displays a full-color picture of a baby or child and an inspirational Scripture. National and religious holidays and Benevolences days are

marked. This calendar has large daily squares for your personal notes.

To order a free calendar, call 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182.



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ADVERTISING INDEX 🔆

Acrylic Podiums133	Global Unive
Advance/Pulpit129	Lakeview Chr
AG Bible Alliance 5	Life Publishe
AG U.S. Missions	Ministerial Enr
AG World Missions 11	National Chu
Asia Pacific Media Ministries119	National Pray
Benevolences115, 141	North Centra
Brooklyn Tabernacle Pastors & Leaders Conference 15	Office of Pub
Carpenter Bus Sales 132	Paraclete
Central Bible College 6	Pentecostal
Chaplaincy110, 141	Phoenix First
Christian Higher Education133	Robison Gam
Church Mutual Insurance17	Southwesterr
ConnectionPower	Sunday Scho
Districts Insurance & Risk Management inside back	Today's Pent
Embracing a Biblical Worldview143	Tommy Barn
Free to Soar Pastors Wives Conference	U.S. MAPS
Global Pastors Network 24	Week of Pray

Global University 109, 141
Lakeview Christian Center143
Life Publishers
Ministerial Enrichment Office 133
National Church & Clergy Tax & Accounting Services141
National Prayer Center133
North Central University 31
Office of Public Relations
Paraclete129
Pentecostal Preachers Week53
Phoenix First AG13
Robison Gamble Creative 2
Southwestern Assemblies of God Universityinside front
Sunday School 112
Today's Pentecostal Evangel
Tommy Barnett's Pastors & Leaders School13
U.S. MAPS123
Week of Prayer133

😤 IN CLOSING 🐳



Pentecost: Empowerment for Life-changing Ministry

BY THOMAS E. TRASK

The Assemblies of God is being used by God around the world in ways our Pentecostal forefathers would have never imagined. More than 250,000 congregations in 211 countries and more than 50 million believers gathering each week for worship, are testimonies to God's grace.

What started out with 3,000 people being saved on the Day of Pentecost, then 5,000, then multitudes, has become today, statisticians tell us, more than 1.5 billion Spirit-filled believers worldwide. The question is: Will the church continue to grow? The answer is: Yes.

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the increase of God's kingdom are not the works of the Assemblies of God or any other body of Pentecostal believers. It is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh"¹ (Joel 2:28). This last-day outpouring is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Why is receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues important? Many reasons can be listed. But the first and foremost reason is found in Acts 1:8: "Ye shall receive power ... and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Jesus). The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers congregations to reach the lost. When we consider the ways and dynamics the Spirit uses to enable us to carry out our mission we are amazed. Scripture says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh" (John 3:8). So is the work of the Spirit.

Scripture reminds us it is "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). The baptism in the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowers us to live victoriously for Jesus Christ in a sinful, wicked world.

Solomon wrote in Psalms 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The world has seen tyrants come and go who have tried to stamp out the Church. But the church empowered by the Holy Spirit marches on.

In Matthew 16:19 Jesus said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Prayer is one of the keys the church has been given. Prayer moves the hand of God. Prayer changes circumstances. Prayer tears down the strongholds of the enemy.

A person baptized in the Holy Spirit has a new prayer language. Romans 8:26 states, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." So the Spirit-filled believer is helped as he prays as the Spirit makes "intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27).

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:2,4: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue (the Spirit's tongue) edifieth (builds up) himself."

We are given a promise in Joel 2:28, and Peter repeated it on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16–18). As we approach Christ's second coming, the Holy Spirit is being poured out on all flesh. This supernatural Pentecostal experience will continue to intensify and culminate in a Spirit-empowered church being raptured at Christ's return.

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ENDNOTE

1. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.