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What is distinctive about

*P E N T E C O S T A L
T H E O L O G Y ?*

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P R E F A C E

The aim of the Institute for Theological Research at the University of South Africa (Unisa) is to conduct research related to theology, and to publish these results. A variety of projects is undertaken, some relating to theoretical research while others deal with applied and/or empirical research. The Institute is ecumenical and academic freedom is a rule of conduct. This explains the variety of research which is undertaken and of the books and articles being published.

One of the more recent projects of the Institute is the Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism project launched by the Department of Systematic Theology of Unisa under the leadership of Dr H I Lederle. Although the present book is not the first publication of this project, it is a very significant one. This book contains the results of research on the proprium of Pentecostal Theology. In view of the surge in literature being produced on Pentecostal Theology and the lack of a 'standard' Pentecostal Theology, this book will serve as an introduction and summary to insiders and outsiders as to what is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology. Because of the importance and influence of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic renewal movement in different parts of the world, the need for such a book is evident.

The project on Pentecostalism of the Institute is made possible partly by a joint donation from the Pentecostal Churches in South Africa. I hope that this book will serve a positive purpose both inside and outside the Pentecostal churches.

Willem S Vorster
(Head of the Institute)

P A R T I

Introductory
considerations

CHAPTER 1

Some of the problems involved in researching Pentecostal theology

1.1 THE PROBLEM OF METHOD

After eight decades of twentieth century Pentecost there is as yet no standard Pentecostal Theology in the mould of the Western post-Reformational theological establishment. The increasing interest shown by Pentecostals in academic training, and the burgeoning neo-Pentecostal movement which includes numerous academically qualified church leaders from outside the classical Pentecostal movement, has led to an ever-increasing volume of literature (learned and otherwise) being produced on the subject. The sheer volume available, and the variety of sources and theological and cultural backgrounds represented, has tended to diminish rather than increase hopes that such a standard theology will ever emerge. Yet among the abundance of pro- and anti-literature, the mass of personal testimony recommending (and sometimes denigrating) the "pentecostal experience" and the many often condescending (though apparently sympathetic!) "objective" evaluations of classical Pentecost from non- or neo-Pentecostal sources, contributions from Pentecostals themselves are beginning to increase. These are latterly tending to dwell upon precisely this point: What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?

Whereas previously the Pentecostal attitude to the contemporary theological establishment had been one of ignorance or distrust (and often downright hostility), a generation of Pentecostals more critical of their own roots arose, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. The excesses of the itinerant healers and evangelists, together with the canonisation of outward Pentecostal liturgical forms (dance, hand-clapping, etc.) tended to lend an apologetic

tone (in the colloquial sense) to their work. They tended to reveal an underlying sense of inferiority when they compared their Pentecostal doctrines and developing traditions with the scholarly and apparently objective and scientific theological systems of the Protestant Reformation traditions. In the case of some it led to eventual dissociation from denominational Pentecost (e.g. Walter Hollenweger, erstwhile Swiss Pentecostal).¹ For others it led to attempts to express Pentecostal doctrines in the context of and within the parameters of non-Pentecostal systems (F P Möller in South Africa is one such example, relying heavily as he does on the theological and cultural thought-world of South African Reformed theology, with minor Pentecostal "amendations").² In North America Thomas Holdcroft³ for instance - and in this respect he is representative of many North American Pentecostals - has tended to express Pentecost in terms of fundamentalistic evangelicalism).

The remarkable spread of Pentecost throughout the Third World, and its penetration into the ranks of the historical denominations, has brought with it a change of atmosphere among Pentecostal academics. Perhaps the increasing number of academically trained men within the Pentecostal denominations has had something to do with this. Any sense of intellectual inferiority is slowly passing from the scene and Pentecostal scholars are arising who are no longer prepared to submit their teaching and practice to criticism which is formulated within theological parameters which are alien to Pentecost itself. The mirror is being reversed and an attempt is being made not only to define the parameters within which Pentecostal practice operates, but to test Western Reformation traditions by those parameters as well. The former aspect is the interest of Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal scholars alike, whereas the latter has tended to be the interest of neo-Pentecostals in particular.

The implications of this development for the method to be applied in this study may be described as follows:

Primary sources must be (the writings of) Pentecostals who are unashamedly committed to Pentecostal teaching, practice and norms. This does not imply that such sources must be uncritical of their own roots, nor that sources from without Pentecost have nothing to contribute. It is merely the consistent application of a principle which holds good in most theological research. In a reversed situation, for instance, a Pentecostal critique of Reformed theology is less likely to state ultimately and accurately the basic tenets of that particular theology than would a systematic exposition of Reformed theology by a theologian who is trained in and committed to Reformed teaching, practice and norms.

From these sources an attempt must be made to outline the parameters within which Pentecostal theology operates and may be defined. If it is true, for instance (without wishing to prejudge the issue) that Pentecostal theology is conducted on the intuitive rather than the analytical plane, and tends to be primarily experiential rather than doctrinal, and if this research is conducted by a Pentecostal scholar, then one of the following courses must be followed:

First option: The research must be conducted from within the parameters of the contemporary Western theological establishment, with the result that the researcher will be restricted by parameters which are alien to his own religious experience and practice. Honesty would then compel the research to draw up short of rationally analysing, from within one set of parameters, religious phenomena and practices which appear and are conducted within a totally different set of parameters. The result would be no different whatsoever from the scores of academic evaluations of Pentecost already to hand, whose conclusions often appear to be determined more by the disposition of the researcher toward Pentecost than by the material at hand.

Second option: The research must be conducted from within the parameters of Pentecostal theology itself. An attempt may be made to clarify issues in terms which may be more comprehensible to scholars who are not at home in this thought world. However, throughout the course of the work it must be borne in mind that where a Pentecostal researcher is dealing with Pentecostal phenomena, without asserting dogmatically that such phenomena defy rational analysis as attempted by modern Western thinkers, this type of analysis will not be allowed the final say. It may well be that Pentecostals will more and more come to express the sentiments of others who have experienced the apparent tyranny of the Western theological establishment, no matter how unlikely they may be as bed-fellows, i.e. the Third World and political theologians (Porter 1974:33-34).

If the first option were merely to furnish one more example of critique of Pentecost from within an alien academic milieu, then neither the purpose nor the promise of this research can be fulfilled. For this reason the second option offers more hope for an understanding (if not total comprehension) of a contemporary Pentecostal researcher's perspective upon that theological "tradition", the parameters within which it may be practised, and the evaluation of critique upon it which has not originated within it. The task of the research is to identify that which is

distinctive about and essential to Pentecostal theology, and this of course includes identifying the parameters themselves. Indeed, it may well be that this identification in itself fulfils the task of the research.

This presentation follows the following outline:

The rather comprehensive introductory section includes

- A critical analysis of attempts to determine the historical roots of Pentecost which will be subjected to critical analysis (1.2).
- A critical analysis of non-Pentecostal critiques of Pentecostal doctrine and practice (1.3).
- A review of the vital context of twentieth century Pentecostal theology today - its common doctrinal kernel, its pluralism, and its influence on Catholic and Reformation theology via neo-Pentecostalism (Chapter 2).

Essays on the theme "What is distinctive about Pentecostal theology?" by Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal ministers and scholars representing a variety of denominations and theological disciplines are included (Appendices A and B).

The main body of the research attempts to identify the characteristics of Pentecostal thought, method and practice. The area covered includes:

- Pentecostal appreciation of Scripture (Chapter 3).
- Pentecostal appreciation of formal doctrine (Chapter 4).
- The place and relationship of experience, commitment and emotion (Chapter 5).
- The role of the community of believers (Chapter 6).
- Social and political influence and influences (Chapter 7).

In this section the content of Pentecostal theology will be analysed in an attempt to distinguish its parameters and method. Since in the author's experience this is not readily achieved by means of the highly rational and analytical method of establishment theology, both the presentation and the analysis will be obviously Pentecostal. (For instance, attempts to comprehend Pentecostal phenomena and effects from the perspectives of non-theological sciences such as sociology and psychology - which tend to operate within a world view not only alien but often violently hostile to modern Pentecost - will probably be accorded only a measure of sympathy and not be granted anything even remotely approaching final authority.)

The final section will then be an attempt to answer the original question as succinctly as possible: What is the proprium of Pentecostal theology, i.e. what is distinctive about Pentecostal theology?

1.2 THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY PENTECOST

Any research into Pentecostalism (a term not always acceptable to Pentecostals, who tend to refer to the movement generically as "Pentecost") will at some stage or other attempt to establish the historical bearings of the movement by determining its antecedents. Among Pentecostal scholars and those more sympathetic to the movement, the attempt will often be no more than an exercise in establishing antecedents in religious movements which have either exhibited familiarities with Pentecost, or with which Pentecost had close links at its origination. More "detached" observers have ventured further and sought to identify the sociological roots of the movement, particularly in a given area such as North America. For the purposes of this study we merely take note at this stage of these latter attempts (Anderson 1979: Bloch-Hoell 1964), although in the section dealing with Pentecost and socio-political influence they may be found to offer a valuable contribution.

Pentecostals themselves have tended to understand their historical antecedents in the mould of Pietist historian Gottfried Arnold. They have searched the "underside" of church history for those groups who have exhibited manifestations and held values similar to those which set Pentecostals apart from their denominational contemporaries. Hence in the church history notes used until recently by the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa for training its pastors, antecedents are found in groups as disparate as the Waldensians and Albigensians. Behind such attempts lies the understanding that Pentecost in this century is a revival of the charismatic first century church. This early church lost its pneumatic fervour through institutionalisation and neglect, but throughout church history there have been flickerings of that original flame, culminating in the grand resurgence of charismatic experience at the beginning of this century. John Nichol points out that Pentecostals may disagree as to whether the revival started in North Carolina in 1896, in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, or in Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906 - but all agree "that the Pentecostal experience is not a religious innovation, and that in one form or another it has manifested itself throughout the history of the Christian church" (Nichol 1966:19).

Larry Hart has shown that establishing the historical antecedents of Pentecost is not a straightforward historical task in a single dimension:

There are at least three different approaches to this task. First, one might trace the "charismatic" outbreaks down through the history of the church Second, Pentecostalism per se is an American phenomenon with roots in Methodism, revivalism, the Holiness Movement, and conservative Protestantism. In addition, a "doctrinal" history can be traced from Roman Catholicism (confirmation) through Methodism and the Holiness Movement (sanctification) to Pentecostalism (Spirit baptism)

(Hart 1978:12-13)

John McNamee (1974) has chosen to identify "enthusiasm" throughout church history, and to relate twentieth century Pentecost to that phenomenon, a method which reveals something of his presuppositions as to the nature of the movement. However, it is F D Bruner that has perhaps most adequately summarised most of the possible and several of the probable antecedents (from a historical perspective):

The ancestral line of the Pentecostal movement could appear to stretch from the enthusiastic Corinthians (I Cor 12-14) or even the Old Testament anointed and ecstatic (e.g. Num 11; I Sam 10), through the gnostics of all varieties, the Montanists, the mediaeval and the pre-Reformation spiritualists, the so-called radical, left-wing, or Anabaptist movements, the Schwärmer of the Reformation period, the post-Reformation Quakers, and, when given fresh new parentage through the Pietist, Wesleyan and revivalist movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany, England, and the United States, continuing in the first half of the nineteenth century briefly but very interestingly through Edward Irving in England, and lengthily and very influentially through Charles Finney in America, issuing in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the higher-life and holiness movements which gave birth to their twentieth century child, the Pentecostal movement.

(Bruner 1970:35)

Bruner seems to have covered most of the options available in the course of church history, with only the gnostics appearing rather out of place in his list.

From the point of view of historical continuity, however, Pentecost can only be clearly linked to the Holiness Movement (there can be little doubt that existing Holiness congregations supplied many of the members and at times even the infrastructure for early Pentecost e.g. Dowie's Zion Christian Church in South Africa), and to "revivalism", in spirit at least. The underside of church history outlined by Bruner has generally been of a sporadic character, showing its continuity and commonality more in its rejection of establishment Christianity, and in its emphasis on experience of God, than in its organisation or ability to propagate itself as a continuing "school". The Pentecostal, however, will generally prefer to be linked to this history, rather than to that history of established ecclesiastical forms which dominates the histories of denominational Christianity.

To find in church history events, movements or groups which reveal characteristics similar to contemporary Pentecost may well be enlightening, however, it is doubtful whether such a comprehensive beam could be shed upon the movement as to enable the historian who has completed such a task to imagine that contemporary Pentecost has thereby been comprehended. It is a minority group among Pentecostals, for instance, that holds to a "second-blessing" expectation with regard to sanctification, as manifested in the Holiness Movement. In the mould of the radical Reformation both revivalism and Anabaptism have developed along lines often similar to Pentecost - yet today groups such as the conservative evangelicals tend to be the most vociferous and unrelenting opponents of Pentecost. (This is true even if North American Pentecostals are welcome in the Association of Evangelicals of North America.) World Pentecost today cannot be understood solely as an American phenomenon, although it may in places stand in drastic need of shedding some of its American cultural baggage. Nor can the dynamically growing movement of this century be more than superficially likened to the often flash-in-the-pan reactions to establishment Christianity which have sporadically reared themselves at intervals throughout the last eighteen hundred years. If Pentecostals acknowledge that in movements such as those outlined by Bruner lies their church history, it is not because they see themselves as a *product* of such a tradition of dissent - it is because they recognise in the experience of such groups their own experience, both of God (in that he accepts them) and of the world (that in general it rejects them).

For the attempt to distinguish the proprium of Pentecostal theology, the historical task may confer most benefit when it illustrates the relationship of the dissenting movements to the "orthodox" church of their time, both in doctrine and practice. If contemporary Pentecost is broadly inimical to the established

schools of theology of this century, then its experience is no different to that of the Montanists and the radical Reformers, to Wesley and revivalism. Many of these movements resisted orthodoxy on more than one front. The Montanists, whatever their excesses, confronted a rapidly institutionalising primitive Catholic Church, while the radical Reformers rejected both Catholicism and the classical Reformation which they perceived as both half-hearted and incomplete. Wesley departed from the sobriety of the orthodox Anglican tradition in which he had been reared (and of which he was a clergyman), while at the same time he resisted the Calvinistic puritanism of the "serious men" of his age. Revivalism was at odds with the rationalism and formalism which a theology permeated by "modernism" had brought to the denominations. Yet, like Pentecost today, it is totally inadequate to explain the emergence and popularity of these groups purely as "reactions" to the established church of their day. Therein may lie some of the truth, and certainly such is the character often most visibly expressed - yet the Pentecostal contention remains that God has always had a totally committed people, known by its acquaintance with him and by the demonstration of his power in their midst; and that if he cannot establish it within the churches, he will do so on their doorstep.

For the purpose of our study then the following must be noted: if the roots of Pentecost, its antecedents, those groups throughout history with which it exhibits the greatest similarities - if these all stood outside the orthodox ecclesiastical and theological establishment of their day, and if Pentecost finds itself in a similar position today then it must also be true that attempts to define Pentecost from outside the movement will differ radically from those made within it. This difference does not lie so much in the realm of "subjective" or prejudiced evaluations versus "objective" attempts - it lies in the incompatibility of the parameters within which the definitions are made. With this in mind, we turn now to the problems surrounding non-Pentecostal critique of Pentecostal thought and practice.

1.3 NON-PENTECOSTAL CRITIQUE OF PENTECOSTAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

The formation of Pentecostal church organisations early in this century is generally held to have been because of the hostility manifested by the established denominations of the day to those manifesting charismatic gifts. Whereas Pentecostals themselves wished to maintain their links with their churches, and to thus revitalise the Christian community by means of their (undoubtedly contagious) spiritual fervour, this option was in the main denied

them. The result was the separation of Pentecostals from the broader community, and unhappily the conferral of a stigma upon the term "Pentecostal" and the people it denoted. The description in fact soon became an epithet. Like the name of the proverbial dog, this stigma remains until today. The more fashionable term "charismatic" has gained wide currency among those who would share in the spirit but not the opprobrium of Pentecost, even some Pentecostal groups, tired no doubt of the stigma and all it entailed, adopting it (Lederle 1985:5). "Pentecostal" became associated with emotional excess, Bible-punching, bigotry, fanaticism, lack of moderation in almost every area from politics to morals, schism, and a host of related shortcomings. In fact, the reaction to Pentecost was almost as emotional as the phenomenon itself is often supposed to be.

So well ingrained has the stigma become that most Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal evaluations reflect it in some way. Within Pentecost, on the one hand it has given rise to the apologetic attitude noted above - which is not a surprising development when until today a Pentecostal who holds his head up high in many non-Pentecostal faculties is still often deemed an affront; while on the other it has bred a certain brashness, an almost arrogant "So what?" attitude, particularly among some of the more articulate leaders of the various personality cults which have come to disfigure the movement from time to time. Since one of the unhappier developments has been that for a number of decades Pentecost took on the stature of a sub-culture, the stigma had become so reinforced at the time of the neo-Pentecostal revival of the 1960s that it was possibly the most influential factor in helping these denominational Pentecostals decide that it was preferable to remain in their own churches. The experience was "in", but the community of those who had most unequivocally advocated it was not. Whereas the earlier charismatics had come to appreciate the role of classical Pentecost as "custodians" of the experience, currently the emphasis seems to be more upon dissociation from those aspects of charismatic lifestyle and expression that obviously have their roots in denominational Pentecost. The movement that never wished to become a separate denomination, having been forced into that mould has now found itself once again unacceptable, this time by those who owe it so much. The result has been that the distinction between classical Pentecostal and charismatic is becoming increasingly well defined. Lederle (1985:5) distinguishes between "classical Pentecostal", "neo-Pentecostal" and "charismatic". Today, however, many Pentecostals are happier with the situation than they were twenty years ago, and that mainly because of the excesses of some of the charismatics!

The increasing sense of self-respect that burgeoned among those Pentecostals who looked back along their history, and, refusing to be deluded by the straw-person caricature held before their gaze by a sceptical (when not downright hostile) theological establishment, saw in it little to be ashamed of and much of which they could be proud, has led in latter years to an increasingly convincing assertion of the validity of their specifically Pentecostal doctrines and practices. This has been in the face of the almost universal accusations of "poor theology" and "weak exegesis" (no matter how diplomatically phrased) which the theological establishment has hurled against them. This non-Pentecostal critique of Pentecost is now discussed from the perspective of a more militant Pentecostal assessment of such critique, and in the context of its value (or lack thereof) for defining what is unique and distinctive about Pentecost.

Horace Ward Jr. (1975) has traced the changes which have occurred in criticism of Pentecost since the earliest days (Synan 1975:99-122). These have varied from charges of demon-possession and down-right immorality in the first decades (although Bloch-Hoell (1964:122) has raised the latter spectre again as recently as the 1960s to more moderate attempts to point out the theological difficulties inherent in maintaining that empowerment is an experience of the Spirit subsequent to regeneration, that tongues is the confirmatory sign of Spirit baptism, and that such baptism cannot be explained other than in terms of a dynamic encounter with God. Ward's conclusion is interesting, particularly his final comment, which is relevant to this study.

The temperate tone of modern criticism should not be accepted as a vindication of Pentecostalism. In many cases the writer has taken away with the one hand everything he has conceded with the other hand. The anti-Pentecostal argument still consists mainly of the following points: (1) The evidential purposes of glossolalia in the Book of Acts are no longer valid; (2) glossolalia was a temporary gift; (3) glossolalia was an inferior gift; (4) glossolalia can be explained as a psychological and human phenomenon.

It is clear that the language and violence of the early argument has been subdued, but that the skepticism (sic) remains. Theological objections are virtually unchanged, but a new dimension of secular inquiry into a spiritual phenomenon has been inaugurated.

The viability of Pentecostalism is demonstrated by its continuing growth. This attests to its evangelistic mission and to its capacity for meeting real human

needs. Since its theology, its mission, its power, and its fruitfulness are in harmony with Scripture, Pentecostalism can rightly demand an honest examination of the proposition that it is a modern expression of the New Testament experience.

(Ward 1975:119-120).

Ward's study reveals how much of the anti-Pentecostal argument has centered on glossolalia in particular. This has had the unhappy effect of forcing Pentecostal apologists to fight on the terrain of their critics, and long pro- and anti-glossolalia arguments have resulted.⁴ Since to the outsider the most noticeable mark of Pentecost is the phenomenon of tongues speaking, many Pentecostals have unquestioningly accepted that this is the distinctive which must be defended most desperately. On a slightly less superficial plane has been the attempt to understand Pentecostals from the perspective of a "two-stage" or "three-stage" soteriology. D W Faupel (1972:12-13) cites Everette Moore and Klaude Kendrick in this regard. This may be useful as a categorisation of Pentecostals, but whether it is at all helpful in determining what the real distinctive element in Pentecost is, is not so certain. Donald Dayton (1985:10) is one who is aware of the difficulties of concentrating on either glossolalia or multi-stage salvation in attempting to analyse Pentecost, and he opts for an identification of four main strands of emphasis instead: Salvation, Spirit baptism, Healing and the Second Coming. These he says are not unique to Pentecost, but when combined with a peculiar Pentecostal logic they reveal (to him) the essence of Pentecostal theology. Indebted as we are to Dayton's relativising of tongues and multistage salvation, it must be doubted whether he has really helped in our search for a Pentecostal proprium. Rather, in a manner reminiscent of Walter Hollenweger, he has attempted to describe the component elements of Pentecostal doctrine, in the very Protestant belief that comprehension of the doctrinal content of a group (its "confession") will allow categorisation of the group itself.⁵

The Pentecostal who embarks on research into what non-Pentecostals have to say about the movement will be confronted with two apparently ambivalent phenomena. On the one hand, the warmth, fervour, mission-centredness, grassroots involvement and concern, and the spiritual commitment of the group are lauded. On the other, the theological method and propositions of the group are (sometimes ever so kindly) derided. Culpepper (1977:50-51), for instance, can follow a glowing description of the movement with a reference in a subsequent chapter to those charismatics who have "simply borrowed from classical Pentecostalism at its weakest points - biblical exegesis and theology" (1977:98). Hollenweger

(1977:506-507) states categorically: "The theological insights of the Pentecostal movement are neither new nor valuable ... the questions posed for the traditional churches by the spread of the Pentecostal movement are more important than the answers given by Pentecostalism." Larry Hart (1978:221), who has some flattering things to say about Pentecost, concludes that Pentecostalism, theologically speaking, is "on very shaky ground indeed in this regard". He claims that there is no Biblical basis for Spirit baptism subsequent to conversion, for speaking in tongues as evidence for such baptism, nor for an experience subsequent to conversion by which one would enter the realm of the charismatic gifts. At the level of exegesis, Biblical theology and systematic theology he sees these conclusions as "devastating" (Hart 1978:222). Non-Pentecostals, be they charismatic or not, anxious to give honour where it is due, applaud the dynamic character of Pentecost, but on the whole deny much (if any) validity to its theological expression.

Pentecostal reaction to such criticism is becoming less apologetic and more militant. As Ward pointed out above, if the movement reveals so many positive characteristics, then it deserves a serious theological evaluation. Pentecostal practice and theology go together like love and marriage in the popular ditty; you can't have one without the other. Where emphasis is shifted to the latter (as tends to be the case in the practice-doctrine relationship of Reformation theology today), the result is a less dynamic and vital community (Hollenweger 1977:425). A Pentecostal movement which sees its ministers and laity returning from studies at non-Pentecostal institutions imbued with all the latest and best in theological method and content, only to be presiding in a very short time over local communities which no longer evangelise or express any warmth or fervour in their worship, or service to one another - such a movement might well conclude that there is something very alien indeed to their experience of God inherent in the methods and content being inculcated at those institutions. So when theologians that grant authority only to those methods and contents termed "theological" by such institutions find that Pentecostal practice and doctrine is "faulty", then a shrug of the shoulders from the thinking Pentecostal must be expected: a scientist who studied a racehorse according to the methods and contents of botany could be expected to come to similar conclusions.

For the purposes of this study a pragmatic view will be adopted. This may be expressed as follows: If the non-Pentecostal churches are a reflection - in terms of their appeal to the person in the street, the fervour of their members, the dynamism of their progress - of the methods and presuppositions that apply in the Western post-Reformational, post-Enlightenment theological estab-

lishment today; and if that establishment finds Pentecostal practice and doctrine theologically untenable; then a dynamic, growing, effective Pentecostal community would appear to be fully within its rights in not only refusing to submit to analysis by those methods, but even to question them seriously. In effect, this means that Pentecostals may credibly argue for a new approach to exegesis, to Biblical and systematic theology - an approach which will not vindicate the static and condemn the dynamic.

CHAPTER 2

The context of Pentecostal theology

2.1 A BROAD SPECTRUM OF COMMON DOCTRINE AMONG CLASSICAL PENTECOSTALS WORLDWIDE

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Pentecostal movement is the wide variety of structural forms, doctrinal emphases, and adaptations to local conditions that it reveals. Yet underlying this pluralism is a very definite nucleus of doctrine, points that, almost without exception, are held to be non-negotiable by Pentecostals themselves. Dayton feels that he has sufficiently comprehended this nucleus as revealed in the four strands mentioned above. Hollenweger gives an overview of the peculiarly Pentecostal view of Bible, salvation, etc. (see note 1). These evaluations are revealing, and go some way toward outlining the common doctrinal emphases in the movement. Yet a Pentecostal observer who moves among various Pentecostal groups soon finds that what is not negotiable in Pentecostal doctrine is that which is most descriptive of the *experience* of the Pentecostal himself. Hollenweger (1977:425) indirectly confirms this when he claims that the transferral of emphasis from experience to formal doctrine in some Pentecostal denominations has been the result of the large percentage of members in those groups, including many pastors, who never have had a Pentecostal experience. The process has also been accompanied by an increasing amount of doctrinal hair-splitting. Despite this, at the grass-roots level (individual member or assembly) there is an understanding that a common nucleus of doctrines exists, held by Pentecostals in North America, South Africa, South-east Asia, Latin America, and practically any other region on earth. This may be summed up as follows:

1. That Jesus Christ can/should be personally encountered as saviour of the sincerely repentant sinner, resulting in regeneration to a transformed life.
2. To every believer there is an experience of God's Spirit available according to the pattern of Spirit baptism found in the history of the first-century church in Acts.
3. The power of God is revealed today in the lives of individuals and communities as it was in the early Christian communities.
4. A sincere attitude of praise and worship should mark the life of the individual believer and the liturgy of the whole group.
5. The regenerate are obliged to reveal a distinctively Christian life-style based on discipleship of Jesus.
6. The goal of the individual believer, of the local church, and of the larger Pentecostal community, is to further the mission of Jesus.
7. Jesus is coming again, to judge the world, and to apocalyptically renew creation.

Within these points emphases may be shifted from time to time and from region to region. However, basically each point centres on a nucleus of common experience among Pentecostals. The form that kerygma should take, the signs and fruits of repentance, the forms of praise and worship - these may well be conditioned by the milieu of the local assembly - but that every Pentecostal life should include the experience termed conversion, baptism of the Spirit, charismata, sanctification, enthusiastic worship and witness, is axiomatic without exception to every Pentecostal community. These things may *not* be negotiated. There may have been Pentecostal leaders who have questioned tongues as the only valid initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit; to the astonishment of the rest of the Pentecostal world, there are groups that practice infant baptism! It could be cogently argued that either aberration would effectively so nuance the first or second of the points listed above as to make them virtually meaningless - yet those involved (in the first instance, scholars and leaders such as Steiner of Switzerland and G. Jeffreys of Britain; in the second, the Chilean Pentecostal church) would assert that these points as stated remain non-negotiable. To be Pentecostal *primarily* presupposes that one partakes of the common Pentecostal experience, and only secondarily presupposes commitment to a common "confession" of doctrine. Where the formulated doctrine is commonly held, it is very clearly based on the experience. The Pentecostal does not merely believe or confess he is Pentecostal - he knows it and lives it, because of the experience he has had and is continually undergoing. Even his

witness is an ongoing experience - it is not that he *must* witness; because he is truly Pentecostal he *will* witness and be a witness.

2.2 THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM AND INDIGENOUS CHURCHES

Because experience of God, and subsequently of the world from "the Lord's side" is so crucial to the nucleus of Pentecostal doctrine, the forms of church structure and the theological systems within which this nucleus is expressed have become largely relativised. It is true that the movement would appear to have a largely North American origin in this century, and that it has carried with it a large amount of American cultural baggage¹ - however, in its worldwide manifestation it is truly cosmopolitan.

The true potential of the movement's theological pluralism did not become obviously apparent until the neo-Pentecostal revival, which showed that individuals with theological convictions as widely disparate as Catholicism and Quakerism could not only experience the power of the Spirit, but could apparently integrate the experience into their own theological framework (McNamee 1974:341).² Yet even before this time it was found that the Pentecostal groups launched potentially effective mission projects among the inhabitants of the Third World. This has been attributed to two elements in particular: firstly, without the traditional, orthodox, or established forms such as the historical denominations carried with them to foreign situations, the Pentecostal groups could adopt the forms best suited to their mission and to the people being reached; and secondly, in dealing with the spirit-consciousness of the Third World the Pentecostal missionary was superbly equipped by his own appreciation of spiritual powers and forces, as well as his own endowment with the power of the Spirit. The result has been a burgeoning of indigenous Pentecostal groups such as those discussed by Hollenweger in his booklet *Pentecost between black and white* (1974). This adaptability has at times been condemned from both without and within the movement as syncretism, although a far more reasoned response is being sensed, particularly from the older Pentecostal denominations. David du Plessis' relationship with his own church is a case in point. His openness to the moving of the Spirit in forms other than that of classical Pentecost led to a certain coolness between him and his old church (the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa) and also with the Assemblies of God in America. Today he (or rather, his memory) is acceptable to both. The undoubtedly Pentecostal character of the rapidly growing Latin American, African and Asian indigenous churches, and their acceptance by the older Pentecostal groups, is a

victory for the understanding of Pentecost among its own adherents - that that which is crucial and non-negotiable can never be compromised, but that that which has relative value for the crucial experience of God be treated as relative. Since the latter could include languages, style of worship, cultural mores and values, forms of church structure and certain doctrinal formulations (trinity, election, etc.), the way is open for the most widely diverse groups to be at one and the same time truly Pentecostal and truly indigenous.

This tendency has been evident from the beginning, when Pentecostals formulated their "confessions" in terms of the nearest or most influential or acceptable denominations, often without understanding the implications of what was being confessed. Because these confessions, as well as the particular mores inherited from the Holiness Movement, later became canonised, the initial ecumenical openness often became intolerance and even at times, bigotry. Local intolerances were often exported. However, today it would be a very narrow-minded Pentecostal indeed who would deny that it is the same Spirit that works in him that now works among others who know nothing, and indeed care even less, for his own shibboleths.

2.3 NEO-PENTECOSTALISM - "EXPERIENCE" INTEGRATED WITH HISTORICAL CHURCH THEOLOGY?

The scope of this study is not intended to include the neo-Pentecostal movement in attempting to ascertain the proprium of Pentecostal theology. However, the attempts of many neo-Pentecostals to integrate the Pentecostal experience with their ecclesiastical traditions in the areas of liturgy and doctrine can be viewed from a classical Pentecostal perspective as being in the nature of an experiment. If the experience of the Anglican neo-Pentecostals, according to Hollenweger's (1978:34-35) perception, is representative of trends among other non-Pentecostal Pentecostals, then it would appear that the middle ground of true integration has yet to be established. Either the initiate into the realm of Pentecostal experience of the spirit has immediately relied heavily upon classical Pentecostalism to supply the categories by means of which he might comprehend the experience, or he has declared that the experience itself is reconcilable with his own tradition and has served to illuminate that tradition without radically criticising its main tenets. Behind these trends there appears to lie an either/or presupposition that has yet to be seriously questioned: Either the Pentecostal experience can be best related to the thinking of the group which has acknowledged its validity for eight decades; or it can be seen as

a neglected area of practice hidden in all the other Christian traditions and by no means inimical to them. For the purposes of our study the experiment in integration has certain implications. For instance, it raises the question of the autonomy of a Pentecostal theology. Is Pentecostal theology valid as an expression of Pentecostal experience, as a theology alongside the Roman, Orthodox and Reformation theologies? Or may a theology of experience of the Spirit merely be appended to any tradition without rocking the theological boat too noticeably? The answer to this question has implications for the self-awareness of Pentecostals themselves. Must they view themselves as, for instance, Evangelicals who just happen to speak in tongues? Or may they make a valid claim to being distinctively Pentecostal, as opposed to any other Christian tradition, in both experience and theological distinctives? It also raises questions for the study or practice of Pentecostal theology at non-Pentecostal faculties: if a certain experience of the Spirit can be integrated with traditional theological tenets without radically altering or questioning those tenets, then Pentecostal theology can (indeed, must) be comprehended within the parameters of other theologies and theological methods.

The arguments which have been offered in the preceding sections may go a long way toward answering the questions raised above. Indeed, Hollenweger's observations may offer a certain evidence that in studying Pentecostal theology one is not dealing with a minor aberration of or emphasis in Protestant theology. Future developments in the neo-Pentecostal movement may help further clarify some of the issues.³

At this stage it becomes necessary to take note of some Pentecostal attitudes toward the emergence of neo-Pentecostalism and some of the trends within it. Although initial scepticism has largely been overcome by pragmatic acceptance (Hocken 1976:35), there are still those Pentecostals who express viewpoints critical of the movement. Ray Hughes (1974:6-10) for instance, raises a number of issues which he feels are inadequately attended to by the neo-Pentecostals. These concern the interrelationship doctrine/experience, the question of normative initial evidence, the question of lifestyle, and the question of relation to the church (meaning the local assembly).

Basically Hughes objects to the relativisation of Biblical doctrine inherent in any movement which finds and expresses its commonality in terms of experience. In this respect, Hughes expresses the sentiments of that portion of the North American Pentecostal establishment which has chosen to ally itself with the more conservative and fundamentalistic traits of Evangelicalism on that continent. However, the points he raises concerning

lifestyle and relationship to the church are areas of concern to many Pentecostals. Concerning lifestyle, Pentecostals express the sentiments not only of the Holiness Movement, but of the Radical Reformation (cf. Turner 1985:16) and of the New Testament writers, who could be cited in this regard *ad infinitum*. It should be the task of all Christians to expose and reject all forms of legalism and the accumulation of unnecessary cultural baggage: however, it is also the task of each committed individual to adopt a lifestyle which is contradictory of the values of a post-Christian world and also exemplary of the character of Jesus himself.

Hughes' point on the relation to the church is well made:

For one reason or another, the new Pentecostals have formed 'renewal communities', 'households' or other such groups directed by informal leaders outside their churches. It is not uncommon for a charismatic person to attend his church on Sunday morning and meet with a prayer group or a renewal community in the evening. One wonders why these exclusive gatherings are necessary if these persons are involved in the life of their churches and the churches are allowing them freedom of expression and opportunity for service.

(Hughes 1974:9)

There is a real problem here for the neo-Pentecostal who wishes to integrate his experience of God with his tradition, and who then finds that the official liturgies and mainstream activities of his denomination so exclude his particular contribution that he must resort to extra-ecclesiastical activities to express both his revitalised faith and his Christian service. There are others in the context of the neo-Pentecostal movement who have been exercised by the problem of doctrine and experience and their interrelationship, like the Pentecostal O. Talmadge Spence (1978) and the evangelical Francis Schaeffer (1973:24-27). The question will be addressed in detail in a later chapter, and criticism of the movement in this regard merely noted here. Since this study is directed at the distinctiveness of Pentecostal theology, contributions from neo-Pentecostals will be best worked into the scheme when they contain the underlying assumption that Pentecostal theology is a valid, autonomous theology, and not merely an experience-oriented emphasis which can be integrated with and into any and every other tradition.

P A R T I I

Characteristics of Pentecostal thought, method and practice

CHAPTER 3

The search for a Pentecostal hermeneutic

Commenting on the debate on the issues of "initial evidence" and "subsequence" which has gone on for no little time now between Pentecostals and others, W. Menzies makes the following assertion:

However, the heart of the theological battle today lies below the level of specific theological issues, as such. It is the bedrock issue of *hermeneutics* itself. Inevitably, the real crux is that of *methodology*. The presuppositions which govern the theological task will in large measure determine the kind of product which emerges. Although identifying a useful Pentecostal hermeneutic will not in itself ensure a solution to all theological problems, it may serve as a helpful guide through which to sift the Biblical data.

(Menzies 1985:5)

One of the real problems which has faced the Pentecostal has been the anomaly between his *love* for Scripture as a prime witness to the person of Jesus and his work of salvation, and his apparent lack of ability to *comprehend* Scripture in terms of those categories which appear to predominate in non-Pentecostal theological circles, whether conservative or liberal.¹ At heart the problem has resulted from the discrepancy between the faith, lifestyle and experience of the Pentecostal Christian and that of his contemporaries who are non-Pentecostal scholars. As has been noted in the introduction to this work, the discrepancy has resulted in the Pentecostal Christian and the non-Pentecostal scholar operating within parameters that at crucial points become

mutually exclusive. Since until now in formal theological expertise the non-Pentecostal scholar has appeared to be far more articulate in the presentation of his views, the stigma of poor theology and weak exegesis has become attached to classical Pentecost. There have been two obvious ways out of the consequent dilemma, and both have their proponents in Pentecost.

Firstly, there are those who either overtly or by implication insist that Pentecostals look to other schools or movements for a viable hermeneutic. Hollenweger, for instance, has obviously found that for him Reformed tradition offers an acceptable framework by means of which he could understand the meaning of the Bible (see note 2). An extremely popular suggestion, and in practical terms no doubt one that has largely been acted upon in North America at least, is that of R N Johnston:

As Pentecostals seek theological definition, it is to the Evangelical wing of the church that they will first turn for particular hermeneutical assistance. For both ecclesiastically and theologically, Pentecostals most nearly identify with Evangelicalism Pentecostals will not lack for options as they seek their theological place within Evangelicalism's umbrella.

(Johnston 1984:55-56)

Gordon Fee appears to have accepted both this position and its implications for Pentecost, concurring with non-Pentecostal scholars that no matter how dynamic and fervent the Pentecostal movement may be, it is "noted for bad hermeneutics" and that this has implications for its doctrinal and experimental "Distinctives" (Fee 1976:119-120).

While no contemporary Pentecostal researcher could hope to sweep under the carpet the many obvious exegetical aberrations that still occur in Pentecostal pulpits, resulting as these so often do in statements and practices which range from the ludicrous through the laughable to the utterly lunatic, it is also very clear that to turn to a camp which is basically fundamentalist and/or dispensationalist in its approach to the Bible does not appear to offer a valid solution to the problem. In fact, it might without injustice be claimed that many of the absurdities which are encountered owe far more to that camp than to Pentecost - indeed, Pentecostal "extremes" are often rather innocuous in comparison with some of those perpetrated by their apparently more respectable "alien".

It is perhaps the historical context of North American Pentecost (which has been the most visible source of Pentecostal jargon and doctrinal categories) that has led to Pentecostals in general being classed with evangelicalism and fundamentalism. The fact that Pentecostals on that continent form a very small minority in relation to their evangelical counterparts (a situation almost peculiar to North America), and that the two movements undoubtedly have much in common, both in terms of religious and of cultural goals, has led to some important distinctions becoming blurred. A joint perceived enemy, in the form of that secular humanism which has come to dominate so many aspects of American life, has over the last few decades increased the similarities. Since much of the early Pentecostal's doctrinal formulation seems to have been influenced by his inability to discover any alternative to destructive "modernism" and its so-called "historical" criticism of the Scripture other than that offered by fundamentalism, it has often been in the categories of fundamentalism that he has framed his formal statements on Scripture. Yet in practical terms his basic approach to Scripture has been neither evangelical, nor fundamentalist, nor dispensationalist. James Barr (1977:208) in his work on fundamentalism, strangely enough has taken note of this fact, and hesitates to class Pentecostals as fundamentalists.

Numerous Pentecostals are themselves becoming aware that in turning to non-Pentecostal camps for assistance in identifying an acceptable hermeneutical framework, they are in fact creating a tension between the ongoing dynamic of Pentecost as it exists, and its formal expression of its tenets, as well as its self-understanding:

... a strict adherence to traditional evangelical/fundamentalist hermeneutic principles leads to a position which, in its most positive forms, suggests the distinctives of the twentieth century Pentecostal movements are perhaps nice, but not necessary; important but not vital to the life of the Church in the twentieth century. In its more negative forms, it leads to a total rejection of Pentecostal phenomena.

(McLean 1984:37)²

McLean is here making specific reference to critics of Pentecostal hermeneutics such as J G Dunn and Gordon Fee who operate within evangelical hermeneutical parameters. G T Sheppard is even more explicit in his rejection of assistance from that quarter:

I hope to show both that Pentecostals were not originally dispensationalist-fundamentalists and that the efforts secondarily to embrace such views have raised new problems for the identity of Pentecostals - hermeneutically, sociologically and politically.

(Sheppard 1984:5)

If the door to a hermeneutic compatible with Pentecost cannot be found in non-Pentecostal ranks, the alternative is to attempt to define an authentic and distinctive Pentecostal approach to Scripture. Such an approach must take cognisance of many critical considerations, such as the relationship between Scripture as norm, and charismatic direction; and the nature of the inspiration of Scripture, to mention but two. That no such definitive hermeneutic has yet been formulated is clear - but that Pentecostal scholars have started to map out the way ahead is perhaps one of the most exciting developments in this field for a while. We will take a detailed look at some of the guidelines which are beginning to emerge.

Mark McLean (1984:36) begins his attempt to articulate the nature of a Pentecostal hermeneutic by addressing the fear uppermost in the mind of most conservative Protestants - what about *sola scriptura*? "The very reasonable fear of many Pentecostal leaders and educators is that a Pentecostal hermeneutic will soon abandon or so distort the Scripture that the twentieth century Pentecostal movement will founder and cease to be Christian". Despite his criticism of fundamentalism noted above, McLean is able to assert: "If we lose our hold on the Bible, that infallible rule of our faith, and conduct, we are lost". McLean's sentiments here are characteristically Pentecostal - an approach to Scripture that so relativises its normativeness would soon reduce Pentecost to the status of a cult, an oddity, a passing freak on the side-show of Church history.

On the positive side, McLean (1984:37) asserts that a Pentecostal hermeneutic is essential because Pentecostals have a distinctive grasp of "the basic *discrimen* governing all Christian Theology, viz., the mode of God's presence *pro nobis*." Pentecostals "will insist on the continuity of the mode of God's presence in and among the faithful from the creation down to this very day. Therefore, God is as much of an active causative agent today as he is pictured in the biblical writings" (McLean 1984:38). To McLean, neither the evangelical nor the modernist could affirm this and the hermeneutic they have developed is thus inadequate for the Pentecostal, who not only affirms it but also experiences it:

It is simply time to admit that the Pentecostal understanding of the mode of God's presence among his people in conjunction with our use of Scripture in the common life of the Church results in a Pentecostal hermeneutic and theology, that at major points is different from an orthodox nonPentecostal hermeneutic and theology.

(McLean 1984:50)

William Menzies (1985) has gone further than McLean. Not only has he perceived the need for a Pentecostal hermeneutic, and provided tentative guidelines, but he has also attempted to flesh out a methodology by means of which such a hermeneutic might be implemented. Menzies' major concern in this essay is with the use of Luke's account in Acts for establishing Pentecostal distinctives - the area of warmest debate by non-Pentecostals with Pentecostals. In dealing with this example, he argues for an approach to the exegesis of these portions and an appreciation of Luke's (or any other Bible writer's) intent that would be natural to a Pentecostal believer and distinct from that of the non-Pentecostal.

The first step in this method is to approach Scripture on the inductive level - this means to analyse the text employing the skills and tools of scientific interpretation (Menzies 1985:510). The exegete "listens" to the text, seeking to establish what it *declares*, and/or *implies* and/or *describes*. The next step occurs at the *deductive* level and here Menzies (1985:10-12) argues for the possibility of a holistic Biblical Theology. At this level the text is interpreted as the light of the *whole* of Scripture is thrown upon it, as opposed to the interpretation in rather more local context attempted at the inductive level. The third step is at the level of verification (Menzies 1985:12-14). At this level it is asked - does it work? Can the interpretation of this portion be verified or demonstrated? Menzies is careful to indicate that he does not argue "If it works, that makes it true!", where the point of origination is not Scripture. But having decided what the interpretation of Scripture is, this conclusion of the exegetical process is taken a step further in Pentecost with the question: can it be demonstrated? Without attempting to follow his application of this principle to Acts and the issues of "subsequence" and "initial evidence", it can be merely stated that his argument that the application of this approach by Pentecostals, by means of a methodology which is not alien to their experiential framework, enables them to come to a conclusion more supportive of the traditional Pentecostal view, is sufficiently cogent to merit further consideration.

Howard Ervin (1985:33) addresses the problem from another angle, that of the role of commonality of experience between the writer and the reader of Scripture. Before reaching his conclusion, however, he notes that traditional hermeneutics, the New Hermeneutic and the pietistic approach to Scripture all have dealt inconclusively with the dichotomy between faith and reason demanded by a theological epistemology which accepts as axiomatic only two ways of knowing viz. reason and sensory experience: Depending on whether reason or faith is made primary,

... the consequence for hermeneutics has been in some quarters a destructive rationalism, in others a dogmatic intransigence and in yet others a non-rational mysticism. What is needed is an epistemology firmly rooted in the Biblical faith with a phenomenology that meets the criteria of empirically verifiable sensory experience (healing, miracles, etc.) and does not violate the coherence of rational categories.

(Ervin 1985:23)

He then pleads for a pneumatic epistemology as opposed to in particular the epistemology of the nineteenth century which underlies the existentialism of the New Hermeneutic and demands a programme such as Bultmann's "demythologisation" (Ervin 1985:33). Such an epistemology would allow for the working of God's Spirit in man and nature; creation being open to and conditioned by the Creator himself. The implications for a pneumatic hermeneutic lie in both *what* is known and in *how* it is known. As for *what* is known, in the context of the incarnation Ervin maintains:

The qualitative distance between the Creator and the creature although it is bridged, is not erased. This distance renders the word ambiguous until the Holy Spirit, who "searches even the depth of God" (I Cor 2:10), interprets it to the hearer. Thus the hearing and understanding of the word is qualitatively more than an exercise in semantics. It is theological (*theoslogos*) communication in its deepest ontological context i.e., the incarnational. The incarnation makes truth personal - "I am the truth". It is not simply grasping the kerygma cognitively. It is being apprehended by Jesus Christ, not simply in the letter-word but the divine-human word. Herein lies the ground for a pneumatic hermeneutic.

(Ervin 1985:28)

Ervin (1985:29) approaches the problem of *how* the Scripture can be known by admitting, on the grounds of the principle of incarnation, that "linguistic, literary and historical analysis are indispensable as a first step to an understanding of the Scriptures". However; "It is only as human rationality *joined* in ontological union with the 'mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16) is *quickened* by the Holy Spirit that the divine mystery is understood by man ...". He then explicitly defines the implications of a pneumatic epistemology for a pneumatic hermeneutic:

A pneumatic epistemology posits an awareness that the Scriptures are the product of an experience with the Holy Spirit which the biblical writers describe in phenomenological language. From the standpoint of a pneumatic epistemology, the interpretation of this phenomenological language is much more than an exercise in semantics or descriptive linguistics. When one encounters the Holy Spirit in the same apostolic experience, with the same charismatic phenomenology accompanying it, one is then in a better position to come to terms with the apostolic witness in a truly existential manner. "Truly existential" in the sense that a vertical dimension to man's existence is recognised and affirmed. One then stands in 'pneumatic' continuity with the faith community that birthed the Scriptures

(Ervin 1985:33)

Ervin is not attempting to be the first to state that the Holy Spirit is the best exegete of Scripture. He is rather insisting that those who have had the same experience of the Spirit as the writers of Scripture have been brought into a way of thinking and understanding that allows the Scriptures to make sense to them. In the context of contemporary Western theology, this means they "are now reading it 'from within' accepting its own idiom and categories, not imposing the alien categories of a nineteenth century mind-set upon them" (Ervin 1985:33).

Implicit in Ervin's reasoning is the conclusion that, in terms of the debates surrounding the charismata (e.g. 1 Cor 12-14) and the "initial evidence" and "subsequence" issues (Lukan accounts in Acts), those who have experienced the charismata and are steeped in the witness of the Spirit to Scripture are best able to make sense of the Scriptures, particularly those dealing with such phenomena. The reverse side of the coin is that Pentecostals who

attempt to make sense of the Scriptures by means of a non-pneumatic hermeneutic are actually subjecting themselves to an unnecessary tension which leads to a crisis of identity and self-understanding (although Ervin does not state this in so many words).

In South Africa a similar position has been spelled out by the principal of the A.F.M. Theological College in Johannesburg, Frank Cronjé. Cronjé (1981:27-28) understands the Scriptures to be written tradition that in its totality incorporates the witness of the Holy Spirit to the deeds, thoughts and intents of God which had already been demonstrated in or revealed to human beings. The task of interpretation is thus to discover behind the written testimony the actual thoughts or message, and this can only be done by the Holy Spirit *in the context of* the working of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of Paul's writings to Corinth, he maintains:

Paul never hesitated for one moment to write to the Spirit-filled Corinthians. He was aware of the fact that without advanced linguistics and application of grammatical rules in interpreting Scripture, they would nevertheless understand by the working of the Holy Spirit what he intended to convey in his letters. After all, they had had the same experience of the Spirit that he had. (My translation).

(Cronjé 1981:38)

Cronjé maintains that this pneumatic principle in hermeneutics was originally the only possible way the early church could have approached Scripture. He is bold enough to assert that any other principle has originated as a poor substitute for the pneumatic, whether in Christian life or in hermeneutics:

The tragedy in the history of the Christian Church is in precisely this, that the church had already lost the working of the Holy Spirit at an early stage. Once believers no longer received the Holy Spirit, they fumbled and searched for truth and guidance. The Church then decided to make the Gospels the sole norm for faith and life for Christians, instead of the Holy Spirit. (My translation).

(Cronjé 1981:26)

The result has been a letter-directed theology and church, and not a Spirit-directed. Implicit in his reasoning is the conclusion that the re-discovery of the Pentecostal and charismatic

dimension demands a radical rethink of hermeneutic categories, and that those which served a church which knew little or nothing of the Pentecostal dynamics of the Spirit should be critically scrutinised before being allowed normative authority in Pentecostal circles.

If we attempt to find a central theme in the above-mentioned attempts to give direction in the search for a Pentecostal hermeneutic, it would be that the distinctively Pentecostal experience of the working of the Holy Spirit issues in a distinctively Pentecostal view of Scripture and approach to Scripture. This reality has often been confused by the tendency of Pentecostals to date to express their doctrines of inspiration and their hermeneutic in the terminology and categories of non-Pentecostal groups of "orthodox" theology. Normally this is not readily acceptable to the non-Pentecostal theological world, and those who wish to be charismatic while remaining true to their non-Pentecostal church traditions often find themselves subjected to the greatest tension in attempting to reconcile the dynamic of the experience with the negation of its corollaries. In a humorous and tolerant fashion William G. MacDonald expresses the Pentecostal response to criticism of the distinctively Pentecostal approach to Scripture and doctrine in particular:

On this score we constantly infuriate our evangelical brothers by our *ex post facto* approach. They contend that we dogmatize as follows: 'Everyone must speak in tongues in order to receive the fullness of the Spirit.' And we merrily agree with them that such a precept is not to be found in the New Testament! However - and there was hardly ever a 'however' with greater amplitude - we assert forthrightly on the basis of biblical precedents and our own experiences, that all believers *in fact do speak in tongues subsequent* to their being submerged completely in the Spirit. This they do, and their glossolalia is *evidence* of what has taken place in them, not the *epitome* or *embodiment* of the experience itself.

(MacDonald 1976:65)

To those who would recoil in horror from the normative position given to experience, he remarks: "Let us sanctify the language of sarcasm with love and say humbly, 'Either you know what I am talking about (by experience) or you do not. If you do not, you would not know if I told you'" (MacDonald 1976:66).

MacDonald has touched upon the nitty-gritty of the problem of doing Pentecostal Theology in such a way as to make sense to non-Pentecostals. Hence the charge of gnosticism, of aspiring to some plane of esoteric knowledge above the level of normal human comprehension, which has often been levelled at Pentecostals. The only answer can be that since Pentecostals are by experience Pentecostal, they cannot do theology in such a way that their Pentecostal experience is denied, particularly not when their experience of the Spirit of Christ appears to have been both everyday and virtually universal among first century Christians. To them, it is not a question of what gnostic "knowledge-by-initiation" Pentecostals have gained, but of what dynamic an institutionalised Church has forfeited by neglect.

This section is concluded by pointing out that the search for a Pentecostal hermeneutic has only just begun in earnest, and that the next few years of research could yield exciting results. Since Pentecost is growing so rapidly in the Third World, insights from articulate Pentecostals in that area are also eagerly awaited. A very real consequence of the Pentecostal revival has been the remarkable love for the Bible that has been engendered by the Spirit of God in the hearts of believers. That the normative interpretation of the book itself cannot be abandoned to flippant or casual "illumination" is obvious, and those exegetical tools which make good sense of the text are not to be neglected. However, the thought-world and world-view of those who have experienced in their lives the dynamic of God's Spirit will no doubt be in line, as Ervin has maintained, with those of the men who penned the revelation of God to them. As Pentecostals continue to love Scripture, to identify with those who penned Scripture, and to proclaim the Christ of Scripture, the endeavour to integrate distinctively Pentecostal experience, practice and doctrine on the basis of a Pentecostal hermeneutic can only be encouraged.

CHAPTER 4

Doctrine and experience

In this section the focus will be upon the *relationship* between doctrine and experience, whereas the following section will deal with the *nature* of legitimate experience in Pentecostal context.

David du Plessis' illustration, when first he made contact with non-Pentecostal leaders who wished to discover more of the nature of Pentecost, highlights the crucial role that experience plays in Pentecostal life and thought. Faced by a group of men who felt that *theologically* Du Plessis was not presenting them with anything profound or even so radically different from their own confessional positions, yet so acknowledgely *other*, he compared the non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal presentation and experience of the gospel of Christ to a frozen steak on the one hand, and a steak grilling on the coals on the other. Analysis and discussion of the quality of the frozen steak, its nutritional value, its probable history, etc, do not have half the appeal (neither do they make it any more edible) as the atmosphere generated when the steak is grilled over the coals.

Du Plessis concluded:

... here we have the elements of a good Pentecostal meeting. There is atmosphere. Everyone knows something is happening. The old alcoholic that sits there does not have to listen to the theology of saving grace ... he gets the 'hot gospel' stated in facts The sinner accepts the invitation. In a few minutes he rises from his knees and *knows* something happened to him There will be plenty of time to teach him the doctrine and theology of his experience later on. After all, I submit there was a Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the

Holy Ghost in the lives of the Apostles before they ever developed or framed the doctrine and the theology. They had experience and no doctrine. Today most people have doctrine and no experience.

(Du Plessis 1977:183-184)

Thirty years later the Pentecostals find themselves in a far more favourable position with regard to self-understanding in theology and doctrine, and are seriously attempting to understand themselves in relationship to other groups and non-Pentecostal theology. After an initial period in which it seemed that they too might be heading for a position of "doctrine and no experience", there are hopeful signs that, without denying the value of doctrinal and theological insights, Pentecostals are by and large learning to once again cherish and maintain the distinctive role of experience in their practice (Williams 1974:181). Because of their greater theological awareness, they too are beginning to study the relationship doctrine-experience, as are many non-Pentecostal or "charismatic" scholars who have been challenged by the increasing emphasis on experience discovered in those groups affected by this neo-Pentecostal "wave of the Spirit". The Pentecostal perspective, however, is the direct opposite of the charismatic. Where the charismatics are faced primarily with integrating experience into doctrinal systems that have been developed largely with no reference to, or experience of, the experiential side of Christianity, the Pentecostals are attempting to find categories in which they can theologically comprehend or at least state, their experience: "It is probably fair - and important - to note that in general the Pentecostals' experience has preceded their hermeneutics. In a sense, the Pentecostal tends to exegete his experience" (Fee 1976:123). The task of neither is without peril. The charismatics could at times be accused (and even be guilty!) of "preaching an experience", as the overwhelming moving of the Spirit relativises their doctrine and theological categories. On the other hand, more than one Pentecostal pastor has discovered that a primary emphasis upon the communication of doctrine often leads to a lessening of Pentecostal warmth and fervour; although Hollenweger (1977:425) maintains that in his estimation the reverse is true, the loss of fervour (by neglect of distinctive Pentecostal experience) precedes the movement of primary emphasis from experience to doctrine (Cronjé 1981:26).

That the relationship of doctrine and experience is not easily adequately defined is obvious when the comments of Pentecostals, charismatics, and others who have made the matter their own concern readily testify. Pentecostal R. Hollis Gause (1976:113-116) classes the matter as a problematic issue, the resolution of

which may help both the self-understanding of Pentecost and the unification of Pentecostals and charismatics. Catholic McNamee (1974:62-63), with particular reference to Donald Gee's teaching, speaks of the tension between doctrine and experience highlighted by Pentecostalism, and in his concluding chapter states: "There is no simple, harmonious relationship between experience and doctrine" (1974:362). R.H. Culpepper (1977:440-442) classes the relationship doctrine-experience as one of the tensions which has become apparent in the polarisation of the pro- and anti-charismatic schools. K McDonnell (1973:47), a sympathetic Catholic prominent in the ongoing Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue, has noted that Pentecostals are not unwary of the dangers inherent in an experience-oriented theology, mainly because "they had had their fingers burnt and are not about to leave themselves open to similar disasters in the future". The Catholic Church has in fact revealed a characteristic pragmatism (sometimes lacking in other non-Pentecostal denominations) in dealing with charismatic manifestations, in that it has apparently acknowledged that regardless of the strengths and weaknesses of Pentecostal doctrine, in practice they have had decades more experience in dealing with the charismata and their abuse, and for that reason cannot be ignored as authorities in that field. (This apparent concession is of course balanced by the insistence that the Pentecostal element has been included in Catholic doctrine and practice all along, and merely needed to be renewed!)

Peter Hocken (1976:34-35) has contributed to the discussion of the problem by pointing out that in reality for Pentecostals it is not merely the insistence of the primacy of experience over doctrine, but that in fact discernment plays a major role, and that the actual sequence is experience, discernment, doctrine. For this reason, Pentecostals have been unable to deny acceptance to charismatic Catholics whom they discerned to have a common experience of the Spirit to themselves, regardless of doctrinal distinctions.

Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike tend to agree that in Pentecostalism experience is important, and most acknowledge that it is not experience per se, but experience of the Holy Spirit which is critical (see next chapter). Pentecostals insist that this "new" emphasis on experience is in line with the church situation the first few decades after Pentecost, while charismatics tend to agree that the spontaneity and warmth of that epoch has been lost along the way, and that its rediscovery can only benefit the church as a whole (Williams 1974:192). Kilian McDonnell (1972:207) sees the contribution of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements as directing Christianity to a particular need of the age, a hunger for the *presence* of God. On his first contact with the Charismatic movement at Milner Park in 1981,

Henry Lederle (1981:23) saw in it a recovery of the ability to *enjoy* worshipping and receiving the blessings of God in an immediate sense. While it has been the neo-Pentecostal revival of the 1960s and later which has really brought home to Christianity at large that the experiential dimension is relevant (indeed critical) to the gospel and its impact on men, it is not easy to deny that the Pentecostal movement has since the early years of this century been exemplary of the practical reality of this dimension in most aspects of church and individual Christian life.

The emphasis on experience in Pentecostal Theology makes the theology itself extremely difficult to assess from a non-Pentecostal viewpoint (Hart 1978:100ff.). Kilian McDonnell (1973: 51) points out that an injustice is done to Pentecostals when they are judged by their printed works: "What the classical Pentecostal does and says is often far better than what he writes. There is no way one can reduce to the printed page the atmospheric dimension of Pentecostal communications". This is a real problem, for no matter how articulate a Pentecostal scholar may be, the attraction or revulsion evinced by his writings (this present study included) is a mere fraction of that experienced by a visitor to the typical Pentecostal meeting. In fact, the Pentecostal will insist that what he writes be understood against the background of what he experiences of God in and out of church meetings, and argues that the New Testament writings have precisely such a presupposition of a charismatic community and vocation behind them too (not that he wishes to consider his own meetings as equivalent to the New Testament canonical works!).

Morton Kelsey (1976:233) points out that any attempt to formulate a theology which takes seriously the possibility and reality of an encounter with God will demand courage, both in denying the prevailing scientism of the modern world, and in remaining open to an encounter with the living God. He argues as follows:

Dealing with the living God in experience is no easy task. It is far easier to deal with ideas about God than with God Himself. Ideas about God rarely overwhelm the thinker, nor do they generally make demands upon him (beyond the expected intellectual ones) ... when a man does encounter God in experience, it is not God who is put under the microscope and examined with reason, but man who finds himself under scrutiny. Among those who have never encountered God there is a fear that God will dissolve under man's penetrating, critical gaze. This idea would be funny if it were not so widely held.

(Kelsey 1976:240-241)

If Pentecostal theology does take experience of God seriously, then it is no wonder that an intellectual world which is cynical about the possibility not just of such an experience, but apparently even of the existence of a God who is other than a useful philosophical concept resorted to only *in extremis*, will experience great difficulty in assessing Pentecostal formulations. Yet to be Pentecostal will continually demand the courage not only to maintain the reality of experience of God in the face of the doubts of a cynical intellectual establishment, but also to enter ever more deeply into the depths of the experiential itself. Both processes will lend a particular colour to Pentecostal writings and teachings, which will of necessity go beyond the rational scrutiny of the problem doctrine-experience, to the definition of the experience itself. In other words, although the initial problem lies at the level of the *possibility* of experience of God, the Pentecostals have by nature of their own experience gone beyond that question, and are faced with the task of describing, qualifying and communicating their experience. Where their descriptive abilities may be lacking in certain qualities which mark scientific articulation, eighty years of Pentecost have shown that in the other two aspects they have not been found wanting.

There are very clear implications for a group which takes experience of God seriously in its theology, not least of all in its practical church life. For instance, formal theology itself will be assigned a position that is not necessarily primary to the continuance of the group. In fact, it could be argued that despite the absence of a distinctively Pentecostal theology, the Pentecostal movement has done, and is doing, rather well, as did the first century church for decades after Pentecost.

It is not that they are fundamentally anti-theological but that they fear the elevating of theology or doctrine to the first place. With the traditional definition of theology as 'faith seeking understanding' the Pentecostals would largely agree; however, they would want to be sure that the faith was not merely formal or intellectual (surely not merely a *depositum fidei* to be accepted), and that it be profoundly experiential. Pentecostals are basically people who have had a certain experience; so they find little use for theology or doctrine that does not recognise and, even more, participate in it.

(Williams 1974:181)

In South Africa, a strong feeling exists among a significant proportion of the faculty of the AFM Theological College that the task (assigned to them some years ago) of formulating a Pentecostal confession of faith for the AFM of SA was not beyond their capabilities, but was singularly inappropriate in a movement which was cynical of "canonised" statements of faith, and which granted membership to applicants primarily on the basis of common experience of salvation in Christ and of His Spirit (and its accompanying life-style) rather than on the basis of common "faith" or confession.

Another implication is that emphasis on experience leads to a relativising of the external ritual element (although in certain fringe groups it appears to be gaining in importance; this is one of the severest criticisms by Pentecostals of the "faith-formula" groups) in church life (Williams 1974:188). Thus water baptism is an important element in most Pentecostals' walk of faith, but is practised with no tinge of sacramentality, either overt or implied.¹ The laying on of hands is similarly a common practice, but is considered neither essential nor sacramental, but rather symbolical (Williams 1974:188-190). The Pentecostal world in fact raises an eyebrow at anyone who would claim that an external rite conveys spiritual benefit, and merely enquire: *Does it?* Pentecostal theology demands more than *belief* in an experience - it demands the *experience* of the experience itself. Although a sub-culture-type liturgy has emerged from time to time in which laying on of hands, prayer for the sick, liturgical dance, etc., have been practiced more for the sake of Pentecostal conformity than for concrete results (or as expression of a concrete experience in the case of liturgical dance), such groups have rarely grown prolifically, and in many cases have lost members to groups where something *does* happen, as witnessed by the testimony of those to whom it happened. It is not the form in which Christianity is offered that is critical in Pentecost, it is the *content* - the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

This attitude to formal theology and liturgical forms extends to ecclesiology. Not unlike a number of revival movements before it, Pentecost has been faced by the tension between institutionalisation and non-formal church forms. Many Pentecostals hope that the emergence of world Pentecostalism will help ward off or even reverse the trend to institutionalisation which has undoubtedly taken place in much European and American Pentecost. In the heart of all but the most hardened bureaucrats resides suspicion of the intentions of rigid structures which in any way direct or hinder the activity of the local community - and in the local community, suspicion of any who act authoritatively by virtue of office and not of the power of the Spirit (Hart 1978:249-266; McNamee 1974:356ff.; Van der Spuy 1985). Much of this suspicion is part

of the free-church heritage of the groups which supplied most input into early Pentecost, the North American evangelical denominations. But it has been radicalised by the experience of the members themselves. The rise of world Pentecost has relativised the whole concept of structures for thinking Pentecostals, however, by bringing home the fact that the best structure is the one that works in its local context. As this insight filters through to more concerned Pentecostals, it may be hoped that any tendency to institutionalisation may be directed into more pragmatic pathways, where the charismatic and kerygmatic nature of the community will be enhanced and complemented by any recognised offices and structures, and not replaced.

Closely linked to the Pentecostal evaluation of the place of theology in its ranks is the negative issue of anti-intellectualism. That early Pentecost was totally opposed to any input from the intellectuals of the day, and that this sentiment is still well-represented in the contemporary movement, cannot be denied (Iederle 1986:133ff.; Culpepper 1977:443ff.). However, where the initial problem was the totally alien nature of the intellectual establishment and its methods to Pentecostal practice, today Pentecostal scepticism concerning that establishment is better motivated and more selective. The "glorification of ignorance" of the early years is being replaced by the awareness that accumulation of data can only be a gain, and that the problem for Pentecostals now lies in the framework in which the data is interpreted. Pentecostal criticism of the presuppositions of modern intellectualism may of course also lead to the rejection of much of the so-called data as well, as being hypotheses based on questionable presuppositions rather than firmly established facts (In the author's view, Old Testament criticism of the Pentateuch and its "findings" falls into this category). There is developing a Pentecostal attitude to intellectual pursuits that is at one and the same time appreciative and kerygmatic - a thankfulness that there are those qualified to provide so much hard-earned data, and a distinctive interpretation of the data which they hope will challenge their teachers to deeper insight into the things of God. However, there will always be an element which rejects totally all academic input on the grounds either that it is "wordly knowledge", or that the Holy Spirit is the only required source of knowledge. As long as a sense of elitism pervades the ranks of those Pentecostals who have higher education, this reaction can only be expected. However, as that pragmatic attitude is shown to dominate (as it is hoped it will), it sees the accumulation of knowledge solely in terms of equipment to help fulfil the commission of Christ, in terms of calling and ministry and not of office and honour, and that has

no desire to elevate such knowledge to a primary position: to that extent it may be hoped that the reactionary elements will dwindle to eventual silence.

Before proceeding (in the next section) to qualify what is meant by "experience" in Pentecost, this section may be concluded by taking note of some of the dangers of an experienced-centred theology. McDonnell (1973:47) has pointed out that Pentecostals are, by bitter experience, all too aware of the dangers inherent in formulating theology which allows for experience. Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer (1973:24ff.) urges Pentecostals not to fall into the trap which has ensnared many New Pentecostals, where "experience" becomes the criterion of legitimate spirituality, regardless of context or content. He points out that classical Pentecostals, while affirming the content of the Bible, and proclaiming it, set very clear parameters for Pentecostal experience. In an age where *content* is apparently immaterial and the form (the experience) is everything, the Pentecostal experience could easily degenerate to meaningless sensation.

In a mass-culture where the attractiveness and acceptability of gatherings is being increasingly determined more by the entertainment offered and sensations afforded, Pentecost needs to take a very close look at what it is offering and proclaiming as legitimate experience of God. In the neo-Montanism of the fringe movements the increasing emphasis upon the *form* of experience (the sensation of the moment, liturgical dance, falling down ostensibly under the power of the Spirit, etc.) presents Pentecost with the challenge of once again stating what the legitimate characteristics are of a genuine encounter with the saving, healing, spirit-baptising Christ. The danger of lapsing into a religiosity or spirituality which emphasises experience for the sake of experience is currently too great to be ignored.

CHAPTER 5

Experience, commitment and emotion

Until fairly recently, when many large, respectable, middle-class Pentecostal congregations in the First World in particular became marked more by their avoidance of Pentecostal phenomena than by their practice, nobody who attended a Pentecostal meeting could deny that something was happening. Testimonies from the pews told of what had happened, preaching from the pulpit avowed that it could and would still happen again, and the ministry of the charismata made it happen right there! A Pentecostal meeting has always been an event, an experience, and those who attend have always expected that something will happen, and that it will happen to them. The desertion by many Pentecostals of those congregations whose atmosphere is that of a monument to what once happened, for the apparently more spiritually rewarding services conducted on the fringes of denominational Pentecost, underlines the crucial role that experience plays in Pentecost. The emphasis upon meeting-centered experience, however, with all its attendant dangers (showmanship, sensation-seeking, unbridled emotionalism, commercialisation of the gospel, to name but a few) has tended to obscure that fact that experience of God is part of the *total* Pentecostal way of life - in private, in the pursuit of a secular vocation, as well as, perhaps more obviously, in the context of the church meeting itself.

5.1 THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF EXPERIENCE IN PENTECOSTAL LIFE

To be Pentecostal is to have experienced the power of God in Jesus.¹ This statement may perhaps serve as a tentative definition of the Pentecostal believer. Experience in this sense is essential to Pentecost - without it there cannot be a true iden-

tification with the church of the Book of Acts, either in mission or in essence. That there is a God who is involved in the lives of mere humans, and who wants to act dynamically in the lives of *all* people, is a basic tenet of Pentecostal faith. That man experiences this power of God in Jesus Christ alone is a corollary. The old Pentecostal formula - Jesus Christ: Saviour, Healer, Spirit-baptiser, Coming King - attests to this. It is Christ who lies at the heart of the Pentecostal experience, although the power by which he is known is that of the Spirit.² For this reason Pentecostals are understandably sceptical of the dialogic elements in Christianity which claim to see the Holy Spirit active in non-Christian religions. Their experience of the Spirit is experience of the Spirit of Jesus, and many in the Third World avow that "The power of God in Jesus" in their own lives has meant a radical deliverance from those spirits which are active in non-Christian religions.

Pentecostal emphasis is not just upon the *essential* role of experience of God - it also stresses that any such experience must be *adequate*. "Experience" per se is insufficient evidence for acceptance into Pentecostal circles. The criteria of valid or adequate experience will be discussed below, but at this point it is merely useful to point out that Pentecostals world-wide easily recognise and accept one another, regardless of their country of origin. The secret is not in a peculiar jargon or similarity of worship styles (although these are often evident), but it is a matter of discernment - that the other person knows by experience of His power in Jesus the God whom I know. The adequacy of the experience is also tested in that it is not merely a passive experience - the initial experience of the power of God may be inner transformation, but the experience known as the baptism of the Spirit is the beginning of a life of empowerment, in which one actively *demonstrates* the power of God. In this sense Spirit baptism must be distinguished from the "second blessing" of sanctification in the Holiness Movement, and must also be viewed as inadequately comprehended when criticised under the heading of "Two-stage salvation".

5.2 PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE IS EXPERIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

Full gospel means "fully experienced gospel", and the content of those experiences is Jesus himself in His multi-dimensions

Does this holy experience result in an experience-centered theology? Hardly. The better way to label it is this: Christ-centred, experience-certified theology. Please note that we do not equate theology as used here

with "The truth". Christ Himself is the truth. To know the truth is to experience Christ, and the greater the experience the greater the knowledge (Phil 3:10-15).

(MacDonald 1976:63-64)

This unashamedly Pentecostal viewpoint puts the role of experience into proper perspective in Pentecostal Theology. In Pentecost, experience is *normal*, but it is Christ who is the dominant theme. It is only in comparing Pentecost to other theologies that the emphasis upon experience becomes necessary. It is the Pentecostal view that this is not because "experience" has been *added* in Pentecostal theology, but that it has been neglected or even lost in other Christian theologies "... Pentecostalism is not the central concern of the Pentecostal. He has become predominantly identified by an aspect of his religious experience that is not central to his Theology or message" (Gaure 1976:113). For a Pentecostal, to know Christ is to know (experience) his power, and to demonstrate it in the world as an effective witness to Christ. The contention is that it is impossible to validly encounter Jesus Christ without experiencing initially his transforming power and subsequently becoming involved in the dynamics of a relationship which involves not only faith, love and devotion, but power for service as well.

Precisely because it is Christ who is encountered, Pentecostals feel they are free from the dangers of subjectivism. The problem of the historical Jesus and the Christ of Kerygma is not an issue in Pentecost. Like the Apostle, the Spirit-filled believer "knows whom he or she has believed", and recognises easily the man of Galilee as well as the Christ of Easter in the one who has saved and commissioned him or her. Both the humanity of Jesus and the divinity of the Son of God are included in the person whom they have encountered. They have not been merely influenced by a philosophy, convinced of a doctrine, or initiated into some esoteric mystery too great for most people to comprehend. Rather, they have plainly and simply met Jesus - whether in a manner similar to Peter or to Paul makes no difference - the person that they have encountered is alive, historical, approachable, and dynamic.

The danger of an experience-centred theology lies in the fact that experience *per se* is undoubtedly subjective. Any experience will do, to gain admission to the club; from *deja vu* to "life after death" encounters with bright white lights. However, initial and ongoing experience of a real, living person is another matter entirely. It will of course contain subjective elements; we cannot deny the risen Christ the multifaceted personality that even the simplest human displays. Some experience him

primarily as Provider, others as Healer, others as Comforter. In some the encounter engenders uncontrollable joy, in others, a deep peace. The variety of facets and people's reaction to him is a topic in itself. However, in the final analysis, because a single, real, living person is whom all of us have encountered, there are undeniable similarities in the event and in the continuing dynamic of the resultant relationship. This is why the Pentecostal can so easily bridge the gap of 1900 years and identify with individual believers and the community as a whole in the Book of Acts. There are attitudes and activities which afford or hinder communication with this Jesus. There are revelations of power which are undeniably the work of his Spirit - and others, just as real in appearance, which are recognised as counterfeit by those who know him (e.g. Acts 16:16-18). And there are signs in the lifestyle of those who know him that are unmistakably evidence of his transforming power. Together with all this goes the "witness of the Spirit", the ability to know, by the Spirit which dwells in us, whether the other person is truly a disciple as well.

That the abovementioned elements in a personal relationship with Jesus are not all distinctive about Pentecost, is readily admitted. However, in practice it is the Pentecostals who have most consistently exemplified to the world in this century the type of transformation, ministry and mission which can be the believer's in the specifically Pentecostal notion of the "full gospel" - the encounter with the living Jesus in as many of the dimensions of his personality and power as possible.

Because Pentecost takes seriously the activity of the risen Lord, by his Spirit, in this world through his people, there are implicit in its experience correctives against the complacency and introversion of pietism and mysticism. There is no forced choice between faith and reason, between "inner" experience and outward manifestations. The Pentecostal world-view is wholistic in the sense that no area is denied access by God, whether in mind, spirit, or body/matter, and no area is exempt from the mission of Christ and the demonstration of power - although in the truly "charismatic" sense, any activity is "as He wills". It is a Pentecostal axiom that the activity of God will be objectively discernible. If it is claimed that God has acted, or that one has had a "spiritual" experience, the Pentecostal will demand the evidence, be it tongues, transformed character, obvious empowerment, or whatever. For this reason the notion of sacramentality is foreign to Pentecost. If Christ is bodily present, if the Spirit is truly communicated - there will be

undeniable evidence of that reality to those who look on. Pentecostals wish to avoid philosophical juggling with religious symbols, and desire both to experience and to demonstrate the dynamic power of God (Hocken 1976:32).

A concomitant of this notion of dynamic relationship with the living person, Jesus, is a thorough-going individualism that permeates Pentecost. Each individual is called to know Jesus himself, to find his mission and ministry for himself, to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling".

Pentecostals have difficulty with the notion that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given to the Church - the Church is more often in their thinking merely the logical consequence of individuals having encountered God and it has only a ministry in so far as Spirit-filled individuals in its ranks minister in the power of the Spirit of Jesus. This thinking has undoubtedly to a great extent contributed to the rise and popularity of free-lance ("lone wolf") evangelists and healers, although the consequent "personality cults" are in themselves a direct contradiction of the individualistic principle, in practice a denial of the reality of the priesthood of all believers.

For the Pentecostal, Christ is not just an object of faith: someone in whom I believe, to whom I am attached by faith. The risen Lord is the subject of the Pentecostal's experience of God. By the agency of his Spirit, it is Christ who saves, who heals, who baptises in the Spirit, will come again for his people. "It is decidedly an experience of Christ as subject and not just object that constitutes genuine 'experience' as we are using the term here" (MacDonald 1976:64). In the working of the Spirit in their own life and experience they have found that Jesus is not only alive and very well indeed, but dynamically active in the processes of human history. (In a later chapter we will consider how this perception of dynamis of the Spirit has relativised in Pentecostal lives all other powers in human history, from the demonic to the political.) Spirit-filled ambassadors of Christ can thus act in the name and authority of Christ, with the reality of the authority lying in their possession of the Spirit, and the agency realising the activity being that same Spirit.

5.3 NORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

We have stressed that "experience" for a Pentecostal is only valid as experience of Christ. Such experience is essential, and must be made evident in its consequences. However, apart from the fact that implicit in its subject, Jesus, there is a normative pattern to the experience, the question must also be asked: What

sort of experience is then viewed by Pentecostals as normative? How do they experience it (i.e. what happens to them, how do they undergo the experience, how do they experience it as it happens?), and are there not factors in an experience which make it immediately recognisable as adequate or inadequate? This sort of question can be tentatively answered by determining what Pentecostals do *not* consider to be valid or adequate experience.

A major misunderstanding in the non-Pentecostal attempts to comprehend Pentecostal phenomena has been in subsuming Pentecostal experience (with glossolalia at the forefront) under the category "ecstatic".³ This presupposition has enabled critics to find parallels with similar manifestations in Christian cults or non-Christian religions which are far removed from Pentecost. The notion of frenzy, or uninhibited emotion-mongering, of virtually orgiastic practices which this categorisation implies is in fact far from the Pentecostal reality. It may be granted in mitigation that at times the atmosphere in a Pentecostal meeting *may* be so emotion laden as to give rise to such notions - however, the vast majority of Pentecostal testimonies make it clear that there is rarely any loss of awareness or control when one experiences the working of the Spirit (with obvious exceptions in the case of dreams and visions, which, by virtue of the fact that they occur mainly in a private context, preclude categorisation as the products of frenzy, mass hysteria, etc.). The current pre-occupation with being "slain in the Spirit" and the cautious reception granted it in many Pentecostal circles underlies the basic suspicion of the "ecstatic" in the Pentecostal way of thinking. Pentecostals do not see themselves as "puppets" of God, acting in some zombi-like state under the domination of the Spirit. They are rather co-workers with God's Spirit, and are thus responsible for what they do or utter "in the Spirit".⁴ Every manifestation is subject to the critique of the congregation, to establish whether it be of God, of man, or perhaps even of more sinister origin. An undoubtedly ecstatic phenomenon would be most liable to congregational scrutiny, as it is the demonic that is generally perceived (with good reason, given the experiences of such activities, of Pentecostal missionaries in particular) to work in precisely that manner - overwhelming, possessing and dominating the human host so that it is only in total annihilation of the human faculties that the evil spirit can manifest itself "supernaturally". Normative experience is thus normally non-ecstatic, as far as Pentecostals are concerned. However, their own perception of the sovereignty of God's Spirit does not deny the possibility of the ecstatic, but demands nevertheless that it be clearly and obviously the working of God's Spirit, and not of any other.

As we have pointed out, Pentecostalism has found itself with a stigma, appended because of the emotional (at times apparently hysterical) atmosphere which often reigns in Pentecostal meetings. It would be senseless to deny that the Pentecostal experience has an emotional concomitant: the evidence is too strong in the opposite direction. In fact, part of the Pentecostal criteria of adequacy of experience is that the emotional elements be present (as discussed below). However, it must be stressed that that experience which is essential to Pentecostalism is not *merely* an emotional experience, cannot be reduced to a mere product of an emotional moment, and cannot be induced by stirring up emotional fervour (emotionalism). Pentecostals have developed very simple discernments to deal with emotion-induced experience by noting what the longer-term effect of such experiences is in the lives of the subjects. Of course more than one Pentecostal minister has attempted to fulfil the Pentecostal criterion for a service ("something must happen") by making it *appear* to happen by increasing the emotional component (by musical manipulation, histrionics, etc.) at his meetings. Insofar as Pentecost has in many areas become a liturgical phenomenon rather than a spiritual lifestyle, this emotion-mongering has often shown itself to be a crowd gatherer. The neglect of the charismatic element by many "respectable" Pentecostal churches has also unfortunately allowed the counterfeit to thrive by virtue of the absence of the genuine.

Closely allied to the problem of emotionalism is that of sensationalism, showmanship, and spiritual entertainment. The "lone ranger" evangelists and healers, aided by the Pentecostal grass-roots assumption that the ultimate in gatherings is the convention or conference (the origin of this assumption lies in nostalgia for "The old camp meeting" of revivalist days) have allowed these elements to flourish. Those groups or events that advertise the most fantastic miracles, that present the most "charismatic" personalities, and that offer the finest in "gospel" artistes - these can be assured of a good crowd. It is *not* the argument of a more conservative and critical Pentecostal theology that God does not perform often spectacular miracles; nor that ministers of the gospel should not possess personable and persuasive characteristics that are not particular charisms of the Spirit; nor that songs and music are illegitimate attractions to the proclamation of the gospel. The problem for Pentecost lies in the fact that very often these elements gain an impetus of their own, and the stated aim may often be missed, or only partially achieved, when it is no longer the power of God that is at work in the changing of human lives, but the techniques and capabilities of men. Pentecostal experience of Jesus Christ in his many dimensions is more than, and achieves far more lasting results than, sensation, showmanship, and

"godly" entertainment. The end does not justify the means, if the means themselves replace or exclude that working of the Spirit which glorifies God and humbles the human person. Writing about an invitation in 1907 to conduct a Pentecostal revival among some very enthusiastic Christians, Frank Bartleman said:

They had to learn that 'Pentecost' meant the dying out of the self-life, carnal ambition, pride, etc, etc. It meant for them to enter into the 'fellowship of His sufferings', not simply to have a popular, good time ... A real Christian means a martyr, unavoidably, in one way or another. Few people are willing to pay the price to become a real Christian

(Bartleman [1925] 1980:99)

As long as this perspective on Pentecost and Christian commitment is upheld, the very pragmatic Pentecostal community will go to any length, using every means to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ: however, it will maintain along the way (and seek validation in the results) that in reality the humanly-contributed component is very small - if the work is to succeed, it must be overwhelmingly of God's Spirit. The result has been an apparently ambivalent attitude to the "goings-on" of the free-lance evangelists and healers - on the one hand, a critical attitude towards some of the more blatantly "showy" elements, while on the other provision of the community which supports these men, and which largely absorbs and disciplines the converts. It is true that the criticism stems largely from clergy and officials, while the grass-roots provide the more positive side; it is also true that official reactions have not always been untouched by professional jealousy and similar very human attributes. After all, as Bartleman ([1925] 1980:44ff.) says; "We have this treasure in earthen vessels", in comment on the very human problems which beset the early Pentecostal community. But in the final analysis, what makes the ministry of any person or group distinctively Pentecostal is not the emotional content, the sensational element, the variety of entertainment on show - it will always and only be the demonstration of the "power of God in Jesus"; in conversions, healings, deliverances and manifestations that are unquestionably the result of the "dunamis", the power of God's spirit, active in human persons.

This perhaps allows the identification of that which is critical to Pentecostal experience - it will be a manifestation of the "dunamis" of God. To be normatively Pentecostal, the experience must have immediate evidence and lasting results which testify to the working of spiritual power. "Power" must not be (although it often has been) misconstrued as sweat and volume in the pulpit or

hysteria in the pews. It may be active in silence or in pandemonium - but the criteria is: can it be seen to be at work? And does the perceived activity lead to those transformations which show that it is truly the power of God that is manifested? When other criteria are employed, the criticisms of men such as George E. Gardiner, are not easily gainsayed:

The greatest tragedy arising from the modern-tongues movement is the missing of the true spirit-filled life. Remember the dog in the ancient fable who, while crossing a bridge with a bone in his mouth, saw his reflection in the water below? The bone he saw in the reflection looked so much better than the one in his mouth, that he dropped the substance for the shadow, and went hungry. Multitudes of hungry people are like that dog today. They have dropped, ignored or by-passed the satisfying reality of Ephesians 5:18, for a shadow of exciting experience built around ecstatic speech. The Corinthian catastrophe is being repeated.

(Gardiner 1974:61-63)

Francis Schaeffer (1973:24-27) echoes these sentiments when criticising the "New Pentecostalism" for its one-sided emphasis on experience without Biblical norms.

Where there is a "Pentecost" that operates according to the norms which Gardiner rather arbitrarily attributes to "the tongues movement" (Pentecost) as a whole, it lays itself wide open to precisely this sort of criticism. Pentecost is not merely "experience"; and if it considers that experience of the "power of God in Jesus" is essential, then it must not seek its essence in the experience alone, but in what the encounter with God's power achieves. In other words, truly Pentecostal experience must be adequate experience. If it is, there are criteria by means of which the validity of the experience can be tested.

5.4 CRITERIA OF VALID PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE

5.4.1 To be Pentecostal presupposes that one is *evangelical*, in the sense that there has been an experience of personal salvation, in which the objective work of the incarnate Christ in his ministry on this earth is subjectively appropriate by faith, and one becomes a believer (Williams 1972:2-4, 15). Although in neo-Pentecostal or charismatic circles it appears to have become possible to be a believer without a crisis experience of salvation, in classical Pentecost it is still impossible to expect a

person to receive the baptism of the Spirit or to manifest charismata without them knowing that they have consciously turned from darkness to light and personally accepted the salvation of God in Jesus Christ. In this experience and its proclamation the Pentecostal and the evangelical are on common ground - for which reason it seems doubly perplexing to Pentecostals that it is precisely their evangelical brothers who have most persistently rejected the possibilities of charismatic manifestations today.

Pentecostal believers know they are "a new creation", that they have been "born again", "translated from darkness to light", were "dead" and are now "alive", were "once blind and now can see".⁵ They can point out a day and an hour in which it happened. Since traditionally the Pentecostal convert in the First World has come from the lower strata of society, the conversion process has been a memorable change in lifestyle. In the Third World the convert's deliverance from fear and superstition has been equally incontrovertible. And surprisingly enough, even the complacent and unexcitable bourgeois, for all that his or her life was scarcely the epitome of sinful excesses, is able to testify to a crisis moment when "Jesus saved me", memorable in the sensation, and in the resultant change in lifestyle and values.

The pattern in the Book of Acts, so important an indicator in Pentecostal thought, is clearly that of Spirit baptism subsequent to a personal decision to become a committed disciple of Christ. The issue of "subsequence", exegetically untenable as it apparently is to non-Pentecostals, arises from this perception. In neither Acts nor in most of twentieth century Pentecost has this Spirit baptism been seen as a second stage in salvation. It was and is an endowment with the power for service. Salvation is complete in a moment, in the forgiveness of sin and the new birth into a new life - but the power of the Spirit is essential to proclaim effectively this new life to those who are "yet dead in their sins". It is inconceivable in Pentecostal thought that such power could be bestowed upon the unregenerate, or even that the unregenerate could wish for such endowment.

The experience of salvation is also not reducible to an inclination for religious pursuits, or to a godly home environment, or to engagement in ecclesiastical activity, or to anything other than Jesus apparently intended - a new birth, a crisis migration from one sphere of existence (in sin) to another (in Christ, in the Spirit, if Pauline terms may be employed). Neither can this new life be sacramentally bestowed, by child baptism or by virtue of a covenant relationship between one's parents and God, into which one had the good luck to be born. A Pentecostal believer is a born-again believer of his or her own choice. They know where they came from and whither they are going. Because they are aware

of the darkness of their past and the brightness of their present and future, they are people with a mission to others still in darkness. And the power to accomplish this mission is what the baptism of the Spirit is all about. In this sense Acts 1:8 is crucial to Pentecost: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me ..."

In Pentecost then, experience of the "power of God in Jesus" is only valid when it issues initially in a transformed life, a new creation, a consciously born-again believer. The person who claims to have had a "spiritual" experience and who cannot testify to the transforming power of God in Jesus the Saviour in his or her life will leave his or her Pentecostal audience stone cold.

5.4.2 Pentecostal experience of God is considered valid when it is undoubtedly *charismatic*. This term has technically been meant to indicate the free working of grace of God, but in modern theology has taken on various connotations (Rahner & Vorgrimler 1981:64; Richardson & Bowden 1982:91). In contemporary Pentecost it denotes churches, groups or individuals who believe in the observable manifestation of the Spirit of God, through people at a given time, particularly in the form of tongues, prophecy, healing, etc. as outlined in I Cor 12, 13 and 14. As the debate continues concerning the working of the Holy Spirit and his gifts, it is coming to be used more specifically, (in particular opposition to those notions of "charismatic" that are broad enough to include human abilities and activities, forces in history, secular power fluctuations, etc.) to denote that event or experience which is undeniably the personal intervention of a personal God in the routine of human proceedings, religious or secular, by an act of his will, by means of his Spirit, in the Name and for the cause of Jesus Christ. Pentecostals have always understood "charism" in this sense anyway (Horton 1949:47, 63-66, 172-174), but many are now coming to consciously employ the term with this very specific meaning for one or both of two reasons: on the one hand in the face of the increasing tendency to use the term in relation to all kinds of development or phenomena in the church or in history that may be perceived to further a particular notion of what is "good" or "Christian"⁶; and on the other hand, as a necessary emphasis in those Pentecostal circles where very little or nothing "charismatic" has happened (sometimes) for decades, and is even less expected by these congregations.

In the former instance, this specific meaning of "charismatic" as used in contemporary Pentecost would be expounded in the context of, for instance, current concern for the "prophetic" ministry of the Church. Against the well-represented trend which interprets this ministry as the church (denominational or ecumenical) addressing the state or a regime on social ethical issues, Pente-

costal theology would respond that prophecy is a charismatic event; and that it is a person who prophesies as the Spirit of God "comes upon" him, not a Church; and that prophecy is a very clear "thus saith the Lord" and not the product of theological or ethical reflection and secular social analysis.⁷ Prophecy as a charismatic event occurs when an individual is apprehended by the Spirit of God, given a revelation from a personal God in personal terms, which he or she then communicates to a specific audience. Prophets thus dare to speak in the name of God only because beyond any doubt, at a given time and place God spoke to them personally.

In the context of confrontation with Pentecostal communities that no longer exhibit manifestations of the Spirit, "charismatic" is used to denote ministry from pulpit and pew that is not merely programmed or habitual religion, but that demonstrates the personal involvement of God with his people in community. A charismatic emphasis here would stress that people's lives can be radically transformed in a moment, that instantaneous healings do take place, that God wishes to address the people directly via the charismatic gifts of utterance, and that human situations can be transformed (e.g. marriages) by a powerful encounter with God. In many instances this charismatic emphasis will point out that programmed activities such as diligent preaching, prayer for the sick (without expectation of immediate answer!), catechism in basic Christianity, and involved counselling sessions, as popular and (sometimes) effective as they may be, are not in themselves charismatic. While scarcely to be deplored, when they totally replace the dynamic intervention of the Spirit in the community, they deny the Pentecostal character of the group. (In fact, much apparent antipathy toward programmes and structures in Pentecost has not been aimed at these elements *per se*, but has pointed out that they are not in themselves sufficient to achieve what God's Spirit can achieve and must ever be allowed to achieve.)

What Pentecostals are saying when they insist that experience of God be charismatic is this: If God is real, and by the power of his Spirit is actively promoting the Kingdom of Christ on earth, then his activity will be dynamic and observable, in its results and methods peculiarly divine, and most obviously not duplicable by any human means. Counterfeits may be expected and attempted - but an encounter with God that is charismatic will be undeniably "a touch of the power of God". A Pentecostal life is thus one that has been initially and is being continually influenced, directed and transformed by experience of God that is marked by power, by the humanly incomprehensible moving of God's Spirit, and by the unduplicable activity of the divine. And precisely because this is so, a theology which attempts in contemporary theological terms to comprehend and adequately describe Pentecost

is fettered by a limitation in its parameters. In a word it becomes impossible to "do" Pentecostal Theology without being Pentecostal - and even then "eye has not seen and ear has not heard", as human rationality lacks the categories to adequately define the activities of the Spirit.

5.4.3 Valid Pentecostal experience produces observable results, whether it be tongues, deliverance from alcohol or drugs, healing of the body, transformed marriages, or other manifestations that cannot easily be reduced to purely psychological or secular terms.⁸ However, in another area altogether, a critical result is sought to validate the experience as Pentecostal. This result is in the area of *commitment*. It is axiomatic in Pentecost that the life which is filled and directed by the Spirit of Christ will be a life which is committed to the person of Jesus himself. Any experience, spiritual, religious or otherwise, which does not highlight the person of Jesus and intensify personal commitment to him, can not be adequate or acceptable as Pentecostal. "Pre-eminently, there is the effect of a heightened sense of the reality of Jesus in and over one's life" (MacDonald 1976:66). Again, unity and identity among Christians cannot be based merely on the observation of certain phenomena within individuals or groups:

... we have attempted unification on the assumption of a common experience. A common experience is exactly the sort of thing that permits identity of phenomena to hide differences of commitment. It is no new observation that persons not even Christian ... have had experiences which are similar to 'speaking in other tongues ...'. Additionally, virtually all religious movements have had 'prophets' who professed to give divine oracles. So the phenomena of Pentecostalism cannot unify, or for that matter, even identify.

(Gause 1976:113)

Pentecostals will remain (particularly in view of the proliferation of "charismatic gifts" today) sceptical about testimonies of "experience" where the life of the witness is not eloquent of a thorough-going commitment to Christ - to the extent that some whose life-style denies such commitment have been at times forbidden to "minister the gifts" in Pentecostal churches. The question of life-style will be discussed later - at this point it must be emphasised that a person is not Pentecostal by virtue merely of "experience", but by virtue of experience which leads to a deeper commitment to the person of Jesus. It is not for Pentecost, denominational or otherwise, for which they feel they have been ridiculed and persecuted for years: it is for the name

and sake of Jesus. The focus of their life is not the Spirit, or tongues, or miracles - but Jesus himself. And when we come to the question of lifestyle, it is not commitment to a set of culturally-conditioned values that is at issue - but of what life-style is adequate for the individual who is thoroughly committed to Him.

5.4.4 Pentecostal *lifestyle* has been patterned in the Holiness mould in which the movement was cast at its beginnings in North America. In its bare essentials this pattern demands that the individual keep the world and its values and attractions at a safe distance. Where the sense of mission has become dulled, the emphasis upon this form of lifestyle has tended to be legalistic, and the end result has often been a "holy huddle" of world-avoiding Christians - in effect, a sub-culture. Pentecostals are of course not the only group in Christian history to suffer from this form of spiritual affliction, where the militant Christian, having abandoned the offensive, becomes a fearful Christian "defending against sin" to the last.

Testimonies of Christians of all ages who have experienced a dramatic conversion from "darkness to light", whether they be Anabaptists in the reformation era, Methodists in the days of the Wesleyan revivals, early Pentecostals, or recent Third World converts, reveal that the conversion has been a tremendous release from a system and values which were a very real form of bondage to them. In the light of the power and purity of their Saviour, their attitude towards the world had undergone a radical change - from conformity to its values they had been transformed by becoming one with Christ. The immediate result was a hostility and aversion to everything that represented the values of that world, or that reflected the "emptiness" they had known there, or which appeared to be a snare to bring them into its slavery again. For this reason the Christian could not be profligate in either material or sensual terms; the entertainments and pleasures of the world held no appeal, reflecting as they did the emptiness of men without God; and the cultivation of any habit outside of spiritual discipline (e.g. use of tobacco and alcoholic beverage) testified to them of slavery to another than Christ.

Where this perspective upon separation from the world has been maintained in genuinely transformed lives, the spectre of legalism has been avoided. However, as successive generations have taken over (or had forced upon them!) the outward signs of this alienation from the world, without re-interpreting in terms

of their own generation and commitment to Christ what holy living should look like, a meaningless conformity to a system of often incomprehensible values has led to the development of a sub-culture which has nothing of Christ to say to the world.

In the specifically Pentecostal context, the emphasis upon the in-dwelling of the body by the Spirit of Christ has added another dimension to the approach to holiness. Ray Hughes, objecting to the apparently uninhibited lifestyle of many "charismatics", states how both emphases are important for Pentecostals:

Traditional Pentecostals believe that holiness is Christlikeness and that holiness is of the heart. They also believe that the transformation will produce a life of nonconformity to the world, which is translated into everyday living. It is true that we must not confuse holiness with cultural mannerisms but at the same time, Christ must be reflected in our lives, and men must know that we have been with Jesus when they behold our design of living.

The baptism in the Spirit is not merely a matter of correct conceptual thinking, but this experience also has tremendous implications for one's lifestyle. It is not simply a matter of holding to certain standards because they are traditional, but it is a matter of obeying them because they are scripturally true and because it is the truth that makes the difference in life.

(Hughes 1976:179)

Both transformation and Spirit baptism have implications for one's lifestyle. Because the nature of Christ, the urgings of the Spirit, and the ethic of Scripture are in unity, the Pentecostal perceives the charismatic, Christlike life to be scriptural as well, and therefore to have well-defined parameters. Since human nature, even in regenerate man, is often at odds with these parameters it takes discipline (the putting-down of "the flesh") to conform to such a lifestyle. This discipline can be interpreted as legalism when it is directionless - however, when its goal is seen as (i) testimony to the transforming power of Christ; (ii) conformity to the reality of the Spirit within; and (iii) authentication of the reality of the message Christians are called to preach; then it is neither legalistic, meaningless, nor directionless. It is in reality both practical and pragmatic.

A perspective upon lifestyle which has often been neglected when Pentecost is under consideration is precisely that which was most prominent in early Pentecost - freedom or liberty. The transformed Christian, the Spirit-filled believer, partakes of a radical freedom which is often not adequately articulated. Non-conformity with the world takes discipline in some of its details, but finds its essence in the liberating power of God. The political implications of this radical freedom have not always received adequate attention in Pentecost, and we will attempt to deal with them in a later chapter. However, this freedom has been exemplified in the life of Jesus, and the lives of the martyrs. It is perceived in, on the one hand, liberation from the demands and norms of the world; and on the other, in the enjoyment of benefits which do not owe their origin to the world. Pentecostal believers, who experience continually in and around them the power of God, are able to look upon the frantic pursuit of conformity by worldly people and to see in it the slavery that it really is. At the same time, they are able to partake of spiritual benefits which owe nothing to the world. That this freedom is a reality means that the believer is able to exist in the world-system without being a part of it; to pursue a vocation in secular terms without being a slave of "the system". Being "free indeed", they are free to participate or to withdraw, the criterion being the accomplishment of their mission. This is the freedom Jesus exemplified - free from the demands of Rome, equally free to pay tax to the Emperor. In the highly-politicised situations of the Third World, and in the complacency of the First, the realisation of this liberty by Pentecostal believers has the potential of social dynamite in its implications, and may well be found to be achieving a fair proportion of that potential already (Hollenweger 1974).

Pentecost and a particular lifestyle are thus corollaries. One cannot be liberated, transformed and empowered and undergo such a change in values that everyday life will not be affected. How this effect will be realised in day to day terms will be determined to a great extent by the social milieu in which the believer lives. However, as there are certain constants in human-kind's rebellion against God, so there will be certain constants in the Pentecostal's rejection, wherever he or she may live, of that rebellion. It will be by means of this attitude to the world that Pentecostals will continually learn to recognise one another: and in its absence, to take lightly the claim of those who wish to be known as Spirit-filled.

5.4.5 Commitment to Jesus and commitment to a life-style exemplary of the freedom found in Him have as concomitant *commitment to the mission of Jesus*. Persons who claim to have had experience of God will be judged by Pentecostals not only on

their profession of love for Christ, nor their life-style, but also on their commitment to the *cause* of Christ. A valid Pentecostal experience results in a commissioned believer. In fact, the experience of Spirit baptism is precisely for this purpose, although it has very welcome "side-effects" in the area of devotions, public worship, and personality - yet even these may be interpreted in terms of equipment for accomplishing the commission of Jesus.

The fact that Pentecostal groups continue to grow dramatically, owes much no doubt to socio-economic conditions, to the neglect of the kerygmatic in much of institutionalised Christianity (or its pre-occupation with politics), to any number of profane conditions - yet at heart its dynamic lies in the commitment of the grass-roots membership to the proclamation of the gospel. Those who can go, go. Those who can speak, speak. Those who can support, do so. And the power which convicts and transforms the sinner is the power of the Spirit, whether by means of the preaching of electronic evangelists like Swaggart and Roberts, or by means of the quiet testimony of a believer in the office, school or factory. Pentecost is not unique in such activity by believers - but is unique in the dynamic which makes it the fastest-growing religious phenomenon on this planet today. Undeniable transformation, exemplary life-style, and often enthusiastic and eloquent witnessing ability, combine in the Pentecostal believer to convince those around him of the validity of his experience and his message.

There are few Pentecostal activities which are not aimed at the conversion of sinners, directly or indirectly. In South Africa the third-generation complacency which saw the diversion of effort into the erection of vast edifices, into more "respectable" levels of theological training and even liturgies, and other related pursuits, is now giving way to a more mission-centred emphasis. Any gathering, be it Sunday worship, mid-week prayer-meeting, youth-meeting, Bible study groups - all are open for believers to bring their friends, family and acquaintances so that they may be "exposed to the gospel". Pentecostal Christians at work or school are aware from day to day of their distinctiveness, and the commission thus entrusted to them. A Pentecostal pastor inducted into a local congregation generally has but one vision - to see it grow, both in spiritual depth and in numbers. The Church-growth movement in evangelicalism has stimulated similar visions in these more moderate Christian circles - but no amount of teaching and programming can replace the dynamic inherent in the Pentecostal experience, and Pentecostal growth continues to outstrip that of any other group (McClung 1985:5-18, 131).

Pentecost as a movement has often been categorised as a "tongues-cult" or "tongues-movement", as though the primary emphasis is to get believers speaking in tongues. Where this has been the actual situation the label must be allowed to stick. Unhappily, in those groups who have become introverted and institutionalised, speaking in tongues has become limited to a statistical necessity for census purposes - How many baptised in water? How many baptised in the Spirit? etc. However, Pentecost has fortunately been marked above all by an extrovert character, and has not whispered its message. This has been first and foremost "Jesus saves, heals and delivers" whether blazoned in neon lights atop the building, or bannered across tents or stadia, or shouted from pulpits or pews; and *not* "Speak in tongues"!

To summarise these three sections on commitment: in Pentecostal thought and practice (and why shouldn't we use the term "theology" to comprehend them both?) a major criterion of experience will be its product in the area of commitment. No matter what claims are made concerning spiritual experience, be it ecstatic or otherwise; no matter how many people are impressed by it - it cannot be concluded to be validly Pentecostal experience if it does not lead to commitment - to Jesus as a real, living person; to a lifestyle which is exemplary of the work of Christ, the nature of Christ, and the in-dwelling Spirit of Christ; and to the ongoing mission of Christ in the power of his Spirit.

This means that excluded are: hypnotism, occultism, mysticism (particularly in the extrovert mission-consciousness of Pentecost), mass hysteria and emotionalism, brain-washing, indoctrination, and many other similar phenomena which have an experiential aspect.

Experience is critical to Pentecost - but not just any experience will do. Outside of Pentecostal experience Pentecostal theology will probably never be adequately understood or defined - however, only if this experience bears the marks of a genuine experience of the Spirit of Jesus can it be held to be Pentecostal at all.

5.4.6 This final section examines the role of *emotion* in Pentecostal thought and practice. Next to tongues, this has no doubt been the most controversial aspect of Pentecost. Even in the many debates within Pentecost itself concerning liturgical practice, the bone of contention has often been emotional content and expression, rather than the free working of the Spirit (Van der Spuy 1985:227-235). From without, emotional excess and Pentecostalism have often been synonymous, even congregations which last experienced any outburst of emotion twenty years ago being

stigmatised today as "daardie mal Apostolies" ("Those mad Apostolics")! For the purpose of this study, however, the question, regardless of how emotional the issue may have been, is whether Pentecostal experience and emotional expression are indispensably connected.

One can hardly conclude a discussion on the important place of experience in classical Pentecostalism without alluding to the possibility of overemphasis on experience in the form of emotionalism. By emotionalism I do not mean the experiencing of strong emotions The real test of whether we have emotionalism is not the degree or intensity of emotions as measured by a psychometer. Rather emotionalism consists of the seeking and stimulation of emotions as ends in themselves, and not as the by-products of real experience in truth and in God. Emotionalism in this pejorative sense is of the flesh, and we do not claim that there have not been those among us who were culpable of mistaking effects for causes in this manner. However, we could assert unequivocally that any genuine experience with the living God will leave an emotional wake in man's psyche. This is not emotionalism but man's being humanised again by the liberating Spirit of God.

(MacDonald 1976:64-65)

MacDonald is here admitting that emotionalism in this sense has been evident in Pentecost here and there and from time to time, while at the same time stating that any experience of God that is truly of God will not leave a person emotionally untouched.

Richard Quebedeaux (1976:150-152) compares the general pattern of classical Pentecostal worship with that adopted by the Neo-Pentecostals, and shows that there has been a move from the "spirit of confusion" (associated with classical Pentecost) to "the quiet Spirit". He associates this move with the difference in class background between early Pentecostals and modern non-Pentecostals, and there is much in what he says. That liturgical forms appropriate to the constituents of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Azusa street have been canonised into Pentecostal tradition cannot be denied - and that middle-class Americans or South Africans who make an issue of those forms are not on the firmest of ground is equally clear. However, the Pentecostal contention is that a genuine encounter with the infinite God will bring about an emotional reaction in the lives of mere finite humans: and to date Pentecostals have generally had the honesty to permit that emotional content of the experience to come to expression in its liturgies and in private devotions. It is only when the

extremely formal and often overtly emotion-hostile liturgies of many non-Pentecostal denominations are made the yardstick that most Pentecostal churches stand condemned as being emotionally beyond the pale. However, when the nature of Pentecostal experience is taken into consideration, it becomes obvious that a formal liturgy and non-emotional form can in no wise accommodate the reality of the involvement of the whole person with God.

Emotional expression in Pentecost varies from assembly to assembly and from individual to individual. Temperament and everyday environment (with its spiritual encouragements or frustrations) often play a greater role in individual expression than do, for instance, culture and class. Emotional expression may in itself play a cathartic role; however, it runs into danger of being classed emotionalism when naked emotion itself, apart from "the touch of the power of God", is expected to play this role. On the other hand, canonisation of "the quiet Spirit" may also do less than justice to the intensity of the encounter with God, which may often conform to the Biblical pattern, found in both Testaments, of the overwhelming presence of God before which the holiest of persons cannot stand, and sinners cry out in terror (Quebedeaux 1976:151). The Pentecostal emphasis is not upon emotion *per se* - but upon the reality of men, filled with the Spirit of God, entering in liturgy and devotions the majestic presence of God, and doing the works of God while experiencing the benefits of God. If such a reality of experience exists - and Pentecostals claim that this is *the* reality of Christianity itself - then it can scarcely be conceived of without concomitant emotional manifestations.

In this context, the rapid growth of Pentecost may have been partially advanced by not only the freedom of liturgical forms, but by the spontaneity of emotional expression as well. Many a convert has testified to the relief of escape from the "cold formality" of many of the historical denominations and indeed, it is difficult to imagine warmth and enthusiasm, two elements which even its most hostile critics must attribute to Pentecost, without emotional expression.

Pentecostal experience, as experience of "the power of God in Jesus", is experience which is thus well defined. To be recognisably (and Pentecostals will insist, scripturally) Pentecostal it will have to meet the criteria outlined above. Its very basis is in the work of salvation, in individual lives, appropriated by faith in Jesus Christ. In the lives of those who are saved, experience which is charismatic; which intensifies commitment to the person of Jesus, to a lifestyle exemplary of His nature, and to His mission; and which is not without some emotional content - such experience may well be termed "Pentecostal". These elements,

however, are not of themselves absolute - for Pentecostal experience remains experience in the Spirit, which, like the wind, blows whence and whither he wishes. By experience and from Scripture one can discern various constants, as we have attempted to do above. Yet in the final event it is the Spirit himself who grants the people of God the ability to recognise in the lives of others the working of God (cf. Acts 10). Pentecostal theology may thus attempt to pinpoint criteria for doctrine and experience - but in the long run it will be that discernment which is given the community of Spirit-filled believers at large which will approve or disprove the matter. In allowing for this discernment, Pentecostal Theology may remain Pentecostal.

5.5 THE NORMS OF PENTECOST, AS OPPOSED TO ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT

Although Pentecost has grown in a mainly Protestant environment and spirit, it must be acknowledged that it is not totally comprehensible or assimilable under that label. We have already shown that the application of North American evangelical theological parameters to Pentecost results in tensions and absurdities. In South Africa the same claim may be made for the application of reformed theological parameters to Pentecost.⁹

On the other hand, honest Pentecostals and Roman Catholics alike recognise certain common ground in their religious forms at least - Pentecostals viewing the laying on of hands by the bishop for the bestowal of the Spirit as a particularly Pentecostal practice in its roots - and as genuinely Pentecostal today if the Spirit is truly received! However, the institutional and sacramental framework of Roman Catholicism is largely alien to Pentecost, and Pentecostalism cannot by any stretch of the imagination be classed as Roman Catholic. It is necessary thus for us to consider Pentecost apart from either of the two great religious streams of the Christian West, and to compare its norms to those of the other two.

If Roman Catholicism may be viewed as that religious grouping in which institution (as guardian of Word and Spirit) and sacrament (by which the benefits of salvation are mediated) are primary facets,¹⁰ then the major emphases of that group stand in strong contrast to Pentecost. The majority of Pentecostals would see the church as an effect rather than a cause, and would view sacramentality as impersonal magic in comparison to the working of a personal God, freely by his Spirit. Yet it would be far too simplistic to label Catholics as "people of the Church" while Pentecostals are "people of the Spirit", the nuances and emphases in both being too qualifying in both cases.

Protestantism has generally found its heart in the four *solae* - Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone. The four emphases were developed in conscious reaction to the Roman Catholic doctrine and practice of the day, and later applied in reaction to the radical reformers and their followers. What Rome and Protestantism soon had in common, however, was "state" churches, as opposed to the "believers' churches" of the radical reformation. The institutionalisation of Protestantism has thus tended to vitiate the dynamic of the four *solae*, which qualification makes them today, with all their implications, basically too limited to apply as Pentecostal norms. This is not to deny that the average Pentecostal would gladly affirm all four - but the historical development of the groups who claim them show their insufficiency for Pentecost.

It may be argued that Pentecost finds its historical roots (as far as European Church history is concerned) in the radical reformation. This would be so because the radical reformers pursued the same aim as the Pentecostals have - a return to the Spirit and power of the original Christian community of the Lukan account in Acts - as opposed to mere reformation of structures, manners and doctrines. In this sense Pentecost is as revolutionary as the radical reformation (cf. Turner 1985:18).

If we compare Pentecost with the other two streams, the following may be noticed:

1. As compared to Roman Catholicism, institution and office are largely played down, with preference being given to community and ministry (read "charism", if technically more precise). Institutional links do not automatically make a community a "church", neither does ordination or certification automatically confer ministry. Office arises in Pentecost as recognition of ministry (although by institutionalisation the rise of professional clergy in places blurs this fact from time to time), and a community is truly church when its constituent members acknowledge their discipleship of Jesus and commitment to his mission *in* and *out* of its gatherings. Pentecostal sacramentology tends to be Zwinglian with regard to the Lord's supper, and Anabaptist in its baptismal practice. Apart from those few groups who accept baptismal regeneration, it bears no relation whatever to Catholic thought on the sacraments.
2. As compared to the Protestant emphasis on *orthodoxy* (correctness in doctrine and confession as derived from Scripture), Pentecost would stress *orthopraxy*. This is not to deny that doctrine founded on the Word is essential, but to push the matter a stage further and to seek validation of

doctrinal truth in dynamic activity in the Spirit. In liturgical context this is expressed by the time and emphasis granted charismatic ministry from the pews; and by the nature of preaching which by and large aims not so much to communicate a doctrinal truth but to minister to the needs of the congregation - spiritual, physical, social and psychological.

3. If Pentecost attempts to avoid deification of the church or the Scriptures (and their derivatives), it does acknowledge the deity of God, as made evident in the reality of the Spirit's activity. The Pentecostal *aim* is thus less likely to be conformity to tradition of either institution or confession - therefore less likely to be defensive and more likely to be militant ("offensive" is a term a Pentecostal apologist will use only with care!). There are defensive elements in Pentecostal theology - aimed mainly at preserving the dynamic of the group, particularly in keeping the liturgy open and in asserting the charismatic nature of Spirit baptism. However, the Pentecostal community is generally a successfully kerygmatic community in that it has few forms and traditions to perpetuate, and thus allows God rather than ecclesiastical or doctrinal tradition to determine its thrust and emphasis in a given context.
4. Finally, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism can both be authentically extended into the future by virtue of their own momentum, and remain truly Roman Catholic and Protestant within their own parameters while so doing. However, the cardinal role of experience in Pentecost means that there can be no authentically Pentecostal group where men and women are not experiencing the "touch of the power of God". It is neither doctrine, tradition, nor ideology, which makes Pentecost what it is. It is the presence of God in and among his people in a manner which is readily evident to participator and bystander alike.

CHAPTER 6

Pentecostal community

The diversity of the Pentecostal movement in its world-wide context, together with its almost universal grass-roots aversion to formal liturgies and restrictive structures, makes it extremely difficult to present as representative of Pentecost any detailed statement on church forms and ministry practises (Hollenweger 1977:424-429). Yet underlying models of church, of liturgy, and of ministry can be identified which would probably be subscribed to by the large majority of Pentecostals, and in this section it is these models which an attempt will be made to outline in the search for that which is distinctive about Pentecost.

6.1 THE PENTECOSTAL MODEL OF THE CHURCH

Pentecostal church structures run the gamut from ultra-congregationalist to groups that are so centralised as to be positively episcopal in their functioning. The form adopted has at times been determined by reaction to the established denominations operating in the same country (Hollenweger 1977:426). In other cases it has been an expression of the particular values of the local milieu, such as the centrally organised congregationalism of the Assemblies of God in America, which provides the individual freedoms so clear to the heirs of the Republic, while catering at the same time for the gregarious disposition and love of wider community inherent in those same people. Recent developments in the larger Western denominations, where the local pastors and their grass-roots following have been urging a loosening of highly centralised bonds, may have a number of contributing factors. Perhaps the most likely are (i) the realisation that an ecclesiastical bureaucracy can very easily develop an

inertia which hinders effective witness in the local context, and (ii) the example set by the highly successful independent ministries (such as the word-faith movement) where local ministries are seen to operate free of restrictive denominational bonds in liturgy, theology and (perhaps most important!) financial management. The British, Australian and South African churches are particular examples of this trend, while the large North American denominations have not been exempt.¹

The Third World Pentecostal churches, which tend to be newer than their First World counterparts, have been able in general to adopt structures which best enable them to accomplish their mission in their societies (Glazier 1980). The stirrings noted above may well be the First World churches' realisation that where the structure has become an end in itself a similar freedom has been abdicated and needs to be regained. If this is so, then in both First and Third Worlds it may be claimed that Pentecostals imply a particular model of the church, and that the structure of the institutional or organisational church must reflect that model and allow its potential to be fully realised.

This model may be described as: The church is the community of those who are saved; it is a group of people who are individually empowered by the Holy Spirit for service within the community and in external witness; and it is a commissioned community (Hollenweger 1977:424; Hattingh 1986:2-8). Since Pentecostals are not the only Christians who expect the church to be a believers' church, and a kerygmatic community, it is perhaps only in the second emphasis that this Pentecostal model is unique. However, this emphasis so qualifies the other two, that it is in all three together that a peculiarly Pentecostal notion of church can be discovered. It may be comprehended, as it was for the Radical Reformation, in a desire to return to the nature and task of "church" exemplified by the history of the New Testament community and the doctrine of the apostles.

Where this model is upheld, the question "where is the church?" may be answered "where there are believers". This means of course that both the individual and the local community receive special emphasis, as opposed to the church collective or organisational.² Christ reigns over the church, and is known to be present by virtue of the manifestation of his Spirit. The church is thus charismatic in nature, revelation and ministry, and can be termed a pneumatological theocracy (Hattingh 1986:5). Pentecostal ideology has a phenomenological element which demands that if Christ reigns in his church by his Spirit, that this be obvious to believer and unbeliever alike (cf. I Cor 14:24-25), i.e. revelation is not presupposed in, for example, preaching or teaching, but is expected in the manifestation of the power of God. Conse-

quently, if it is asked "why does a believer attend church services?" or "what is the purpose of gathering together?" the Pentecostal answer is distinctive. Simplistically stated, where the Roman Catholic might answer "to receive sacramentally mediated grace, and to worship", and the Protestant might say "to gather around word and sacrament, and to worship", the Pentecostal would say "to encounter the power of God in Jesus, and to worship", where "encounter" must be interpreted in the active and passive sense ("blessing others, and being blessed through others") and includes word and sacrament, among other elements.

The outward expression of this model, and the diversity of its forms, owes a lot to the historical development of Pentecost. Uninformed biblicism has often accentuated New Testament teachings which have led to strange Pentecostal doctrines and practises (foot-washing and regulations concerning ladies' head-gear, among others). Structures and practises inherited or borrowed from non-Pentecostal groups have often made contributions that cannot be rationally reconciled with the Pentecostal model. However, whatever the imperfections of its manifestations, the model itself remains basic to Pentecost, and where the contradiction of form and model becomes too acute, the result is either de-Pentecostalisation, or grass-roots agitation for the "purification" of the form (Dulles 1974:19).

A real problem for Pentecostals in maintaining this model lies in the area of biblical theological practice. As with the Pentecostal hermeneutic, only recently have Pentecostal scholars begun to emerge who are able to research the field of New Testament history and theology from a Pentecostal perspective. Hollenweger points out that "Käsemann, Ritter and Schweizer are theologians of the first importance for Pentecostalism" (Hollenweger 1977:429); and this is no doubt true. However, to be Pentecostal is a matter of experience, and a Pentecostal understanding of the early church would owe much to an identification with the early Christians in experiential context, which these highly accomplished scholars obviously (by Pentecostal standards) lack. The value of such empathy can be seen in the fact that, despite its poverty in the technicalities of biblical theology, the Pentecostal movement has developed an understanding of that original community which is not a parody, and which has often been substantiated by scholarly insights.³

If the validity of the Pentecostal model of the church is to be substantiated, then its operation in the major areas of liturgy and ministry needs to be examined. As we turn to this task, it must be unequivocally stated that the simplistic distinction between "office" and "Spirit" and between "structure" and "freedom" can not be arbitrarily maintained. Anyone who knows the

Pentecostal movement will know that office and structure are pragmatic realities, even if Spirit and freedom are the motivating ideals of its ecclesiology; perhaps the distinctive quality of the Pentecostal community is that its recognition of Spirit and freedom enables the tension between these poles, and the consequent interaction to emerge as an everyday reality and not merely as a problem of theological theory or historical remembrance. Originally because of its biblicism the movement granted equal authority in its own practice to I Cor 14, Eph 4, and the Pastoral epistles - and maintains that position today on a sounder biblical theological base which sees no contradiction between recognised ministries (so-called "offices") and charismatic freedom. The Pentecostal proviso is that the minister be seen to be acting *ex spiritu* and not *ex officio* - where this is not the case he will vote with his feet and seek a church environment which is neither office-less nor Spirit-less.

6.2 PENTECOSTAL LITURGY

In matters liturgical the Pentecostal ideal has been a liturgy of the freedom of the Spirit reacting against the cold formalism, structured inflexibility and "meaningless" repetition they saw in the historical denominations (and from which most had come). The early Pentecostal pioneers rejected any notion of a formal liturgy. Indeed, two decades after Azusa Street, Bartleman compared the contemporary trend of "pep" and "make it snappy" methods used to achieve a spiritual purpose, with the atmosphere at Azusa Street. "Meetings must be controlled by the way of the throne. A spiritual atmosphere must be created, through humility and prayer, that Satan cannot live in. This we realised in the beginning" (Bartleman [1925] 1980:81, 82). The epitome of a person and God are involved in the encounter, and the human input cannot be obviated. But Bartleman argued that the terms of the encounter must be set by God, and not humanly. In this way, something could happen. The following description, typical of the era, illustrates the sense of urgency and of patience, as well as the dynamic purpose, evident in the earlier Pentecostal meetings:

Often meetings lasted all night. Missionary enthusiasm ran high No organ or hymn books were used. The spirit conducted the services and there seemed no place for them. Hundreds definitely met God. Numbers were saved, baptized in the Spirit, and healed. Many received a call to foreign fields The altars were seldom empty of seekers day or night ... we determined to fight nothing but sin, and to fear nothing but God".

(Bartleman [1925] 1980:107)

Although few, if any, of the pioneers may have expressed it precisely thus, the nature of the church was for them mission, and the power to achieve the purpose of the church, in its gatherings and in its individual agents, was the Holy Spirit. Services were held for the edification of the saints and for the preaching of the gospel - the form and content essential to both elements had to be provided by the Spirit.

Any movement striving for this ideal of freedom in the Spirit operates at risk. Azusa Street was no exception: "Even spiritualists and hypnotists came to investigate, and to try their influence. Then all the religious sore-heads and crooks and cranks came, seeking a place to work" (Bartleman [1925] 1980:48). The Pentecostal movement as a whole has often burnt its fingers in this respect; but where it has, in reaction, rigidly organised the liturgy, it has only succeeded in losing a great deal of its Pentecostal dynamic. "If the church wants to remain a dynamic church governed by the Holy Spirit, then we have no choice but to walk the pathway of risk" (My translation) (Hattingh 1986:5). Hattingh's primary context is church structure, but the point is valid for liturgy as well, within his context.

The reality of Pentecostal parishes as opposed to "missions" such as Azusa Street has brought a measure of structure to Pentecostal liturgy. Even the most fanatical opponents of formalism find themselves presiding over structured services; although the pattern may be varied from time to time, for many consecutive weeks it may be an identical programme, until someone decides it is time to "get out of the rut". Various movements exhibit varying idioms of worship - in South Africa for instance, Apostolic Faith Mission, Full Gospel Church of God, and Rhema Bible Church liturgies, although all Pentecostal, have distinctive idioms which cannot be missed.

Pentecost has also had its advocates of patterned or structured worship in the sense of formal liturgies. Justus du Plessis, as General Secretary of the Apostolic Faith Mission of S.A., was popularly held, within this movement, to have been a protagonist of this tendency during the 1960s and 1970s. From another perspective, the School of Psalmody, promoted in South Africa by Tom Inglis, propagates a liturgy of praise and worship based on the forms ordained in the Davidic tabernacle.⁴ This School has had a vast influence in South African Pentecost, with many a local church exhibiting the peculiar pattern of song, music and dance which Inglis claims to be essential to Christian worship. The irony is that the most vociferous opponents of Du Plessis are

often found in the Psalmody camp, totally unaware that their rejection of one structure has driven them to accept another! The cause may be sought in the unhappy circumstance that the "how" of holding church services has often become more important than the "why".

The particular genius of the Pentecostals lies in achieving forms of worship combining undoubted leadership with real scope for congregational initiative, both individual and corporate Giving such scope to all worshippers does not deprive the leaders of their role; they are those who exercise particular forms of ministry, rather than those who decide what will happen and when ... the Pentecostal pastor, presiding at worship, ideally discerns what is happening more than he determines what will happen.

(Hocken 1976:3)

Hocken's description of (a somewhat idealised) Pentecostal liturgy highlights its consistency with the Pentecostal model of the church: if the church consists of *all* the saved, then all must have an equal chance in the liturgy - and if they are individually empowered then they have input as individuals, and are distinguished from one another only in the function of their particular "ministry". This priesthood of all believers cannot be denied in the liturgy without the community losing the spontaneity of its Pentecostal character. The element of risk is also obvious. But even the most blatant abuses are often glossed over surprisingly well by the Spirit, if not dwelt upon:

The Spirit allows little human interference in the meetings, generally passing mistakes by unnoticed, or moving them out of the way Himself. Things that ordinarily we would feel must be corrected, are often passed over, and a worse calamity averted thereby.

(Bartleman [1925] 1980:71)

Where the aim has been to correct abuses, the erection of spiritual traffic-lights has often been the direct cause of complete cessation of traffic flow: however, where the aim has been to encounter the power of God in Jesus, the imperfections are often easily passed over.

If the most startling aspect of a Pentecostal meeting, from the perspective of a non-Pentecostal visitor, is the phenomenon of glossolalia and the emotional intensity (Baer 1976:155ff.), these

are the two elements which the seasoned Pentecostal himself often notices only in their absence. Neither constitutes the epitome of a Pentecostal liturgy, except in the sense that the service should naturally be held in such a way that neither tongues (along with the other charismata) nor emotional response are unreasonably inhibited.⁵ A "reasonable" limitation would also have to be defined in terms of Christian *agape* - unselfish concern for a fellow-believer, for an outsider, for the body of believers as a whole, and respect for the ministry of others, being the strongest factors in the individual's self-control in charismatic and emotional expression. In other words, formalisation of liturgy is *not* a valid reason for the inhibition of spontaneous charismatic participation, as far as classical Pentecostals are concerned.

W J Hattingh has consistently applied the Pentecostal ideology which demands that God be experienced and that such experience have objective results. This has led to his concentrating far more on the "why" of the liturgy than on the form it takes. The form must be purely the vehicle of the eventual purpose, which to Hattingh is to "celebrate the truth" and to glorify God. However, truth must be experienced before it can be celebrated, God must be experienced at work before praise and worship can be "in spirit and in truth". We cite him at some length on this subject:

In the worship service, as the term indicates, God is honoured and worshipped. This however is only possible once an encounter and transformation has taken place, if it is in any sense to correspond with the Bible. God prepares praise for himself, and it is offered by people that have experienced the miracle of his touch. The central purpose of the worship service, i.e. the glory of God, is not rejected but is actually served when we claim that the worship service is centred on encounter in which the truth of God is realised

When we celebrate the truth we are not concerned with the making known of certain truths, but with truth that happens. It is thus not enough to proclaim, among other things, salvation, forgiveness, atonement, love, healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, in a theologically correct manner, without these things becoming truths that take place in the worship service, or unless in the liturgical direction opportunity is given for them to occur. Unless truth becomes events, we have to do with only half the truth.

... If a church believes that God reveals himself through the Holy Spirit, that people can be converted and transformed, that He heals men, that people can be baptised in the Holy Spirit, that love and forgiveness is possible - then the church must expect these things to occur in its worship service, and allow opportunity for it to happen. Our integrity is questioned if we proclaim these important deeds of God, and yet it remains but words and nothing happens in our gatherings. (My translation)

(Hattingh 1984:222-223)

Hattingh is well aware that the final criteria of a Pentecostal liturgy is not that certain external elements are observed, but that God's salvation (Afrikaans: "heil") is made evident:

Salvation is the work of God, but nothing is more directed to and involved with the sinner than precisely this salvation of God. It is concerned that sinners should be made aware of their sins and confess them with repentance and call out for mercy. It is aimed at breaking the old pattern of living, and at surrender to God, and it is absolutely concerned with people and it is real. Sin, brokenness and sickness are experienced daily in a concrete and obvious way. Thus it is alien to conceive of deliverance and healing which takes place in an unplanned manner, quietly and in secret There are those who wish to externalise the truth to purely human reactions and thus make human reactions the goal, instead of aiming at the actualisation of God's salvation. In such cases we have an actualism, but not that actualism which God brings about. This is just as much a parody as passive participation in a series of actions and ceremonies with the mistaken assumptions that this is objective worship directed towards God. (My translation)

(Hattingh 1984:225)

Pentecostal liturgy is thus truly concerned with God and with humanity. Both must be taken seriously. Even regenerate, Spirit-filled, charismatically active people are *people*, with the needs and manners and make-up of people. Human beings must be allowed to be humans before God, just as they are, with body and spirit and intellect and emotions and will - and God must be allowed to

be God, delivering and healing and comforting and encouraging people who respond in faith to his presence, as people. Both God and people are concrete, and their interaction has concrete characteristics.

This emphasis on not merely talking about God and presupposing revelation, for example, takes place in preaching, worship occurs when a hymn is sung, etc.; but demanding a concrete interaction between God and people that either is or is not truth being realised (and is known after the meeting to have been realised or not, without doubt), means that every element of the liturgy becomes meaningful. Song and music is not merely a religious art form, but is a proclamation of God's salvation, an expression of our encounter with that salvation, is heartfelt praise and worship (Hattingh 1984:233-243) - when it is consciously employed in the liturgy in this sense, and is accompanied by a sense of expectation. Indeed, because the Pentecostal liturgy is so goal-oriented, expectation plays a large part in the attitude and the atmosphere of the congregation. Where a Pentecostal group has lost its dynamic character, this is often preceded by a lowering of expectation in divine worship - and almost always accompanied by it.

Because both humanity and God are taken seriously in Pentecostal liturgy, there is an untold variety of forms and idioms which can be utilised. In a single gathering there can be changes of atmosphere and emphasis from enthusiastic song and praise to quiet confidence and peace; from joyful "Hallelujahs" to broken weeping. Or these variations may each totally mark a sequence of meetings over a long period.

In a wider sense, the idiom may vary from culture to culture, from class to class. The ultimate purpose is that people and God get together - people in all the variety of their needs, origins, temperaments, etc. and God in the bountifulness of his grace and salvation. If the encounter obviously takes place, then the liturgy has been a success. If not, it has not. This is the criterion - the form becomes wholly relativised.

The ideal liturgy for Pentecost thus becomes a two-way street, a communications event, in which human beings and God alternate as subject and object. God as subject is remarked particularly in the ministry of the nine charismata listed in I Cor 12, although by no means limited to this element. However, that God employs humans as co-subjects in this ministry is evidence that God takes people themselves seriously. People as subjects bring to God their praise, worship and adoration. But because they take God seriously, it is not just founded upon the remembrance of salvific events (incarnation, passion, resurrection, ascension, Pente-

cost, etc.), but becomes spontaneous as they observe the power of God at work now, in the presence of his people. It is a Pentecostal thesis that *programmed* praise and worship only becomes an option where God is no longer seen to be at work among and through his people. Macleod (1975:69-74) makes the point that "we *thank* God for all he gives us But we *praise* God for *who* and *what he is*", and this may be a valid distinction. However, a particularly Pentecostal qualifier would be: "How do I know who and what God is?" The God whose deeds are commemorated in history, and whose attributes are compiled in Christian doctrine, may best be known when he is seen at work. Having seen and experienced the great works of God, the Christian is overwhelmed by who God *is*, and as a result both thanksgiving and praise take on a spontaneous "non-religious" character.

Pentecost, in its liturgy, as in the personal experience of its members, stresses the possibility (indeed, the necessity) that people and God can interact. Perhaps it would be pertinent to mention at this point that this stress on human beings and God "getting together" is not based on arrogance, presumption, or vainglory - on the one hand, it is a willing response to the invitation of God:

"Come unto me";

"Come, now and let us reason together";

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock".

The accent here is on *grace* - undeservedly, on our part, God invites us to come into his presence. On the other hand, it is obedience to his commission: "As ambassadors of Christ ... the love of Christ constrains us ... be ye reconciled with God!" The message committed to Christendom is that God wants us to get together with him. In their personal experience and in their liturgy then, taking God seriously and expecting that the divine-human encounter will have phenomenological elements, Pentecostals both come to God and proclaim to others: "You too are welcome ... God is more than able to meet your needs". This brings us to the topic of Pentecostal ministry.

6.3 PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

Although Pentecost is ideally a "move of the Spirit" and a priesthood of all believers, within the movement there is recognition that certain individuals are endowed with qualities of ministry (charisms) that set them apart from the larger body of believers. This ministry may be at and for a given moment only - the person who prophesies at a worship service is a "minister" at that moment - or it may be marked by a particular vocation, a

"call" to full-time ministry, understood in the light of the *episcopos* of the Pastorals, or as evangelist, or as missionary (the "apostle" of Eph. 4). There are numerous grades in between, e.g. song-leader, musician, church-administrator, the classical "offices" of elder and deacon, among others. In other words, the contribution to the Pentecostal body of any given individual may vary from the occasional to the continual. What is peculiar to the Pentecostal notion of the church, and what relativises the contributions so that in the end there *is* a priesthood of all believers, is a two-fold emphasis: (i) *every* Spirit-filled believer has a contribution to make; and (ii) every contribution is only valid insofar as it can be traced back to the dynamic activity of God.

Eight decades of institutionalisation have of course blurred this ideal in many respects. The rise of interest groups (and hence "church politics"), the burgeoning bureaucracies of the more centrally organised groups, the gradual development of a professional clergy, and the syncretism promoted by both extra-Pentecostal hostility and dialogue, have each contributed their mite in this process. However, since the movement is pragmatically oriented, and the sense of commitment to the commission of Jesus is strongly engrained, the model is widely upheld at the local church level - otherwise the aim of growth is obstructed, stagnation sets in, and static or negative growth is the result. In these conditions the model itself may finally be rejected, and the congregation becomes oriented around a Protestant (sometimes evangelical) model of the church.⁶

Where the Pentecostal model is maintained, it is perhaps significant that the existence of "offices" is not denied, provided the "office", whether titular or not, is granted as recognition, or even better, as description, of the ministry of the individual. Hence, if the title or office of prophet is granted to people, there is an insistence that they minister as prophets, i.e. that they prophesy charismatically. Their words are prophetic *ex spirito* and not *ex officio*.⁷ The title *pastor* has taken on a far more official connotation, as in many denominations it denotes a full-time professional clergyman, rather than a person committed to the care of souls. Yet even in the most institutionalised Pentecostal groups there appears to be an understanding that whatever office someone holds, or whatever ministry he or she fulfils, the criterion of validity is charismatic.⁸ For example, it is expected of a treasurer in the local or wider church that he or she have the heart of a spirit-filled believer and not of a professional accountant (the abilities of the accountant of course remain desirable). In other words, the origin, the ability

and the content of the ministry must be discernably God-given. Since in this aspect, too, both God and human beings are taken seriously, the specifically human contribution is not denied, whether in learning, in temperament, in aptitude, or whatever.

In our search for what is distinctive about Pentecost and its theology, we will consider two areas of Pentecostal ministry, viz. preaching and missions. There are of course other important areas which space does not permit us to treat. One of these, the ministry of the *charismata* themselves, may appear a strange omission in a study of Pentecost. However, not only is it an area which demands a full treatise to be done justice to (Möller 1983), but it is also a Pentecostal discussion, concerning which much has been written. Pentecostal preaching has not received such universal treatment; Pentecostal missions have been in the limelight recently, although contributions in this area have been more specialised than broadly theological (McClung 1985:5-18; Gaxiola 1977:7-63; Hedlund 1972:129-136; De Mello 1971:245-248; Saracco 1977:66-70). It will thus be more in the nature of a fresh contribution to discuss Pentecostal ministry in these contexts, than to attempt in a short space to deal with a subject which few have done justice to in the long run. Suffice it to say that Pentecost presupposes *charismata*, in personal, liturgical, and ministerial context.

6.3.1 Preaching

Twentieth century Pentecost stands in the tradition of those groups throughout church history (and represented before that in the Old Testament prophets) that have been influenced to a large extent by people rich in dynamic oral communications ability while very often poor in the intellectual sophistication offered by their contemporary society. The Galilean fisherman preacher of Acts 2 and the one-eyed Negro of Azusa Street in 1906 are examples of this. This is not to place a premium on human ignorance, but to point out that Pentecostal preaching finds its effectiveness from a wholly other source than that rhetoric which is rationally acquired and polished (Yim 1985:74-75), a truth which even the erudite apostle Paul appears to validate in referring to his own preaching in I Cor 2:1-5. Truly Pentecostal preachers are, in a very real sense, truly gifted. Even in those groups in classical Pentecostalism which are increasingly dominated by a "professional" pastorate, it is remarkable that many of the most popular preachers are still of the old school - effective even before more sophisticated audiences despite their own intellectual shortcomings. As in so many other areas of Pentecostal practice, the criteria for validity in preaching is not established in terms of theological sophistication or profes-

sional accomplishment, but in terms of effectiveness. Where folk have been saved, delivered from sin, sickness and bondage to evil forces; where real comfort and encouragement have been received; in effect, where people have experienced the power of God in Jesus - there the preaching has been successful. A "better" sermon is one that is more effective in promoting this meeting of God and human being - a less successful sermon is one that is less effective.

Where this criteria is applied to preaching there is an undeniable risk factor. Where emotional reaction is misread as spiritual effect, preaching can be marked by volume rather than power, by emotional gimmickry rather than by that attraction which is inherent in the crucified Christ himself (John 12:32). Rabble-rousing and emotionalism, fear-mongering ("fire and brimstone") and fanatical bigotry can all too easily become the prevalent trend where "results" are the only criteria of a sermon. (As we showed in a previous chapter, the experience which is normative to Pentecost is not without qualification). However, no pneumatic movement can remain pneumatic by obviating all element of risk. And it should be added that one of the plus factors in the professional training of pastors is that, where it stresses the primary criteria as indispensable, it has also pointed out that homiletically structured preaching need not be an antidote of the Spirit.⁹ It is only where the effectiveness of preaching is sought primarily in structural and theological sophistication that it so often loses its Pentecostal effectiveness.

The Pentecostal ideology requires that the effect of preaching be obvious and visible: "Sin, brokenness and sickness are experienced daily in a concrete and public way, thus it is difficult to consider deliverance and healing as something unplanned and occurring soundlessly in secret" (my translation) (Hattingh 1984:225). Some refer to it as "signs" (Hocken 1976:32), although this term can be interpreted (and its New Testament context is obviously this) to mean a miraculous demonstration by God to confirm that what is being preached is truly His message. These "signs" are no doubt essential elements in Pentecost; however, the obvious and visible results aimed at go beyond signs of confirmation, aimed at convincing hearers. They rather point to what Hattingh has referred to above as the "realisation of the truth proclaimed" in the lives and situations of the hearers. They would include such obvious signs as healing, exorcism, tongues, etc. as well as forgiveness, reconciliation, conversion, release from depression and a host of others - which become obvious by the spontaneous reaction of individuals to their occurrence, and their personal (often immediate) testimony. In fact, the aim of liturgy and preaching may be neatly comprehended in one Pentecostal chorus:

You won't leave here like you came, in Jesus name -
Bound, oppressed, convicted, sick or lame.
For the Holy Ghost of Acts is still the same.
You won't leave here like you came, in Jesus name!

Pentecostal preaching is thus kerygmatic, *par excellence*. It is exposition (however rudimentary sometimes) of Scripture, but an exposition aimed at confronting the hearers with the reality of God's love, grace and power. Where the hearers react with faith, it is expected that they will experience the power of God in Jesus. H R Yim summarises it thus:

Preaching is intended to transform the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour of Christians and non-believers through the proclamation of God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit. No measure of worldly wisdom or human personality can duplicate the life-changing action of preaching. This is due to the presence of Biblical knowledge in the preaching situation. A product of the interchange between God's word and the Holy Spirit, biblical knowledge functions to set people free. This liberating action occurs in four basic contexts, and each context may be characterised by the interrelationship of preacher, God's word, Holy Spirit, message, audience, time and place. Although elements of one may certainly exist in another, a context will tend to be either evangelistic, apologetic, devotional, or expository. In which case the preacher's task is to communicate God's word 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.

(Yim 1985:81)

It must be stressed that kerygma goes beyond *mere* exposition. The exegetical and expository tasks are essential elements in Pentecostal preaching (although the hermeneutical framework may differ radically from other streams in Christianity). However, what makes preaching a dynamic event is the power of the Holy Spirit in conveying the word (utterance, or often loosely termed "inspiration"), in convicting the hearers of its truth, of confirming its truth (signs), and of realising it as truth (hearers encounter the power of God in Jesus). This powerful presence of the Holy Spirit makes the event of exposition of Scripture kerygmatic: the Scripture becomes the word of God in a specific situation and event *only* by virtue of this powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. While agreeing that the content of Scripture is reliable and adequate as a witness to God's dealings and intentions with human beings, and may be efficacious in developing

desirable character traits, the Pentecostal understanding is that its communication or exposition *per se* is not automatically a revelation-event. God is *revealed* when He personally intervenes in human affairs by his Spirit - and Pentecostal preaching is directed at precisely that event.

Since it stands to reason that it is the power and working of the Holy Spirit which makes a sermon an effective word of God, the exact same sermon could be preached by two different people, and in the one case have astounding results, and in another be merely a nice piece of biblical exposition. For the working of the Spirit is linked to people rather than to abstracts, to "preacher" rather than to "preaching". Hattingh (1984:154-168) maintains that where preacher and needy people come together in the sermon event, relevancy is as much a matter of a relevant preacher as of a relevant sermon. "The preacher is called to be God's representative, someone who has experienced God's spirit in his life Although the preacher remains human, it must be obvious that he has been helped by God and that God is speaking through him" (my translation). The preacher is primarily witness (Acts 1:8) or ambassador (II Cor 5:17) of Christ. As a person he must therefore be equipped with the power of Christ. The endowment of power associated with the preacher has a marked pattern in Acts, determining as it did the preaching of Peter (Acts 2, 10), of Philip (Acts 8), of Steven (Acts 7), and of Paul (I Cor 2:1-5). Against the argument that these men were so equipped for the propagation of the church in a missionary context, it may well be answered that the distinguishing mark of the church is mission¹⁰, and that preaching is aimed at the meeting of human needs, only one of which is personal repentance and regeneration - the preacher is as reliant upon the power of God in his own life to proclaim, and see realised, the ability of God to deal with all the other needs as well.

The relationship of preaching to prophecy also needs to be examined in the light of Pentecostal ideology and practice. Where "prophecy" and "prophetic task" are coming into increasing prominence in modern theology (mainly because of the charismatic movement in the former instance, and the political theologies in the latter), it must be unequivocally stated that to the Pentecostal, prophecy is a *charismatic* event, while kerygma (proclamation or preaching), although it may at times attain the level of direct prophecy, is a matter of divine commission and human obedience and has an element of human planning and preparation, of human rational input. To most Pentecostals the distinction is clear - charismatic prophecy is a direct, unplanned unresearched word of God, a "Thus saith the Lord" (although that Biblical phrase need not be included), a momentary revelation of God to his people by an individual, at God's time and place, and is understood very

much in the Old Testament mode in that sense. Preaching or kerygma is obedient spoken witness to God's work in Jesus Christ - it may be planned, researched, programmed, etc. It only attains the level of prophecy when the preacher is used by God at a particular point in his or her preaching to deliver a word from God which is received and communicated in identical fashion to a charismatic prophecy. Aware as we are that terminology can bedevil rational communication, we might risk defining prophecy as "speaking the Word of God as the Spirit reveals it", while preaching might be contrasted as "proclaiming the Word of God as the Spirit empowers it". Preaching *should* of course be divine revelation to us - but where it is, it is generally in a different mode to prophecy. In any case, Pentecost does not assume that preaching is revelation, nor sacramentalism of the Word.¹¹

To include this section on preaching, it may be expected that effective Pentecostal preachers are as aware of their audience and its needs as of themselves and their material. In a sense this involves *agape*, and Pentecost of course lays no claim to being exceptional in this respect. However, the ideology of Pentecost maintains that this involves power as well, with an expectation of obvious and objective results. Pentecostal preachers, aware of the power of God, and proclaiming God's intention with human beings, bear in mind the variety of needs confronting them in the audience, and expect that the result of their preaching will be the alleviation of these needs. Realising that they are commissioned by Jesus as Jesus was by his Father, they know that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he has anointed me to preach the gospel ..." - and faced by the forces of evil oppressing people, and of the effects of human rebellion against God, in the power of that Spirit they proclaim God's deliverance and expect it to realise before their very eyes In a church world where so much preaching lacks this emphasis, the Pentecostal preacher is in constant danger of being labelled a "sheep stealer", for needy people often seek help where help is consciously offered, and expected to be adequate to boot. From the side of the preachers, a dynamic sense of mission demands that, irrespective of the religious label borne by the object of their task, they address themselves to every and any person who has need of a touch of the power of God in Jesus.

6.3.2 Pentecostal missions

Alongside of the emphasis on divine signs (including Spirit baptism with tongues) and the emotional intensity of their worship, Pentecostals have had to be taken account of by outsiders for their phenomenal evangelical zeal and growth. While

the Church Growth Movement has done its best to stimulate growth and evangelical zeal among non-Pentecostal churches, long before they had much influence in Pentecostal circles they had to take note of Pentecost. Grant McClung comments:

Though benefiting from each other in a parallel (some would say semi-symbolic) relationship, neither Church Growth Movement nor the Pentecostal Movement would say that they have been the cause for each other's acceptance and diffusion the Pentecostal Movement has encouraged the Church Growth Movement and has been admired as a model by its researchers. Some might dare to say that if it were not for Pentecostal growth around the world, the Church Growth Movement might not have much growth to study.

(McClung 1985:12)

If the typical church model of Pentecost is conceived of in primarily teleological terms ("what is the goal or purpose of the Church?")¹², then the idea of world evangelisation should rank high among its members. That this has been so has been obvious throughout this century. Once baptism in the Spirit came to be understood as empowerment rather than sanctification, the purpose of empowerment came to be understood in terms of Acts 1:8 "Ye shall receive power ... ye shall be witnesses unto me ... to the uttermost parts of the earth". A vision of "reaching the world for Jesus" has always been a strong motivating factor, whether the world has been the neighbour, the downtown slum, the drug-ridden generation of contemporary city-dwellers, the jungles of Africa or even the collective villages behind the Iron or Bamboo Curtains - none of these areas has been considered exempt from the witness of Pentecost to the saving grace of Jesus. The result has been a burgeoning movement - and particularly in world missions the success of this vision has become most evident. Pentecostal missions must be one of the Christian success stories of the century - not that this can be a cause for complacency. The overwhelming majority of people alive today are not Christians - there is much work to be done!

There are various reasons offered for the reception afforded the gospel as preached by the Pentecostals in the Third World: whether the primary factor affecting receptivity is perceived in sociological and anthropological terms (Anderson 1979; Glazier 1980)¹³ or in terms of the Spirit's dynamic (McClung 1985:12-13), the fact is that the growth *is* taking place. From the perspective of the evangelical wing of the church, this can be nothing but desirable. A number of recent studies into the reasons for this success have been produced, and from the theological perspective

two are of particular value. The first is a comprehensive review of Pentecostal mission method and theory, presented by Grand McClung to the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies at Gaithersburg in 1985, the other is the January 1986 issue of *International Review of Missions* (Vol 75, No 297), devoted to Pentecostalism. The comprehensive character of the former makes it obligatory reading for any Pentecostal wishing to understand the Movement in mission. To reproduce all McClung's data here is obviously impossible. However, his view of the reasons for Pentecost's dynamic may be summarised as follows:

1. Pentecostals attempt to move "in Spirit and in Truth" (p. 2) and are accordingly people of "The Book" (p. 2) and people of the Spirit (p. 3) who also maintain a strong Christology (p. 5).
2. Pentecostals uphold a strong sense of apocalypticism, with a "Last Days" Mission Theology (p. 6).
3. Pentecostals have a sense of divine destiny, as God's people for this hour (p. 7), and are both optimistic and confident.
4. Pentecostals emphasise the Holy Spirit and his power, both in collective (worship) and individual (Spirit baptism) context (p. 11-14).
5. Pentecostals have developed a Biblically pragmatic approach which entails tailoring the means to the end to be achieved (p. 14).
6. Pentecostals have committed personnel at their disposal, as well as a supportive system of home churches (p. 16, 21).

Dutch Pentecostal P N van der Laan (1986:47-50) attempts to outline the reason for the success achieved by Dutch Pentecostal missionaries. He lists:

1. Naive biblicism and eschatology.
2. Individualism - every Pentecostal is a missionary.
3. Total commitment.
4. Pragmatism - God is expected to *act*.
5. Flexibility - based on the Spirit's leading.
6. Room allowed for emotional expression.
7. Oral tradition (personal testimonies).
8. Establishing truly indigenous Churches.
9. Demonstration of the power of the Spirit.
10. Participation encouraged in services.

Discussing mission in the Caribbean and Pentecostal impact there, G M Mulrain (1986:51-58) stresses the elements essential to reaching the inhabitants of that region. These are flexibility based on sensitivity, and orality and narrativity, i.e. primary communication by the spoken word and the telling of tales, as opposed to literary means. In these areas the Pentecostals excel. G Y Lartey (1986:75-81) points out that Pentecostal emphasis on healing has made it particularly effective in Africa, where healing has always been a primary element in African Spiritual concern. The same can be said for the Caribbean and Latin America, where healing often provides the point of contact for the initiation of new evangelisation drives. (Glazier 1980:7-76; 67-80; 125-142).

If these comments on Pentecostal method and practice in missions are valid, then it would appear that the crucial difference between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal lies not so much in formal mission strategy as in the content and communication of their message. Distinctive about the Pentecostal content is the insistence that deliverance, healing and salvation take place *now*, in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit; and distinctive about Pentecostal communication is the personal empowerment of the speaker, whose speech is "anointed" to carry conviction and to persuade. It is in their understanding of the Spirit and his power and leading that their methods have been developed. The adoption of their methods (by e.g. the Church Growth Movement) may help non-Pentecostal groups to be more dynamic - however, Pentecostals insist that the Spirit who led them into those methods should be acknowledged as the *source* of their dynamic. To copy the method and to bypass the source would to them be on a par with building a cart and refusing to allow the horse to pull it!

While Pentecostal mission success is notable, and the growth of indigenous churches of the Spirit-type is phenomenal (Hollenweger 1986:9-11), the effect of Pentecost in socio-political context must also be taken into account. This we will do in the following section.

CHAPTER 7

Pentecost and socio-political concerns

Although there is not one world organisation of Pentecostals that can speak for all Pentecostals, it seems as though the underlying attitude of many Pentecostals is that the church as such should not involve itself in political matters. In the First World this has often taken the form of conformity to the status quo and indifference to those groups and ideologies which act against states and social structures.¹ In the Third World there are notable exceptions to this rule, particularly in Latin American countries; while in Africa and Asia the so-called "spirit-type" churches stand largely apart from more politically motivated groups (known in Southern Africa as the Ethiopian independent churches). Naturally individual members and pastors may take their own personal stand, and when the political impact of Pentecost is being evaluated it is often this individual relationship with society which must be taken into consideration, in view of the silence from official church quarters.

Perhaps it should be stated in defence of Pentecostal organisations as such that their attempts to remain free from political issues is not merely a coincidence of interests with the states in which they operate. The simplistic charge "If you are not actively resisting certain unjust social structures you must be in favour of them", so often leveled against church groups which would rather not go on public record with regard to socio-political issues, often owes more to the ideologies of the activists (their social analysis and utopian ideals) than to the reality of the situation. Since Pentecostals have a well-developed sense of mission, and are usually pretty clear about what they hope to achieve, they can scarcely be charged with "leaving the world as it is". In this section an attempt will be made to outline (i)

the variety of approaches to society and politics adopted by Pentecostals world-wide; (ii) the effect and influence of Pentecost in various socio-political situations; (iii) how Pentecostals have experienced political systems and (iv) some elements of Pentecostal thought and practice which have implications for its political stance.

7.1 SOME PENTECOSTAL ATTITUDES TO STATE AND POLITICS

It is the Latin American and Scandinavian Pentecostal churches in particular which have consciously involved themselves in socio-political concerns (McDonnell 1973:53; Lundgren 1985:158-172), in Latin America in particular becoming involved at times in issues of conflict with the structures of society. It is in this region that perhaps the closest link between Pentecostals and liberation-type theologies can be found. Elsewhere the relationship between Pentecostals and government appears to be rather pragmatic. Hollenweger mentions the Italian Pentecostals who apparently tend to vote for the Communists because their experience of Catholic and (previously) Fascist governments has been oppressive (Hollenweger 1977:259-260). In Eastern Europe the Romanian church refuses to criticise the state, since it has enjoyed a greater measure of freedom under the current Marxist socialist regime than it did previously (Bundy 1985:21-22). In South Africa the general move of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa in the 1960s was toward support of the governing National Party, in search of a previously denied recognition and social respectability, with the result that it now enjoys the right to broadcast and televise Pentecostal services on State-controlled media. Black Pentecostals in America have involved themselves in community projects despite the White churches' aversion to anything smacking of political involvement, while in Mexico a Pentecostal group exists relatively prosperously in commune, apart from the hurly-burly of Mexican politics (Hollenweger 1974).

Whatever the form of government or structure of society under which they fulfil their commission in the world, most Pentecostals would be able to agree with Lidia Vaccaro de Petrella:

To live out the good news is to be immersed in evangelism, but we are aware that the good news would be of no effect if people's lives are not changed in all dimensions by the salvation given in Jesus Christ.

The task of evangelism is incomplete if its sole interest is the spiritual life of those who receive the gospel. Pentecostal communities do not want to be

branded in advance as *pietistic or spiritualistic movements*, because while being guided and inspired by the fire of the Holy Spirit they are set in the midst of the world with all its need and suffering and it is there that people can receive the Christian message. *The Pentecostal experience does not cause men and women to withdraw from the world in which they live. Rather they are instruments of God's intervention in that world.*

(Vaccaro de Petrella 1986:37)

The variety of socio-political conditions in the world requires a variety of responses. For this reason Pentecost cannot offer a blanket legitimization of revolution or socialism (or capitalism, for that matter), as though these were absolutes. Pentecostals are aware of being God's people, and as far as they are able they wish to fulfil God's commission. The dualism of body and spirit is alien to Pentecostal ideology, and for that reason the Pentecostal gospel has always placed a high valuation on physical reality, including the human body and its needs, without committing itself to the jargon of many contemporary socio-political effects and implications.

7.2 THE EFFECT OF PENTECOST IN SOCIETY

Where Pentecost was originally a movement rooted mainly in the lower strata of society, in the First World at least it has become largely a middle-class phenomenon, and even in the Third World it imparts a social upward mobility to its converts. This fact alone obviates its identification and exclusion as a group with no social relevance, merely offering "pie in the sky, bye-and-bye" to its members. Research by anthropologists into its influence in Caribbean and Latin American society makes for interesting findings. In Jamaica, for instance, Wedenoja declares:

Pentecostalism is a subtle revolution that induces a great number of social, cultural and psychological changes Its this-worldly theology rejects the status quo and preaches that a millennial revolution will elevate Pentecostals above the "ungodly" - the large land-owners, businessmen and politicians.

(Wedenoja 1980:41)

In a paragraph entitled "The Pentecostal revolution", he adds:

Pentecostalism is a subtle but profound revolution because it is low-key, religious and not obviously political Pentecostalism is a revolutionary faith because it effects changes in self and the relations between self and others, which incidentally also affects the established churches, and generates an ideological force promoting corresponding changes in society, economy and polity.

(Wedenoja 1980:42-43)

Naturally there are those who see the impact of Pentecost in socio-political terms in a negative light:

Since Puerto Rico's political and economic conditions have been determined primarily by its relationship to the United States, an accommodating movement such as Pentecostalism, tends to reinforce an Americanisation process which, in the past three decades, has turned Puerto Rico into an ideological, economic, and political satellite of the United States.

(La Ruffa 1980:60)

That Pentecost does have a socio-political impact is thus obvious, whether in strengthening conservative forces, in promoting a revolution (no matter how subtle) or in facilitating modernization. One's evaluation of and attitude toward the particular impact in a given region is often determined by the ideological convictions and methodology brought to the research (Manning 1980:185). With regard to some negative evaluations, Manning asks:

Why does Pentecostalism come in for so much condemnation from those who most strongly identify themselves as the enemies of colonialism, notably the new national elites and the newly radicalised clergy of the mainstream churches?

(Manning 1980:181-182)

He finds an answer in the fact that these post-colonial elites have not really brought about an egalitarian society, but have merely replaced an alien authoritarian structure with an indigenous one.

To the new national bourgeoisie, Pentecostalism is a threat. It is the religion of the masses, and more than that, the source and symbol of their self-dignity and sense of human equality. The new elite view Pentecostalism ... as a challenge to authority ... the elite reaction is to stigmatise Pentecostalism by associating it with the United States or other allegedly imperialist countries.

(Manning 1980:182)

Manning's argument appears to make sense in a number of historical and contemporary situations. Early Christianity (which was certainly "Pentecostal") found itself in hot water, not for being overtly politically active, or even conscious, but for challenging authority by refusing emperor worship. In South Africa Afrikaners Pentecostals have been stigmatised by their compatriots for decades, since by virtue of their conversion they removed themselves from that stream of Reformed theology and culture which has provided the backbone of Afrikaner nationalism. In the Soviet Union and other totalitarian states the Pentecostals and their ideology (along with other religious groups) are a challenge to the authority of the ruling Party elite. It is those who claim to speak for "the people" who have most to lose from the emergence of a grass-roots, populist movement such as Pentecost, which supplies its members with an identity and dignity which the political movement feels is its own prerogative to offer.

7.3 PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The sections above have already indicated some political attitudes toward Pentecostal groups. In those countries where freedom of religion is a valued element of the constitution, Pentecost has not been opposed by statute or officialdom, although often enough red-tape has been generated by its opponents in ecclesiastical or educational circles. The First World Protestant countries are examples here. In the Catholic (and previously fascist) countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy, Pentecost has at times found itself partially or completely outlawed, and this trend has occurred in some Latin American countries too. However, Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue and (perhaps) Vatican II and the more liberal trends it has inaugurated in Catholic dogma and relationships, may have altered this situation to a large extent.

The Pentecostal experience in Marxist countries has not been uniform (cf. Romania and the Soviet Union, as contrasts). It would appear that often Pentecostals are prime targets during the revolutionary war (this has been the case in the former Rhodesia - the author speaks from experience - Korea, Nicaragua, and is often the case in South African townships today), together with those other Christians who have refused to take sides in secular power struggles. Yet in those Marxist countries which are least totalitarian they are tolerated, and, as in Romania, even offered more protection than they could have hoped for under pre-revolutionary regimes.

Although the impact of Pentecost has socio-political dimensions, its maintenance of the distinction between church and world leads it into a largely passive role as far as politics itself is concerned. It is where secular powers (as embodied in the state or against the state) perceive that they are engaged in a battle for the hearts and minds of the people that the challenge of Pentecost is realised as a threat, and that the Pentecostal experience of secular processes in human society becomes that of oppression. To be "free indeed", as the Master was here on earth, apparently confers the concomitant distinction of being hated as he was hated.¹

7.4 ELEMENTS OF PENTECOSTAL THOUGHT WHICH HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

John Mills (1976:97-98; 105-106) has shown that in Pentecost the three salient features of apocalyptic are included in its world-view: the notion of "break", or "radical reversal"; the reality of hope (expectation of Christ's return) which makes sense of secular history and faith; and a sense that all of humanity and nature are mutually involved in progress toward the apocalyptic end. Pentecost is truly an apocalyptic movement, in its self-understanding and its ideology. This has implications for its relationship to societal issues. Conversion to Jesus Christ entails a break from the world and its values. The church and the world are distinctively different entities with entirely different destinations. For Pentecostals "hope for the world" is for the redeemed to escape the coming destruction of the world and its systems. The temporal is relativised by the eternal. Pentecostals take the world very seriously - as seriously as they are not of the world, just as seriously do they take being *in* the world. That many Pentecostals have taken refuge from the world in a legalistic and ascetic sub-culture is a denial of the dynamic of Pentecost, which is given for mission in the world. Since Pentecostal conversion is a radical break from the value systems of the world, and Pentecostal apocalyptic holds out no hope that

the world and its structures has any lasting future, the Pentecostal perception of the kingdom of God is that it is found in the world, but only among the consciously redeemed. It is revealed in their personal and community ethic, and will not be revealed (even in approximate or anticipatory form) in the secular structures of human society until these are subject to the personal rule of Christ as King after his direct and unmistakable intervention in cosmic affairs. In other words, for many a Pentecostal, active involvement in socio-political affairs is an exercise in futility (although this can be radically qualified, as we shall show below). Legitimate activity is to convert a host of sinners from an *aeon* which is passing away to be citizens of that which Christ will personally inaugurate at his Coming, rather than to work at refurbishing and replacing contemporary structures.

This relativisation of the world's structures can of course be misread as their absolutisation, and a simplistic exegesis of Romans 13 often gives this impression. However, in reality it is not that the status quo structure is highly valued and that a revolutionary movement's (for instance) attempts to break them down and replace them with others is seen as sacrilege against some divinely ordained entity. That there are structures at all, is interpreted as God's providence. However, any secular structure, be it pre- or post-revolutionary, comes under apocalyptic evaluation, and has only relative value for Pentecostals. Some structures may hinder or promote their mission more than others. That is about the only criterion which impresses them.

The relativisation of all structures which this apocalyptic view implies encourages an attitude expressed by "why not?" (what hinders?) rather than by "why?". In this sense K Stendahl (1980:206-207) definitely got it right. Where there is work to be done, why not get on with it, regardless of the structures existing in that particular society? And if our work has implications for those structures, why not let them have their effect? The strong emphasis on the mission of Jesus, of personal involvement in that mission, and of a personal relationship with Jesus, makes personal obedience to the master (and not to an ethical system, social or otherwise) the criterion of in what field and in what way the disciple is to become involved. Since the master who directs the disciple is also the Lord who will bring about the apocalyptic "break" in the cosmos, ending this *aeon* and introducing the next, it is possible for Pentecostals to leave the strategy to Him, while fulfilling their own commission as they engage in the tactical warfare to which they have been called.³

Where apocalypticism may reinforce the teleological emphasis in Pentecostal attitudes toward society, it is redemption which provides the ontological basis. Here Pentecostals can find common ground with modern theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann (1967:324), who pleads for a Christian attitude to the world based on the radical freedom of the believer.⁴ The redemption which is in the blood of Jesus brings an end to one phase of existence (in captivity to the world, to sin, to evil forces, to the law (Anderson-Scott 1961:26-52)) and inaugurates another, in which the believer, in faith-union with Christ, partakes of the freedom of Christ as expressed by the man Jesus himself. This freedom transcends every label or expectation bestowed upon the believer by the world, or society, or even theology, for that matter. It is delimited by life in the Spirit and by *agape* and hence falls short of libertinism - but it is radical in the sense that no area of life is unaffected by it. Ontologically, the Christian *is* free. This release from the burden of secular expectation and pressure to conform enables Christians to be what the Master wants them to be. Coupled with the Pentecostal understanding of the dynamic of the Spirit, this means the door is open to Pentecostal participation in anything. Where the rule of thumb may be implied by apocalypticism, with regard to political activities (i.e. that involvement in reformation or replacement of political structures is futile since the structures are relativised by the "glory which is to come"), redemption implies the freedom of the believer to engage in any activity, and the dynamic and guidance of the Spirit becomes the power and the urge to fulfil a particular commission. If this thinking smacks of subjectivism, and appears to belittle objective norms such as Scripture, the experiences of the Old Testament prophets, of the Apostles and others, who all knew what God had called them to do, and who often ran foul of secular and religious powers and structures in fulfilling their commission, provides corroboration (from Scripture) of the line of thinking involved here. Pentecostal history abounds with examples of those whose lifestyle and callings were dramatically changed as they obeyed the Spirit, regardless of the opprobrium or agreement of their peers. Two world-renowned examples are David du Plessis and David Wilkerson. Pentecostal understanding is that the individual believer is subject to the impulse of a Spirit who, like the wind, blows whence and wither he wishes. The norm of Scripture is followed in personal dynamic accommodation to the impulse, and is also applied as a criterion of its validity.⁵ Further, ideally the difference between the Old Testament prophet and the New Testament disciple is the presupposition of a pneumatic community which can discern and judge whether the impulse is truly of God.

Where the notions of apocalypticism and redemption, of radical freedom and of charismatic direction are crucial for the practical relationship of Pentecostals to societal issues, their understanding of society itself is also often different to that which at times appears to reign among their more politically motivated religious contemporaries. Pentecostal social analysis is based on redemption (New Testament) rather than on creation (Old Testament) - hence the existence in their circles of a well-developed community ethic and the absence of all but the most tentative framework of a social ethic. The Pentecostal perception of oppression, for instance, is remarkably well-honed - but it differs radically from those secular analyses which define it almost solely in economic, political or juridical terms. It is also not seen in a mere religious or ethical sense. In the Third World mission fields where the hold of demon spirits is well-attested and often encountered, and in the First World where a post-Christian culture is becoming more and more open to occultic influences⁶, the Pentecostal understanding of oppression as a very real spiritual slavery to demon forces, to human nature as it reveals itself in rebellion against God, to legalistic systems which (in the guise of religion or philosophy) hold out a vain hope of self-salvation - together with an understanding that the mission of Jesus in the power of the Spirit was directly almost exclusively against this type of manifestation - is becoming increasingly relevant. The primary division of humanity is redeemed and unredeemed: redemption is essential from this type of oppression. The thrust of Pentecostal mission is thus directed toward the individual and not the collective, to the component and not the structure.

Pragmatism demands a realisation that this component belongs to a certain race, class or group, as defined by secular social analyses. Realism acknowledges that personal appropriation of redemption, by faith in Jesus, is not going to leave those relationships entirely unchanged. But the Pentecostal world-view sees a far more serious challenge to human liberty and well-being in oppressive forces of personal evil than in temporal and temporary social structures. The conflict is not with flesh and blood, neither are the weapons involved natural, but "mighty through God". The question is not even that of the primacy of the vertical relationship over the horizontal; that sort of distinction and all its attendant arguments can too often lead to simplistic distinctions and superficial evaluations, and is based on a distinction between immanence and transcendence which owes more to post-Kantian philosophy than to Pentecostal understanding of reality. To Pentecostals the real question is - are you free, or aren't you? If you are free in Christ you know it, appreciate

it, exercise your liberty, and proclaim freedom to others. *There is no power or structure on earth which can bestow, further or limit that freedom.*

To those who are not free, the love of Christ constrains us to preach the liberty of God, available in reconciliation with him. But the Pentecostal understanding of that appropriation of liberty demands that it affect more than the rational comprehension of religious truth, or the moral attitude, of the subject - it demands that he be set free, obviously and effectively. Peripheral to this sort of liberation (but by no means exempt from its implications) are the societal structures of which the individual is a part. And the existence of a fellowship of the redeemed, transcending secular group boundaries, makes the implications for society as a whole also very real. But the eventual working out of those implications is left to the divine strategist and not usurped by human beings. That the strategist may call and empower people to implement that strategy in political or administrative context is also a matter of his sovereignty and their obedience.

The understanding of the Christian situation as mission and conflict also bears as concomitant the Pentecostal understanding of power - *dunamis*. As the political debates rage between East and West, North and South, rich and poor, capitalism and socialism, Whites and Blacks, there is underlying them all a notion that the power that matters most is economic, juridical or military in its nature. In this milieu the Pentecostal is an alien, an incongruity. To become engaged in the battle on the terms of this sort of understanding would be a contradiction of Pentecostal experience and perception. Where liberty, justice and peace are the slogans, in reality it is power in these terms that is the name of the game. And those who know by experience the power of God's Spirit in their lives have had a foretaste of the power to be revealed in the eschatological kingdom apocalyptically inaugurated by Jesus himself, and their thirst has been dulled for the emptiness of temporal power, while sharpened for more of the Spirit's power. For this reason a healthy cynicism is found among most Pentecostals concerning the struggles of people around them for social justice, etc. The issue (and many political theologians are honest in this regard) is transfer of power, temporal power, of some sort or the other. It may be constitutional power from White to Black, economic power from rich to poor (or more likely from corporation-dominated industries to party-dominated bureaucracy), or military power from an authoritarian regime to a totalitarian "people's army". Whatever the context or issue, those who do not have power, want power, while those who have it will do all in their power to cling to it. In this context Pentecostals (and dare we say it - most

disciples of Jesus) are scarcely at home. To become involved in one party's power struggle with another - or to legitimate the one over against the other - is merely to perpetuate the absurdities and futilities of history, where temporal power has been won and lost by factions and parties and secret societies and monarchs and priests, and almost every possible variety of power change has been experienced, while God's kingdom itself is both "already" and "not yet", and qualified on a totally different plane to these struggles. This is not a Pentecostal cop-out - every Spirit-filled believer is involved with real power in a very real and grim struggle. But the quest for temporal power is peripheral to this issue, for king and pauper, Party official and collective farm worker, revolutionary and reactionary - all, whatever the context or outcome of their power struggles, are in slavery and need if they do not know by experience the "touch of the power of God in Jesus".

The Holy Spirit is also known as the Spirit of truth. Truth for Pentecostals is a person - Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ who is Lord. In a media culture where most knowledge of human affairs is gleaned via certain filters, Pentecostals who are associated with *the Truth* in a dynamic personal relationship have every right to be sceptical of the presentation of issues in modern secular society. If the South African political issue is taken as an example: within South Africa the liberal, politically active theological group appears to present and struggle with a caricature of the State and the governing National Party, while these powers-that-be do not hesitate to bombard the public with a caricature of political church leaders, while both sides offer (albeit unwittingly!) caricatures of themselves to the public. Government media and liberal press merely reinforce the whole ridiculous situation. Outside of South Africa the true situation in South Africa is even more difficult to discern. Pentecostals who wish to get to grips with the reality of a situation need to ascertain what are data, what is fabrication, what is distortion, and what is interpretation by a faction with its own axe to grind. In a world full of self-interest, of propaganda and media images, the data outside of one's immediate situation is rarely objectively available. Hence Pentecostal crusading cannot be aimed at the variables of structures and human aspirations, but at what every Pentecostal *knows* is a constant, from Lapland to the Argentine, from Taiwan to California - that people in rebellion against their creator are in need of redemption, and that it is this that has been entrusted to us, God's message of reconciliation and redemption, its power being demonstrated by the power of the Spirit which is in us and works through us.

7.5 SUMMARY

Pentecostal attitudes to states and structures are thus pragmatic, in terms of their perceived mission, rather than idealistic. In practical terms they experience friction with states according to the totalitarian, authoritarian or democratic impulses currently active within those states. States and structures appear to react to Pentecostalism within their borders according to their own ideals for the people, and the threat (rarely promise) which a burgeoning Pentecostal movement holds for them. Pentecost does have social and political effect and implications, although not many Pentecostal groups encourage or participate in overt socio-political activities. The growth of Pentecost makes these implications a factor to be taken into account by many states. Pentecostal apocalypticism, their social analysis based on redemption, their scepticism concerning temporal power struggles, and their relationship with personal Truth, make Pentecostal involvement in media-publicised issues problematic. Their radical freedom and belief in charismatic direction mean that socio-political activity by Pentecostals is not illegitimate if it is "as He wills"; however, where human power struggles present a distorted version of the true situation, and where transfers of power are often futile and rarely produce the promised goods (this is certainly true in post-colonial Africa, and Indo-China may be another good example), Pentecostals will prefer to engage in activities directed towards the constants in every human situation - rebellion against God and God's salvation in Jesus Christ, confirmed by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in and among believers.

PART III

Summary and evaluation

CHAPTER 8

What is distinctive about Pentecostal theology?

In the course of this study we have attempted an evaluation of Pentecostal practice and thought from a variety of perspectives. The role and use of Scripture, the emphasis on valid and adequate experience, with the tensions this generates with regard to doctrine, the nature of this experience, Pentecostal community (church life) and the socio-political implications of Pentecost - all of these have been considered from a decidedly Pentecostal point of view. Yet it must at this point be unequivocally stated that the study has not been able to comprehend or communicate Pentecost adequately, for the simple reason that a one-dimensional approach has been used (of necessity).

This is not to say that a more comprehensive discussion of Pentecost could not have been attempted - there is certainly material enough and sources enough, so that "if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). Indeed, the wealth of material of every description devoted to tongues, the charismata, the Holy Spirit, etc., from a multitude of sources, each with a particular theological axe to grind, shows that the Apostle's estimate of the literary output required to set in the one-dimensional rational-literary format the free and gracious working of God may well be accurate - it certainly appears to be heading for infinity! The basic inadequacy of this research lies not in the limited use made (in consideration of time and available space) of the available material. It must be sought in the nature of Pentecost itself, the rational description and understanding of which can convey but a fraction of its impact, dynamic and meaning.

The point of departure in this research has been that of a committed Pentecostal pastor and teacher. The categories employed have been largely those of the formal theological milieu in which he has been trained. But, as pointed out in the introduction, the theological parameters themselves (those of Pentecost and of formal non-Pentecostal theology) are widely disparate, if not mutually exclusive. At best the result is a hybrid, with all that that implies. In short, the establishment of a Pentecostal proprium may be well-nigh impossible in what currently passes for formal theological format.

However, if a one-dimensional attempt is the only feasible expression of the search for a Pentecostal proprium, in the context of this project, then at least it should be done as well as possible. These remarks on the limitations of the method are made to indicate that the rational-literary expression offers at best an approximation of only a fraction of what is essential and distinctive about Pentecost, and that this research must be understood in the light of such limitations. Pentecostal theology may or may not be unique in this respect - either way, with regard to *Pentecost* this is very much the case. To conclude this work then we will summarise and evaluate some tentative pointers highlighted in the body of our research, and as a final step point to areas other than the rational-literary which may prove more adequate in the task of communicating the essential and distinctive about Pentecost.

8.1 SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS ALREADY REACHED

8.1.1 In our introduction the point was made that the *parameters of Pentecostal theology* and practice are totally different from those of non-Pentecostal theologies, and particularly the Western post-Reformation theological establishment. This has become clear from criticism directed against Pentecost from these circles, as well as from the detrimental effect upon Pentecostal ministry of theologies which are patterned according to the contemporary mode. This means in effect that the proprium of Pentecost is not merely a minor (perhaps major, at points) aberration of or differentiation from the mainstream of Protestant theology. To do justice to Pentecost, a theology must be formulated which is, from A to Z, Pentecostal. Since this theology may express itself in totally different categories to other theologies, its content may not be best communicated in rational-literary format or doctrinal concepts. In other words, it may be doubted whether a non-Pentecostal faculty will ever be able to offer anything deeper than a description of some aspects (symptoms?) of Pentecostal theology as an option within its own understanding of "theology". In doctrinal formulation Pentecost of course has

strong links with various Protestant streams, e.g. the evangelicals. However, the context of the formulations and their origin, as well as their importance for theology itself, may possibly be radically different.

8.1.2 *Pentecostal use of the Bible* is conducted according to a basic hermeneutical model which is distinctively Pentecostal. Although lip-service is often given to non-Pentecostal models, particularly in much of modern Pentecostal training for ministry, in homiletical and teaching practice the Pentecostal model still comes to the fore. In this model the reader of Scripture can identify with the writer by virtue of common spiritual experience. The Bible itself is not used primarily as a source-book of Christian doctrine. It may be rather daring to aver that in Pentecost the role of Scripture is to serve as confirmation and guideline to the dynamic of the Spirit, while at the same time the obvious moving of the Spirit serves as confirmation and guideline to the proclamation of the witness of the Scriptures, since if the context of the statement (a Pentecostal community) is misunderstood, a totally erroneous impression of subjective appropriation of Scripture may be conveyed. However, this is the way it generally works in Pentecost, where the Bible is associated with activity and experience rather than viewed as a textbook of doctrine. Experience after the Biblical pattern takes precedence over confession according to the supposed theological content of Scripture. For instance, trinitarian and non-trinitarian Pentecostals are immediately recognisable as Pentecostal, although in confessional disputes the fur might fly!

8.1.3 *The tension between doctrine and experience* becomes very real in Pentecost, if doctrine is granted an autonomous position with regard to experience, or vice versa. It is precisely the task of a Pentecostal theology to formulate doctrine so that it does not contradict valid experience, and to demand experience in line with Biblical patterns. This task, originating as it does in the peculiar Pentecostal environment, may produce a theology which is not always comprehensible to non-Pentecostal scholars. However, this element of risk, both in terms of non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal understanding of Pentecost, may not be obviated by "safe" doctrinal formulations which in any way limit God's Spirit. After all, there does appear to be a good argument from Scripture for the principle that God be allowed to be God (cf. Peter's experience in Acts 10, among many others).

8.1.4 *Pentecostal emphasis on experience* means that theology takes on a perspective that is absent in most other contemporary theologies. It is of course a Pentecostal contention that this is not because of an unhealthy concentration on the experiential on their part, but because of the almost total neglect of the

experiential in other theologies. Whatever the rights of the matter, experiential emphasis marks this theology as "other". The neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have encouraged renewed interest in the experiential in non-Pentecostal circles. However, it is my conviction that the attempt to integrate Pentecostal-type experience with theologies that have been formulated over centuries in which experience has been neglected (even hostilely considered, in some reformation traditions), is very much a case of attempting to put new wine into old wineskins. This does not preclude appreciation of or fellowship with such people, as the Pentecostal criterion of Christian fellowship is not doctrinally defined, but experientially (with "experience" here being subject to all the qualifications expressed in our chapter on valid Pentecostal experience).

8.1.5 A tentative proposal for a Pentecostal essential was made in terms of insistence upon *"a touch of the power of God in Jesus"*, descriptive of the experience which Pentecostals consider essential, valid and adequate. This phrase denotes experience ("touch"), power, and the centrality of the person of Jesus, all of which are cardinal in Pentecost. It also fits in with the four-square formula, Jesus Christ; Saviour, Healer, Spirit-baptiser, Coming King. However, knowing and agreeing to the formula is not what makes a Pentecostal - knowing (by experience) and ministering "the touch of the power of God in Jesus" is.

8.1.6 In Pentecostal ministry the peculiar Pentecostal phenomenology that demands God's presence and working to be perceptible and obvious, contributes a sense of expectation that truth will not only be held in remembrance, or objectively proclaimed as "pure" doctrine - but that *truth will be realised in the midst of the people*. Liturgy, preaching and missions are all conducted in this expectation - that sins will be forgiven, bodies and psyches will be healed, spirits will be uplifted, relationships will be restored, believers will be endued with spiritual power, etc. Truth is both personal (i.e. Jesus is the Truth) and empirically realisable, as opposed to merely conceptual. A Pentecostal thus has a relationship to truth which is both personal and verifiable, as opposed to mere rational cognition. The question to be answered is not "Do you know about this or that?" but "Do you know Him?" and "Has it really happened to you yet?" The implications for theology are extensive - an attempt has to be made to return to the theology of the early church, where a relationship was the kernel of both personal experience and kerygma, as opposed to the formal religion (as expressed in some denomination or other) so often presupposed in many contemporary theologies.

8.1.7 A Pentecostal theology will take an approach to secular society and its structures which is neither unthinkingly accommodating nor fashionably critical, but which rather is God-dictated. It is unlikely, bearing in mind the heterogeneity of the movement and its widely varying and divergent fields of witness, that a normative Pentecostal social ethic will develop that will, for instance, validate socialism against capitalism, or vice versa. Pentecostal theology, if it seeks its roots in the example of Jesus and of the early community of Christians in this matter, will leave the strategy of socio-political developments to God, and expect of believers to be involved in tactics, as they exercise their radical freedom from the world and its values according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as and when he empowers them for particular calling and service in this area. The emphasis upon the charismatic element should ensure that such ministry (as indeed is the case in *all* ministry) should have its origin and purpose in the personal involvement of God himself.

These are perhaps the most salient points made in our survey. In them we find pointers toward what makes Pentecostalism tick. To take cognisance of these elements is, however, but a tiny step toward a comprehensive understanding of Pentecost. Because of the emphasis upon experience and relationship, the category "rational conceptuality" becomes relativised, and the category "knowledge as experience of" comes far more to the fore. To illustrate this point we might give consideration to the trinitarian formula, which the majority of Pentecostals accept along with the rest of Christendom. The necessity for such a formula in the early centuries of the Church age appeared to arise at the same time as the pneumatic element in its ranks declined from neglect. The concept "trinity", set out so meticulously in the rational categories of the philosophies of the day, and passed down as a confession to mainline Christianity today, may well have become necessary because of the decline of the experiential in the church. The primary category of communication of tradition, and of the perpetuation of the church, became rational acceptance of the creed, rather than spiritual experience of the deity. A rational formulation, to serve as a creed, was thus extracted from the testimony of spiritual experience, as recorded in the first century. Pentecostals today, by virtue of their experience, are aware of the existence of the triune God, since they know by experience the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and are aware that the three are not the same person, but are all definitely divine. They may interpret these encounters modalistically in some groups, but they do not confuse them. Most Pentecostal groups have accepted the trinitarian formula in their statements of faith - however, it is primarily in their

experience and practice that a Pentecostal theology will seek a trinitarian belief, rather than a delivered tradition formulated in the face of neglect of experience.

8.2 AREAS OTHER THAN THE RATIONAL-LITERARY IN WHICH PENTECOSTAL ESSENTIALS AND DISTINCTIVES MIGHT BE COMMUNICATED

This study will hopefully have value for two groups of people in particular. Firstly, for those Pentecostals who desire a better self-understanding of their theological position, this has been one attempt to state what Pentecost is and what it is not, from a decidedly classical Pentecostal stance. This statement may be necessary if Pentecostal ministry can indeed be threatened where a theology formulated in parameters alien to Pentecost is allowed to become normative in its pulpits and counselling rooms. This group will hopefully readily identify with much of what has been penned here, and will sympathise (by virtue of their own Pentecostal experience and ministry) with the difficulties involved in attempting to communicate the heart of Pentecost in this fashion.

On the other hand, there are those who stand at a greater or lesser distance from Pentecost, who may wish for more information on what makes Pentecost what it is. These observers may range from enthusiastically participatory charismatics to overtly hostile critics. For this group there will hopefully be a wealth of data presented here, gleaned not only from academic sources but also from a commitment to Pentecostal ministry, from teenage years as a youth leader to lecturing in a theological college, and involving some years of pastoring along the way. The data of course are given in the context of a specific Pentecostal frame of reference, a framework for interpretation in which it makes sense to a Pentecostal. This Pentecostal "understanding", like the data, may be taken cognisance of, and analysed, since it is a phenomenon or datum itself. However, it is to this group in particular that the warning note must be sounded: rational cognisance of the data and the Pentecostal framework within which it is presented does *not* entail or imply an understanding of the Pentecostal proprium. Obviously this project has been an attempt to communicate both data and framework to the best extent possible, given the limits of the rational-literary medium. Even if it is successful in this sense, no reader of the work will be able to say, by virtue of having perused it: "I have read this work, I have taken note of and assimilated all the data it contains, I now understand Pentecost and can evaluate it as I feel necessary." Such a claim would merely reveal a total misunderstanding of Pentecost, not to mention of the aim of a Pentecostal teacher in agreeing to undertake this project.

How can one who is not Pentecostal come to understand what Pentecost is all about? Admittedly there are those who are quite happy to have the data, to incorporate it or evaluate it according to their own belief systems, and to leave it at that. To them it is one more phenomenon which must be taken note of, categorised, and left at that. However, there is something in Pentecost which drives many to wish for a deeper understanding. To the former group the point must merely be made that their viewpoint is perfectly valid and logical within the parameters of most theologies, but that in all fairness they are not competent to express authoritative opinions with regard to Pentecost on the grounds of data gained in this fashion alone. With regard to the others, when the various faculty members of the theological college where the author lectures were asked how a non-Pentecostal could come to understand Pentecost, they all answered (though each phrased it differently): To *understand* Pentecost, one must *be* Pentecostal, and even then there will be much which one cannot hope to really rationally get to grips with. This is no doubt one of the most arrogant, presumptuous and exclusivist statements ever made by a religious grouping, since the day when "no salvation outside of the church" was formulated! Pentecost has of course always been noted for its "aggressive marketing policy", and it is something of a privilege to be able to uphold this desirable tradition within the context of a formal theological investigation. Pentecostal researchers will strive, like any others, to be objective and fair. However, since their experience is not negotiable, it is unlikely that they will be neutral! Here are some unashamed proposals for a non-Pentecostal to gain an understanding of what is distinctive and essential about Pentecost.

8.2.1 Participation

Pentecost is not alone in this premise - many so-called contextual theologies demand that theology be "done" (praxis), in the context of the struggles of the people, etc. Theology is not merely a rational and cognitive process, it involves participation. Many Pentecostals shudder at the absurdity of the charges brought against them by their critics, realising that no matter how much data the critics have at their fingertips, they don't *know* (by experience) what they are talking about. A Pentecostal proposal to participate does not mean that an understanding of Pentecost can best be gained by joining a Pentecostal denomination, subscribing to its doctrinal "confession", and sharing its joys and sorrows as an institution. It does, however, presuppose a Pentecostal community, i.e. a community which is consciously submitted to the dictates and dynamic of the Holy Spirit. Such communities are not always found within denominational Pentecost (tragically), and may well be found in other groups.

The Pentecostal contention is that *observers* cannot understand Pentecost. They are like people sitting on the banks of a river, dabbling their toes (that is, if they are participatory observers - some others would prefer to observe from a long way off, through binoculars!) while their Pentecostal contemporaries are out in midstream, "moving with the flow". Since at the heart of the Pentecostal experience is submission and commitment to God - for all experience of God is by his grace alone - who moves by his Spirit, the Pentecostal demand for participation is aimed at this area. It is not a demand to speak in tongues, to worship emotionally, or to perform extraordinary miracles. It is an expectation that human beings and God really can get together, and that each can take the other seriously for what they are - a person in his or her need and God in His grace and power - and that they can thus experience one another. There is in Pentecost an implicit understanding that such experience will incorporate the type of manifestation to which Scripture is a witness. Until human beings and God have got together in this fashion, the Pentecostal and the non-Pentecostal are separated by a major divide. Call this a demand for Pentecostal experience, for Spirit baptism; call it what you will - without an obvious (subjectively and objectively) encounter with God there can be no real comprehension of what Pentecost is all about.

8.2.2 Commitment (total surrender)

Pentecostals are not just Christians who have a good-time religion, which allows for the experiential and emotional (so handily categorised as the "subjective element" by many outsiders). Nor is there some mystical element of Christianity which they have rediscovered and elevated to primacy. Pietism does have some input into contemporary Pentecost's historical roots, but Pentecost is not flight into a world of individual and private religion. It all starts with the individual, each person and his or her needs being taken extremely seriously - however, what marks Pentecost is its public and extrovert character. To be Pentecostal is to be committed to a certain purpose.

As we pointed out in the chapter on valid experience, Pentecostal commitment begins with commitment to the person of Jesus. Its concomitants are commitment to mission, to a lifestyle, and to values which are in agreement with commitment to his person. In the context of understanding the essential and distinctive about Pentecost, the interested party would need not only to participate in Pentecostal experience of God, but to share in the basic commitment to the calling ministry, vision and power of God which

is made evident in Scripture, and which underlies the Pentecostal movement, for all its imperfections. And it is here that the crunch comes.

There have been many who have attended Pentecostal services to see if they can "feel" something, to partake of a particular sensation. Some serious theologians and churchmen have observed the movement from a desire to add something of the experiential to their theological understanding, while at the same time still retaining theological control over what is happening. This is of course not a bad thing when dealing with some of the too human input into Pentecost, the attempts to "make something happen". However, in dealing with God it can be prejudicial, as Nicodemus and various others in Scripture found when they encountered Jesus. We have stressed that in the Pentecostal encounter, God must be allowed to be God. It is in fact rather sad that such an encounter must be specifically labelled "Pentecostal", by virtue of neglect on the part of such a large part of historical Christendom. Since people are God's creation, when God is allowed to be God he does not overwhelm them in the sense of taking robot-like control - that sort of experience is more likely to find a context in the occult. But the person who comes to God desiring participation in the moving of God today, has to do so *on God's terms*. This is where commitment comes in. The practice of rational and controlled theology receives its come uppance when it is confronted by the demands of a free and sovereign God. It then finds God as the subject of theological practice, not the object, and it becomes a descriptive rather than prescriptive science, operating on a totally different plane to before. The person (and particularly the thinking individual) who comes to God hoping to participate in experience of God is involving him or herself in risk - risk that he or she, as a person, together with his or her pattern of thinking, will never be the same again.

This commitment to God involves nothing less than total surrender. The Pentecostal (and the present writer) is saying to the person who is interested in what Pentecost is all about:

Come and meet my God - on his terms, not your own. Forget the opprobrium of tongues, the incongruities of some Pentecostal doctrines, the peculiar habits some of those people have. Lay aside your normative theological opinions and subject your person, with all your religious patterns and traditions, to God. Then you will understand something of Pentecost. But regardless of what you expect to happen, let God be the eventual deciding factor.

This is *not* an assertion that only Pentecostals know the truth about God. It was the very clear message of David du Plessis, for instance, that we lay no claim to such a monopoly. It is the Pentecostal desire that all Christians lay aside their preconceived notions of how God should operate, and get together with God, allowing him to be God. However, it *is* our understanding that Pentecostals, for all their manifold and manifest faults and limitations, have been involved in this sort of commitment to God from the very beginning, and that it is not our specific doctrines which we wish to market aggressively, but this notion that human beings are welcome, as far as God is concerned, to get together with Him and to be dynamically renewed, vitalised and commissioned. Participation in this type of Pentecostal experience is essential if one wants to understand Pentecost. But participation in the Pentecostal calling, vision, ministry and power, with the understanding that it involves total surrender to the God of the day of Pentecost, is its essential context. To leave the safety of one's well-controlled conceptual theological haven is an indispensable part of the search for an understanding of what Pentecost is all about (and may we Pentecostals never create one of our own!) That we gain a few unusual (to say the least!) travelling companions along the way is inevitable. But to attempt to obviate that and other similar risks is to lose out on reality, for where people desire to dictate the conditions, God tends to make himself conspicuous by his absence.

It is more than possible that despite all our qualifications to obviate it, a charge of exclusivity, indeed, of gnosticism, may be made against the Pentecostal thinking outlined above. After all (and our evangelical friends are often in the forefront when this accusation is made), who are the Pentecostals to claim that they, and they alone, have it all? It is true that many non-Pentecostal theologies do not deny the possibility of encounter with God, and some, like that of the evangelicals, even encourage it within certain parameters. Pentecostals certainly do not have it all; indeed, sadly many seem to have lost all but the form of what they once had. But our argument is - test your theological parameters to see how much God is allowed to be God. Experience of God should not be considered merely as an option, nor even merely encouraged. It is *essential*. And it must be on his terms. Experience seemed to have been normative for the first Christians. In fact one wonders whether participation in the community was considered possible otherwise. After almost two millennia of church history it appears ironic that a plea for a return to the thinking and practice of that era should be labelled "sectarian", its proponents a "cult". It is also significant that the movement associated with this experience is, in many places, turning the world upside down in the same fashion as its early Christian forerunners. Pentecost is exclusive only in

this sense, that it does claim that the true essence of Christianity itself (not just of Pentecost) is that mortal human beings and God get together on God's conditions, with all the experiential implications of that encounter; and in further claiming that to date it does seem as if Pentecostalism is the one branch of Christendom that reveals a willingness to encounter God thus. It may perhaps be gnostic from some perspectives, in that its members claim to have had such a profound experience of God. If so, one may argue that the early church founders were all gnostic! Pentecostals may be militant and often uncompromising - but it is not with arrogance but with humility that we assert, far from laying any claim to exclusivity: "For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39) The main thrust of Pentecostal kerygma (and even our theology easily becomes that) is not Pentecostalism, but God's invitation and promise to us as human beings.

8.3 CONCLUSION

One may raise the question of the viability of research into Pentecost by asking: Are you researching it or propagating it? The answer must be that Pentecost is researched at the researcher's peril. Perhaps we may seek the proprium of Pentecost in the fact that it is not just another doctrine or theology. It invites investigation and eventually demands participation. Its early proponents claimed it was a movement, not a doctrine. Perhaps we might qualify that by saying Pentecostal practice and thought is a side effect of the moving of God's Spirit in fulfilment of the commission of Christ. There can be no Pentecostalism or Pentecostal theology without the moving of God's Spirit which it presupposes. We might, if we wished to establish a proprium in terms of rational conceptuality, toy with concepts such as Spirit, power, and experience - all of which are cardinal in Pentecost, compared to other movements. However, that is to allow non-Pentecostal common factors the power of a norm, with Pentecost out on a limb as separatist. The proprium would thus be its distinguishing mark. However, what is essential to Pentecost is the dynamic of the free moving of God, by his Spirit. And since a gracious God has allowed people to become involved in this working, to the extent that they are even termed co-workers of God, the very essence of Pentecost as a theological force lies in its invitation to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8) and its proclamation that "We are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

P A R T I V

Notes

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Hollenweger's position with regard to denominational Pentecost appears ambivalent. There is no doubt that his major work (1977) reveals more sympathy for Pentecost than many other works of the time, yet his position appears to be primarily critical - in fact, his situation as a "renegade" confirms this. His later works may indicate that his desertion from Pentecost may have coincided with the period of greatest academic scepticism toward the movement, while its subsequent increase in "respectability" seems to be eliciting more favourable comment from him in more recent times.
2. F P Möller's systematic theological thought is reflected in his *Dogmatics* as presented at the Apostolic Faith Mission Theological College in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Original notes differ little from Reformed theology, except for the revision of the covenant aspects with regard to baptism, and the inclusion of chapters on the baptism and gifts of the Spirit. His more recent unpublished *Dogmatics* shows greater variance from Reformed notions with however little evidence that it seeks to define a distinctively Pentecostal theology operating within distinctively Pentecostal parameters.
3. Thomas Holdcroft is President of the Western Pentecostal Bible College in British Columbia, Canada. His college, along with many other Pentecostal colleges in America, has sought common ground and even affiliation with evangelicals. This may be because the issue of the "inerrancy of Scripture" has a bearing on the struggle of conservative churchleaders with the mores and values of secular humanism in all aspects of state policy in North America.

4. A South African illustration of Pentecostal pre-occupation with criticism of the gift of tongues is F P Möller (1975). The amount of discussion awarded the gift of tongues is out of all proportion to the space granted the other charismata, apparently because it is very rarely that non-Pentecostals (particularly at the time Möller wrote) show much detailed interest in the other gifts. Healing may perhaps be an exception to the rule.
5. Walter Hollenweger (1977), in the section on "Belief and practice", attempts to set out Pentecostal teaching on various Christian topics (Bible, salvation etc.). His findings are enlightening and interesting, but are also evidence of the presupposition that a phenomenon may be comprehended if enough data concerning it can be accumulated and categorised. Pentecost is indebted to Hollenweger for the immense amount of data so painstakingly accumulated.

Chapter 2

1. The question of the relationship to the USA has often been a vexed one for Pentecostals. A type of American paternalism has often offended non-American Pentecostals. The excesses of the extremely visible healing evangelists in America during the fifties and sixties have unhappily contributed to the stigma attached to Pentecostals everywhere. Even today the high-powered presentation of the electronic evangelists colours the issues for many non-American Pentecostals. The fundamentalism, conservative political image and cultural mores that American Pentecost has inherited or contracted from the North American evangelical establishment has too often been forced upon non-American communities to whom they are in essence totally irrelevant. It is significant that the most enthusiastic and sustained applause at the World Pentecostal Conference in London, 1976, was granted the Brazilian representative when he exulted: "I bring you greetings from the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world!" The Russian church has no proven historical link with North America, the Latin Americans prefer to play theirs down, and the British have always gone out of their way to avoid American "gimmickry". Many other groups who acknowledge their debt to North American Pentecostal pioneers are now so indigenous that their American roots are scarcely discernible.
2. It is of course the opinion of many classical Pentecostals that there are limits to the extent of the pluralism which can be tolerated. This appears to have been borne out by the tendency among charismatics to relativise either their experience of the Spirit or their original theological

framework. One purpose of this study, is to show that classical Pentecost has inherently the theological framework which is most consistent with the experience.

3. It will be interesting to observe whether those who hold to the primacy of their traditions for the categories by which they understand the Pentecostal experience will be able to sustain their charismatic fervour and manifestations for any length of time.

Chapter 3

1. Cf. Hollenweger's dedication to *The Pentecostals*: "To my friends and teachers in the Pentecostal movement who taught me to love the Bible, and to my teachers and friends in the Presbyterian Church who taught me to understand it."
2. Cf. also the work of W C Meloon (1971). Meloon asserts that the basic reason for evangelical hostility to Pentecost has been dispensationalism, and that in evangelical circles it is not Pentecost which should be criticised, but the dispensationalist framework of presuppositions.

Chapter 4

1. Catholic baptismal regeneration would be considered overt; the Reformed notion of "covenant sign" would be considered implied sacramentality: the action itself leaves some spiritual mark.

Chapter 5

1. In South Africa the Pentecostal congregation attempts this at moments of intense worship, by singing:
"It is Jesus, Hallelujah;
It's the power of God in Jesus"
2. After twenty-eight years of an average three meetings a week in classical Pentecost the author has never yet heard a sermon which was based solely on the dynamic of the Spirit without referring to the centrality of Christ - in fact most sermons have been on Christ with only reference to the Spirit.
3. Examples in literature on Pentecostalism are legion, and the presupposition so entrenched that the New English Bible consistently renders "tongues" as "ecstatic speech". F P Möller (1975:151ff.) has dealt with this aspect (in view of his training both in Psychology and in Theology). He notes in this and the following section that many psychological evaluation of glossolalia (or any other Pentecostal manifes-

- tation) are limited by the presuppositions of the researchers and seldom define the phenomena in a way that Pentecostals would consider an adequate description of their experience. This problem is greatest where the presuppositions of the social and psychological sciences preclude the dynamic intervention of a personal God in individual or social affairs.
4. This, in my view, is the major contention of I Cor. 14.
 5. Pentecostal praise in song abounds of this testimony, redolent as it is with the themes of Wesley, Newton, the Great Awakening, The Salvation Army, the revival movements, etc.
 6. Jürgen Moltmann's work on *The Church in The Power of the Spirit* (1977) is an example of this. In attempting a "charismatic" theology of the church Moltmann has at no point touched on a notion of "charismatic" acceptable to Pentecostal thought.
 7. Cf. the paper presented by M Clark at the dialogue of Catholic and Pentecostal groups in Pretoria, 1987, entitled "A Pentecostal perspective upon socio-political concern in the church of Jesus Christ". The insights expressed here owe much to W Eichrodt (1971:289-391).
 8. The attempt to so reduce these manifestations is a healthy manifestation of human cynicism, or the free critical spirit, and is not to be derided. Pentecostals, by discernment, take just such a critical attitude. However modern reductionism falls short of objective findings in too often applying presuppositions that exclude any possibility that the manifestations are charismatic, i.e. divine in origin, thereby prejudging the issue and leaving a large question mark behind its findings.
 9. This is a matter of personal observation - the ongoing liturgical and doctrinal tensions in the AFM of SA today are certainly not divorced from this problem.
 10. The author is indebted to Dr Marié-Henry Keane of Unisa for this insight, expressed in this way.

Chapter 6

1. The Assemblies of God in Australia and the Elim Pentecostal Church in the U.K. have both experimented with less restrictive structures, apparently to good effect. The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa is under increasing grass-roots pressure to follow suit. The North American Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada already have comparatively decentralised structures, but the rise of the independent ministries has applied pressure there, too, although perhaps more particularly in the area of liturgy.

2. F P Möller, in his lecture notes entitled *Oogmatiek* (Vol. III), p.443-444, may be an exception here. He maintains that even the New Testament Church had a centralised structure based on the Jerusalem Councils and the Apostolic Executive. It must be borne in mind that Möller's entire Pentecostal career has been closely linked to central administration, rather than to pastoring in a local community. Hattings (1986:5) expresses an opposite tendency, where the structure of the Church should emphasise the individual member rather than community or central organisation.
3. Pentecostal insight into early church history need not be valuable only in the context of the apostolic communities. Since the Pentecostal norm of orthodoxy is not based on the church institutional nor on technical purity of doctrine, a Pentecostal history of the theology of those times might include a reappraisal of such early heretics and Marcion, Montanus and Arius, whose doctrines may have been a contradiction of Pentecostal realities, but whose lifestyle and dynamic mission were probably a more reliable expression of a knowledge of and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord as the one who had commissioned them.
4. The argument is based on a questionable exegesis of Acts 15, where James cites Amos in connection with the rebuilding of the Davidic Tabernacle. Inglis argues that this rebuilding implies the liturgy, and that James cites the Scripture to show that after the Gentiles become saved they will worship in the Davidic pattern.
5. The tensions such as those described by M van der Spuy (1985), centre mostly upon this point of freedom to participate emotionally and charismatically in the service. However, it must be borne in mind that many Pentecostals are more at home in a service where such participation is positively encouraged than in that where it is perhaps not prohibited, but allowed to operate only within very constrictive parameters.
6. This option has of course been taken up by more than one Pentecostal congregation, resulting in alienation from other congregations in the denomination, and all the attendant evils of alleged "sheep-stealing" by more dynamic communities, etc.
7. A minority of smaller Pentecostal groups (e.g. The Apostolic Church of Great Britain) have a practice of designating "set prophets". This can lead to abuse, however. There is a growing tendency among newer Pentecostal groups (the word-faith groups in particular) to recognise and advertise prophets and prophetesses, in keeping with their formal recognition of the five-fold ministry of Eph 4.
8. The problem of charismatic versus organised/institutionalised ministries has been recently touched on in charismatic

- perspective by among others: Gelpi (1974:254-258), Moody (1965:168-181) and Fung (1980:195-214).
9. This point is being ably made in South Africa, at least, by preachers such as Frank Cronjé, Jan Hattingh, and Izak Burger, of the Apostolic Faith Mission of S.A. Lacking little in erudition, these men conduct services, prayer-meetings and seminars in which the Pentecostal element is markedly present, and are immensely popular because of that. This is in marked contrast to the reception granted many earlier Pentecostal academics! The development has no doubt a number of contributing factors, one of which is the more ready acceptance of theological qualifications in Pentecost - another is undoubtedly that this generation of academics represents a more militant and less apologetic Pentecost.
 10. "Hendrik Kraemer, Hoekendyk and others have reminded us in this century that the primary task of the Church is to be engaged in spreading the gospel to a sinful world. It is not that the church has, among other elements, a call to mission, but that the entire existence of the church is directed by Christ's reaching out to the world. The church's existence is in going, the church lives for the task of winning the world for Christ" (my translation) (Hattingh 1986:7).
 11. In Pentecostal circles where fundamentalism is consciously adhered to, one might hear of the 'power of the Bible to heal' and other such sacramental understandings of Scripture. In the world-faith circles the word becomes sacramental (efficacious) in being spoken (confessed). However, since Pentecost tends toward a strong personal understanding of God and his working, generally speaking it is the *God* of the Bible who is acknowledged and sought, not the object itself.
 12. Cf. paper by M S Clark to the Structure Committee of the Apostolic Faith Mission of S.A., June 1986, entitled "Unity and Diversity in the Church", in which this emphasis is maintained as primary, against the ontological perspective, which often leads to a static church.
 13. The study of Glazier is of great value for an understanding not only of the sociological processes within which Pentecost becomes attractive, but also of the social effects of the movement on individuals and societies.

Chapter 7

1. The larger Pentecostal groups in North America appear to be quite prepared to identify with much of the ideology of the New Right which has such popular support from the Evangelicals. In South Africa the First World component among the Pentecostals refuses to associate with groups such as the

South African Council of Churches, as long as these groups express hostility to the state as currently constituted.

2. Secular powers are notorious in their demands for allegiance, whether to the Party, "the people", the corporation, the state, the revolution, the Church (where it is an institution wielding secular power), or whatever. Pentecostals, like the early Christians and the large majority of the radical reformers before them, offer a measure of conditional compliance, with a promise not to overtly rebel. This is never enough for those secular powers which see a threat to their continued authority and existence in the existence of a group of people who are beyond their influence in so many important areas.
3. Many political theologies reveal an incipient humanism here, where the strategy is taken out of God's hands and usurped by the ideological aims and ideals of ideologues and intellectuals (so-called "planning"). A fairly representative view in Pentecost is that while God's plans and intentions are revealed to us in Scripture, his "counsel" or strategy is his own, often incomprehensible to human beings. Thus an outright Christian validation of *any* political ideology, state or movement (Marxism, socialism, capitalism, etc.) must be considered presumptuous. The church (composed of individual believers) can only *obey* - this means it is engaged in tactics (in the face of the enemy), not strategy. The motivation of the Pentecostal is thus not to move *from* one particular structure, or to move *toward* some more attractive structure, but to *obey*. This may imply conservatism or revolution - why not?
4. Moltmann does not always maintain this freedom in every sphere, opting as he does for a modified Marxist social-analysis and socialism, without apparently considering that any other social analysis or political ideology could be appropriate in a given situation.
5. See the section on Pentecostal hermeneutics. This notion of charismatic direction in politics is also treated in the paper presented by M S Clark at the Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue in Pretoria, R.S.A., March 1987, entitled "A pentecostal perspective upon socio-political concern in the church of Jesus Christ".
6. The pop-culture, so-called "fantasy" novels, electronic games such as Dungeons and Dragons, cartoons such as "He-man and the Masters of the Universe", feature films such as "The Exorcist" and "Ghost-busters", are all revealing ever increasing use of occult symbols, elements and themes.

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P A R T V I

Appendices

A P P E N D I X A

CONTRIBUTIONS BY SOUTH AFRICAN PENTECOSTALS ON THE THEME "WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY ?"

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

JOHN BOND - ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

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1 INTRODUCTION

Historically the Pentecostal churches had their rise in revivals at the turn of the present century. Outpourings of the Holy Spirit occurred in mainline denominations of varying traditions. There has never been a widely publicised attempt to set out a distinctively Pentecostal theology, although I am aware that Dr Möller of the Apostolic Faith Mission has produced such a volume in Afrikaans. However, it is not generally available. Because of the diversity of backgrounds from which the various Pentecostal churches sprang, one can find in Pentecostal circles in one place or another any trend or characteristic present in the mainline churches. Such trends could be taken by the adherents of Pentecostal churches to be distinctive doctrines of their own, but in reality they have been carried over from the traditions out of which the particular Pentecostal churches came.

Broadly speaking all Pentecostal theology is conservative and usually fundamentalist. The virgin birth, the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ and his coming again are basic tenets of Pentecostal faith. The fall of humanity, redemption by the blood of Jesus, the need for the new birth, the priesthood of all believers, could all be taken as distinctively Pentecostal doctrine, yet in fact they are not distinctive but are legacies from the evangelical churches out of which the Pentecostal churches were born. Even baptism by immersion of believers is not distinctively Pentecostal thought; most Pentecostals believe in it and some major on it as a means of proselytising.

The one great distinctive of Pentecostalism is the belief that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a second experience to salvation and that it should be or can be accompanied by speaking in tongues (real languages unknown to the speakers). Associated is a belief in the miraculous as a present-day reality. The nine charismatic gifts of 1 Cor. 12:7-11 are held to be available to the congregation as manifestations of the Holy Spirit who manifests himself once he has come to believers in an "*upon baptism*". The term "*upon baptism*" is sometimes used by Pentecostal teachers to emphasise that the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes as an outpouring from above and not as a release of something already within. The distinction tends to be obscured by charismatic teachers of the sacramental school, who have been known to assert that at baptism (meaning when a baby is sprinkled) the fullness of all Christian experience becomes latent in the supposedly regenerated child, to be released later in stages as the subject has faith to believe for it.

Arising from belief in the charismata as present in the church there are liturgical practices which are distinctively Pentecostal. Congregational singing in tongues takes place when everybody chants or intones together in a harmony of ecstatic language, (the so-called "heavenly choir" which people heard in the Asuza Street revival). There are utterances in tongues with subsequent interpretation by the gift of interpretation. There are prophecies. The laying on of hands for divine healing is practised. Hands are laid on for the receiving of the Holy Ghost too and to this end the distinctively Pentecostal "tarrying meeting" came into vogue. Pentecostal evangelism sometimes took on a distinctive character with its great emphasis on Divine healing and signs and wonders. Some felt it was no longer presenting the claims of Christ in a call for repentance and faith following an exposition of the Gospel, but that it had become an attempt at thaumaturgy. This was perhaps so in extreme cases.

2 PRE-SUPPOSITIONS IN PENTECOSTAL THINKING

Theology follows experience. First comes the act of God, then follows the attempt to understand it. Pentecostalism was born out of experience. In Wales for instance, in Methodist chapels across the land, "children of the revival" (Evan Roberts had been the revivalist) gathered in prayer groups calling upon God for His blessing. The consequence was that the Holy Ghost fell on them with charismatic manifestations. That was the commencement of Pentecost in Great Britain. The experience of the early Pentecostals has brought about a distinctively Pentecostal attitude to *TRUTH*. The Pentecostal eschews the thought of truth merely as conceptualised in a theory or an abstraction. Truth must be *experienced*; otherwise it is not valid - a mere form or religion without power. Pentecostal thinking opts for the dynamic rather than for what seems to be formalised and tightly structured. Formal theology failed in the beginning of the revival when it sat in judgement on the charismatic experiences which were manifested. Structured religion became the enemy of Pentecostal experience by outlawing and driving out its protagonists. Religion in the churches from which Pentecostals had been driven seemed to become increasingly theoretical, formalised and dead. To this day the Pentecostal theologian and pastor has to face a dilemma of pastoralia. Should he opt unequivocally for the experiential, giving it free reign, or should he curb experience by discipline, taking refuge from fanaticism in more or less formalised attitudes? Is it possible to find a way to encourage the experiential emphasis on truth in a way to enrich the church with a revelation of the living Christ mediated personally in individual lives by the Holy Spirit and yet not encourage a

concept of autonomy through the experience of the Spirit which leads to propheticism and an unacceptable individualism? Truth and freedom are always risky. This risk in regard to truth is a Pentecostal dilemma and must be included as a distinctive of Pentecostal theology.

3 SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES OF PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecostal Christians exist in a situation where the scene is dominated by two movements, Catholicism and Protestantism. They usually overlook the other division of East and West resulting from the schism of 1054. Probably they classify themselves broadly as a species of Protestant. *In fact this is not so.* There are those who would assert that the spiritual affinities of Pentecostals are more with the mystical theology of the Eastern Church than with either Western Protestantism or Catholicism. I believe Howard M. Ervin of Oral Roberts University is one of them. Be that as it may, I believe that Pentecostal theology will have to recognise sooner or later that it differs from both Protestantism and Catholicism, not only in obvious points of conflict such as water baptism, but in its philosophical distance from Western Christianity as a whole.

Like most schisms the great schism of 1054 was caused by political as well as doctrinal tensions. The trouble started centuries before (prior to 381 in fact). It concentrated around the conflict of the 'filioque' (i.e. the procession of the Holy Spirit not only from the Father but also from the Son). Perhaps one could suggest that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father *through* the Son.

Without dwelling on the turns and developments of the historical dispute, the fact is that the 'filioque' divided Church history. Indeed it divided history into the two streams of East and West! There were theological, social, cultural and economic consequences of this division. One Reformed theologian asserts that the followers of the Eastern Church, which he says separated Word and Spirit, ended up in intellectualism or Mesmerism. I do not know enough of Eastern Orthodoxy to evaluate such a statement. But I do have the impression that in the East there is a more mystical openness to the spiritual dimension than there is in the West. Without knowing enough to sanction or condemn, I merely mention the activities of the 'starets' or elders in the Eastern Church quoted by Vladimir Lossky in *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* and *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart* (translated by E. Kadloubovsky and G E H Palmer). It might be worthwhile to probe this suggestion to see whether Eastern theology asserts an autonomy for the Holy Ghost which favours

Pentecostal concepts and attitudes. While it is true that Pentecostal Theology is fiercely loyal to the Bible as the Word of God there does appear in practice a strange dichotomy in Pentecostalism which might suggest that subconsciously there sometimes is a tendency to separate Word and Spirit. Perhaps one should at this point distinguish sharply between classical Pentecostalism and the newer independent charismatic and "Faith" churches. If such a distinction were not so, what can one think of the bizarre prophesying, words of knowledge so-called and virtually anything dramatic which can find an acceptance in those circles regardless of whether it squares with Scripture or not. It again raises the dilemma of Pentecostalism concerning the dynamic and experiential as against formalised discipline and structure.

Western thought did not separate Word and Spirit. The work of the Holy Ghost was not conceived of as autonomous but as self-effacing and was recognised in Christocentric terms. The Holy Spirit is recognised as the Mediator between the Father and the Son. So strongly is this asserted that in evangelicalism it sometimes appears that the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity are actually confused rather than separated. While the Trinity may not be divided it may not be confused either. Some Evangelical statements appear to be binitarian rather than trinitarian. Pentecostal theology interprets 1 Cor. 12:7-11 and 1 Cor 12:4-6 in ways which must presuppose an activity of the Holy Ghost manifesting himself. The charismata (or nine gifts) are manifestations of the Holy Spirit, not of Jesus Christ. Out of the East/West schism Western Protestantism emerged with a strongly Christocentric interpretation of Scripture. Perhaps it was the down to earth logicity of seeing Christ in the written Word that engendered the practicality and work ethic of Protestantism, virtues which reached their peak in Calvinism, and which alas degenerated into materialism. Max Weber, the outstanding analyst of the independent significance of religion in the encouragement of national economic activity, argued that the themes of this worldly asceticism (another name for the Protestant work ethic no doubt) developed so highly in Protestantism and especially in Calvinism encouraged people to value highly the rational and methodical mastery of the social, cultural and in particular the economic environment.

In their respective ways both Western Catholicism and Protestantism have a history of seeking mastery over the cultural, social and even political environment. The tradition finds its expression today in this-worldly activities by the mainline churches. Instead of an apocalyptic view of eschatology they embrace evolutionary, even revolutionary and "Kingdom now" concepts. Generally speaking Pentecostal theology has no place for any sacralised view of this world. The classical Pentecostal stance is one of

withdrawal from the world ethically, religiously and politically. Involvement in social programmes and political reform is generally shunned. If anything, Pentecostals tend to theologise in favour of the 'status quo'.

This is not simply a cop-out, for Pentecostals have a record of suffering stubbornly and intensely for their beliefs, not shunning ostracism or even imprisonment. Their withdrawal from the world politically is instinctive. As much as anything else it sets them apart from Western Catholicism and Protestantism. Perhaps it is an area of weakness, not untinged with Gnosticism, but it does disclose spiritual affinities which set it apart as a third stream in Western Christianity. Having said this one must add that in the last decade the Pentecostal churches in South Africa have been pressed by events to form and articulate judgments on social conditions and ethical questions on the South African scene. Church conferences such as the Congress on Mission and Evangelism and S.A.C.L.A. have had an effect on Pentecostal theology.

One should also add that while Pentecostals have been averse to agendas followed by mainline clergy, they have in their own way reacted practically to social needs. In his book *Pentecost between Black and White* Walter Hollenweger mentions six instances of social action by Pentecostal communities including an interesting study of Simon Kimbangu and the Kimbanguist sect in Zaire.

From all the foregoing it can be argued that the distinctive features of Pentecostal theology are less in the tenets they hold to than in the spirit and mood of the movement. Apart from the Pentecostal teaching on the Holy Spirit baptism, their theology is much like that of any fundamentalist group. It is their instincts, their fervour and their emphases which most characterise Pentecostals and give a distinctiveness to Pentecostal theology. Among all the things believed by Pentecostals there are some which are held with such emphasis that they could be taken as characteristically (though not uniquely) Pentecostal doctrines. Let me try to enumerate.

3.1 The Bible

As I have already indicated the Bible is accepted as verbally inspired and as the all-sufficient guide for doctrine and practice. Herein lies the greatest strength of the Pentecostal

churches. They are people of the Book. Let me not take time to speak of "redemption and life". Suffice it to say that the mere fact of having a book to study has a civilising effect upon any people or group.

3.2 The Cross

In common with all evangelicals, Pentecostals believe in the justification of sinners by the blood of Christ. They believe in the life-transforming work of the Holy Ghost through the Cross. While not unique in their faith, they hold to the doctrine with great if not unique intensity.

3.3 Revival - the Work of the Holy Spirit

The Pentecostal Movement is a revivalist movement. They believe in and depend on the action of the Holy Spirit in their services to convict the hearers and empower Christians for service and sanctified living.

3.4 Miracles

Throughout church history there have been manifestations of miraculous power but the emphasis on the miraculous in Pentecostal circles is uniquely Pentecostal in the present day.

3.5 The Demonic

Casting out of demons is by no means confined to Pentecostals, but the emphasis on the devil and the demonic certainly characterises Pentecostal theology, oftentimes to the point of being bizarre.

3.6 The Sacraments

Pentecostals major on baptising their converts. Almost universally the person is immersed as an adult, or at least as a believer able to make an intelligent decision. The act is regarded as a step of obedience and as a Christian initiation, but not as being necessary for salvation or as being a means to regeneration.

Like all churches other than the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends they partake of the Eucharist. Many do so once a month. Others follow the pattern of the Plymouth Brethren and break bread weekly. I think it must be acknowledged that usually the attitude to the elements of bread and wine betrays a doctrinal shallowness and even savours of superstition. Sacerdotalism is rejected in its theological claims, but one feels that sometimes the Communion table in a subtle unconscious way is treated as an altar, and the officiating pastor very often acts somewhat as a priest.

3.7 Eschatology

Pentecostals believe that the world as we know it is proceeding towards a goal laid down by God. Usually there is a belief in a physical rapture of the saints, of a seven year tribulation and a millennium, but these concepts, while broadly accepted, do provide a fertile field for controversy. All Pentecostals believe that the world we know, is not the world as God intended it to be, but that God in divine sovereignty will ultimately break into human history in a final act of redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ.

3.8 Evangelism

Pentecostal churches are usually characterised by a thrust towards evangelism. Their attitude to the world is that "Christ is the answer". If enough people get converted this world's problems will be ameliorated. The compassion of Christ prompts the Pentecostal believer to a caring evangelistic attitude towards his neighbour. It is also true that the pioneering phase of existence in which most Pentecostal congregations are found, brings about a strong necessity for recruitment. There is a pressure to grow which is not as keenly felt by the older, more established churches. At best such pressure gives a zeal for evangelism. At its worst it engenders unwholesome proselytising attitudes.

4 THE EFFECT OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT ON PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

In speaking of a distinctive Pentecostal Theology it is necessary to set at a distance theological concepts prevalent in some independent charismatic circles. But it is not possible to isolate such concepts. They penetrate and infiltrate into Pentecostal teaching and practices.

4.1 Faith

In recent years there has been a phenomenal upsurge of so-called "Faith" churches or "Rhema" type churches. They propagate a concept of faith which at first flush appears to be no more than a resurgence of primitive Pentecostal teaching, but in fact it is based largely on the teachings of E W Kenyon whose thesis of "Sense knowledge vs Faith knowledge" really reflects a positive thinking mind cure approach. It is worlds away from the old time Pentecostal concept of prayer as being communion with God based upon the work of the Holy Spirit on the basis of Christ's finished work on the Cross.

4.2 Liturgy

There has been a whole new approach to worship. Hymns have been swept aside; now choruses are sung exclusively. The congregation usually has to stand, possibly to facilitate dancing which has become a must in some people's thinking. More than half the service is spent in singing led by instrumental song groups. Little or no time is left for individual response of worship or praying. All is done vicariously in the words of choruses. Frequently the music is more like religious pop than devotional music. Soulful "highs" take the place of the genuine spiritual experience which Pentecostalism looked for. The penetration of such liturgies into Pentecostalist circles is damaging and pernicious to the experience of Holy Ghost moving which Pentecostal theology extols.

4.3 The Spectacular

Pentecostal theology has always promoted the charismatic gifts including prophecy, words of knowledge and gifts of healings. Perhaps, because of criticism from the evangelical churches, these were manifested discreetly and with discretion. Now there is a disconcerting flood of activities all ascribed to the working of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal theology finds it hard to cope with the prevalence of "prophetic words", "revelations" and "prophecies" which have become the vogue.

5 CONCLUSION

Pentecostalism shows in large part the theology of the evangelical Protestant churches, but Pentecostalism is neither Protestant nor Catholic. It has its own unique inspiration and affinities. At present it is going through a period of challenge

and confusion. Much that has looked like classical Pentecostalism is turning out to be theologically suspect. No doubt a re-assessment will take place. Perhaps it is already taking place. The result can only be the articulation of a sound, specifically Pentecostal theology.

A PROPRIUM FOR PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

LEMMER DU PLESSIS - FULL GOSPEL CHURCH OF GOD

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Dr Du Plessis has pastored congregations in Groblersdal and Verwoerdburg, Transvaal, and has lectured at the Berea Theological College. He is an elected member of the Executive Council of his denomination, and Chairman of the Council for Christian Education. He has already produced a number of books and articles, and is the official church historian of his denomination.

1 INTRODUCTION

To obtain insight into the origin and growth of Pentecostalism, in particular into those factors which led to the origin of Classical Pentecost in South Africa, demands research which takes seriously the history of the ecclesiastical, as well as the social and political backgrounds from which the movement arose, on the one hand; and on the other, those practical principles which undergird the growth of the Pentecostal churches.

This cursory examination is limited to these two areas, and attempts to understand Pentecostalism from the perspective of an academic integration of the contributions of Church History and Practical Theology.

2 HISTORICAL ROOTS OF PENTECOSTALISM

For the purpose of this article a cursory review of the insights offered by Church History with regard to those separatist groups which stemmed from and existed alongside orthodox church structures, suffices. This is not to claim that modern Pentecost can be arbitrarily classed with these groups; however, as a *Spirit-movement*, points of contact between the Pentecostal movement and other similar movements which have, over the centuries, often reacted to the formalism of orthodoxy, can be identified.

There is a reasonable consensus that Pentecost arose in the spirit of Enthusiasm, and that it should thus be examined from similar perspectives. Enthusiast groups whose distinctive marks have been transposed particularly into Pentecostalism include among others Montanism of the second century, Mysticism from the twelfth and thirteenth, Anabaptism from the sixteenth, the Later Reformation and Pietism from the seventeenth, Methodism from the eighteenth, and American Revivalism and the Holiness Movement from the nineteenth century.

These Spirit-movements arose in reaction to the stagnation, intellectualism, dead formalism and absence of the experiential which have characterised the orthodox churches over the centuries. The tremendous growth experienced by Pentecostal and charismatic groups in South African can be largely attributed to precisely these shortcomings in the orthodox churches. Pentecostalism, with its *emphasis on experience*, offers to many an escape from lifeless church prisons. However, this has not prevented the negative excesses of a theology of experience from finding fertile soil in Pentecostalism. Hence the sad tendency in Pentecostalism toward repeated schism and the forming of countless sub-groups, attributable so often to subjectivism.

Historically the two oldest South African Pentecostal churches, the AFM and the Full Gospel Church, arose from the revival at Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906. The influence of the Zionist movement of John Alexander Dowie was of particular importance for the AFM, which developed into an independent mission movement in 1908. Its doctrine of divine healing, of baptism by three-fold immersion, of sanctification, etc., can apparently be traced back to Dowie's group in particular. The Full Gospel Church derived its baptismal practice from its founder, George Bowie, in 1910, and is similar in this respect to the Baptists.

The historical connections between these two Pentecostal churches and the South African church scene of the nineteenth century must also be taken into consideration. This is a two-edged sword. On the one hand they have found common ground with that pietistic spirit which characterised certain Dutch Reformed congregations. Pentecostals make much of revivals in the Dutch Reformed churches, and the influence of Andrew Murray should not be underestimated.

On the other hand there has been a perennial conflict on the part of the Pentecostal churches with the doctrines of the Afrikaans "Sister churches". One characteristic of Reformed doctrine which Pentecostals are adamant in resisting is the basic hermeneutical point of departure that the origin of God's covenant with the church of Christ should be sought in his covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17. Pentecostal theologians refuse to accept this, appealing rather for a basis for God's covenant with his church from an exclusively New Testament perspective. Christ's resurrection and the day of Pentecost are crucial elements for Pentecostals.

South African Pentecostals also maintain that the spiritual identification of the Great Trek of 1836-1838 - when the farmers of the Eastern Border areas left the Cape to escape British rule - with the exodus from Egypt, was based on the Covenant theology of Reformed doctrine. Pentecostals have distanced themselves from this spiritual exclusivism, viz. that the Boers were the people of God, as opposed to the other people of South Africa; and thus from the Old Testament-based sanction of the later Apartheid policy of the government. The *Biblical* basis of the Apartheid policy should thus be understood in terms of the uncritical equation of the church with Israel, based on Covenant theology.

Over against this Pentecotalism considers the nation Israel still to be God's elect people, in accordance with the covenant made with the fathers (Rm 11:28). Thus Pentecostal and Reformed scholars in South Africa also differ in their eschatology and

pneumatology. Pentecostals believe that after the Rapture of the church (Ith 4:16, 17) Jesus Christ will minister to Israel again, during the revelation of the anti-christ and the Great Tribulation, before Jesus reigns visibly on earth during the Millennium. Consistent with this schema is their belief that the church of Christ has been given the Holy Spirit during the eschatological interim, but that the Spirit with his gifts will be bestowed upon Israel after the Second Coming.

Pentecostal theology currently falls short in the sense that the traditional views on Christology, pneumatology, eschatology and ecclesiology have not yet been adequately integrated according to a hermeneutical paradigm or model. It is my opinion that the schematised propositions of dispensationalism are influenced too much by a subjective interpretation of Scripture to be able to make up for this shortcoming.

3 PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES WHICH RETARD OR FURTHER THE GROWTH OF PENTECOSTALISM

It should be realised that it is impossible to demarcate Pentecostal doctrine from Pentecostal life-style. Although systematic theological emphases are included in this section, the primary concern is the impact of Pentecostalism in a practical sense. Much has of course been written about Pentecostal doctrine from the perspective of orthodox theology. It is my opinion that such criticism should take into consideration both the *weaker* and *stronger* aspects of Pentecostalism to be able to offer a balanced evaluation. In South Africa Pentecostalism is normally depicted in Reformed writings as a sect, or a group peripheral to Christendom. Pentecostals consider such an attitude to be in conflict with the Scriptural truth that the Church of Christ consists of a homogeneous organism. Either Pentecostals form part of the holy, catholic, Christian church or they do not!! However, if the confessions and basic rules of faith as contained for instance in the *Apostle's Creed* - which is accepted by both the AFM and the Full Gospel Church (as well as other Pentecostal churches) - are used as norms, it can not be doubted that Pentecostals form part of the heart of Christendom. Pentecostal movements do not exist apart from the church, but are also the church.

Criticism of Pentecostalism should thus be directed as though against a particular denomination which, for certain reasons and convictions, cannot identify with so-called orthodox doctrine. And the consequences of orthodoxy, as restated on a Scriptural foundation by the Pentecostal movement, should be recognised by the older churches. Within the church there is thus hope for mutual enrichment. It may be desirable to consider the orthodox

churches and the Spirit churches to be components of the same body. For Christ has only one body here on earth. The orthodox churches, with their intellectual and formal approach, might be deemed the brain; Pentecostalism, with its life of feeling, the heart. A body without either organ could not survive.

Characteristics neglected by Pentecostalism (and normally exalted by the orthodox churches) include:

3.1 Lack of theology

It should be clear that because of the heavy emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the consequent emphasis on the experiential, the practice of systematic theology has been neglected among Pentecostals. Indeed, during the early years of the Pentecostal movement academic erudition was questioned precisely because it was believed to hinder the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It should also be noted that Pentecostal believers originally came from the ranks of the less-educated labourers. This combination of factors led to a lack of systematic theologising.

This lack meant that to a great extent the knowledge accumulated by the church of Christ over the centuries, the formulations of the great Councils and the development of the theological thought of the church, was to a great extent missed by Pentecostals. The glorification, in Pentecostal thought, of the primitive assembly of Acts as a *perfect* model for the church of the twentieth century could be attributed to this shortcoming, among other things.

This consideration concerns the use of Scripture by Pentecostals as well. Their often subjective interpretations must be understood against this background. The Bible is sometimes used as an encyclopaedia, as though the solution to every problem of the day is contained in it in so many words. This is not to say that all Pentecostals use Scripture thus, but it is a tendency.

3.2 Distinction between Word and Spirit

Pentecostals accept the reality of living prophecy. Criticism from orthodox circles maintains that this phenomenon implies a distinction between Word and Spirit, and it is even asked if Pentecostals recognise the completion of the canon. Pentecostals

place a high premium on the Bible, but also recognise the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When a prophecy is uttered, Pentecostals do not consider it to be complementary to the canon, but insist rather that it be tested against the content of Scripture.

The disadvantage of the so-called separation of Word and Spirit among Pentecostals can be observed in the way it serves the dangers of subjectivism. The religious experience of the Pentecostal can easily be exalted by falling back on a revelation of the Spirit, without the Word being allowed its rightful place as the criterion of such *revelations*. When Pentecostals measure their conduct by "But the Spirit led me!", it becomes almost impossible to present a rational argument as a corrective, and virtually anything, up to and including schism, can be legitimised thereby. In such cases the Spirit has been enslaved by man.

3.3 Distinction between the church and the world

Pentecostals draw a sharp distinction between the church and the world. In fact their *Sitz im Leben* is coloured by this world-view. The world is hostile to the church, and is to be aggressively evangelised or treated with the greatest caution.

The principle of the individual's relationship with God is buttressed by this principle. The vertical perspective is emphasised and the horizontal avoided. Thus the church is a stranger to the world and avoids the world. Naturally this emphasis on an intimate relationship between God and man serves as an attraction to those who belong to churches which neglect the personal relationship.

The vision for mission and evangelisation of Pentecostals is thus determined by this principle. Like the Anabaptists and Pietists, Pentecostals view the world as lost, and every soul which cannot offer a clear testimony of redemption is to be proselytised and baptised, even nominal Christians. It could be argued that Pentecostals have perpetuated the mission situation of Acts.

This double world-view of the Pentecostals implies a devaluation of history. The first priority is to save lost souls, and the call to be Christ to a suffering world is lost on them.

A logical consequence of this view is the separation of church and state and a lukewarm attitude toward political involvement. The state belongs to the secular order, and the church's responsibility toward it is to pray for it.

In conclusion, this approach leads to a particular eschatological view. A strong expectation of the Second Coming is positively reinforced by the avoidance of the world by Pentecostals. Difficult economic, social and political problems are simplistically by-passed by referring to the glorious day which will dawn when Jesus comes again.

3.4 Distinction between Law and Gospel

The antithesis between Law and Gospel in South African Pentecostalism leads to a rejection of Covenant theology. As mentioned above, Israel is transposed into the church in Reformed doctrine, while Pentecostals separate Israel and the church into historical and phenomenological entities. This demands the rejection of infant baptism, with its Old Testament roots, by Pentecostals.

In terms of Law and Gospel Pentecostals' exaltation of the resurrection of Christ compared to the position of the cross becomes clear. Pentecostals often advocate a *Theologia Gloriae* at the expense of the *Theologia Crucis*. The danger in this is that Pentecostals deny the way of the cross and the brokenness of life, and want to experience continual triumph.

This leads to a peculiar form of legalism. Pentecostals derive a peculiar ethic from the victory which was achieved over evil. Since believers are freed from sin, they ought no longer to sin. This is reminiscent of the Wesleyan model of perfection. Pentecostals thus reject the Lutheran formula *simul justus et peccator* (both righteous and a sinner) and emphasise sanctification at the expense of justification.

3.5 The Holy Spirit and his gifts

There are also, however, theological insights which Pentecostals may contribute which are largely or completely lacking in some orthodox churches. This input generally concerns the experiential aspects of life, and becomes part of the believer's *experience* and *fellowship* with God.

To understand anything of the characteristics of Pentecostalism it must be understood that the Holy Spirit and his working play a tremendous role in the life and thought of Pentecostals. This does not imply an arbitrary de-emphasis of Christology compared to Pneumatology, but it does underline the personal relationship with the Holy Spirit which brings the Word to the believer.

The Holy Spirit and his gifts are considered indispensable to the edification and growth of the church of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin, who regenerates, who fills believers, by whom healing occurs in the name of Jesus, who sanctifies believers, who leads them and who speaks to them, etc.

3.6 Liturgical flexibility

On the level of liturgy, and in the case of the worship service in particular, Pentecostalism has made tremendous headway in presenting the glory of the communion between God and humanity - more so than is usually the case in other churches.

This results in Pentecostal liturgy functioning in the area of group therapy. Many who were used to the quiet formality of orthodox worship have experienced Pentecostal gatherings as therapeutically liberating, since they can participate in fellowship with God and his people.

Biblical emphasis on prayer has also been highlighted. Pentecostals have shown once again what the value of praise and worship is to the church. This Scripturally based expression of unanimous praise is what makes the glory of God a reality in a Pentecostal service.

In a Pentecostal worship service not only are the offices recognised, but the Pauline model of the body of Christ as a functional group is realised. That is, the lay-person is granted opportunity to participate in the liturgical process. The Word is preached from the pulpit, and the congregation reacts and participates spontaneously in worship. The members are given the opportunity to express their thanks and praise by means of loud amens, the raising of hands, enthusiastic community singing, joint worship, dances of praise and the ministry of the gifts of the Spirit, especially tongues, interpretation and prophecy.

3.7 Communication

This aspect, a definite contribution and advantage of Pentecostalism, is relevant for the proselytisation of people in the Third World in particular. The orthodox (White Western) religion is based on definite rational models and standardised ecclesiastical techniques. As a result there has always been a spirit of paternalism in the orthodox Christian relationship with the poor proselytised heathen of the Third World. This is underlined by the establishment of *daughter churches*, as opposed to the mother church.

Third World believers wish to break away from the underlying Western culture, with its theological models and world-view. They want to experience religion in the context of their own milieu, and not be bound by prescriptive theological categories by means of which White Christendom attempts to force them to be Christians.

The diversity of Pentecostalism contributes to this religious transformation. The nature of Pentecostalism as a Spirit church enables it to reach down to the illiterate masses of the Third World and to offer to those people the opportunity to experience Christ within the context of their own culture. Since Pentecostalism is by its very nature less intellectual and more Spirit-determined, the Christian message is more easily indigenised by Pentecostalism than by the other great traditions of Christendom.

It is thus not surprising that Pentecostalism is showing such growth among people living in South America, Africa and the Far East. These people practice oral religion, and stand apart from that rational system which characterises White Western religion. Pentecostalism suits this situation like a hand in a glove.

3.8 Certainty and hope

Pentecostals normally maintain their point of view with conviction. This means that while they accept that a believer must know that he is saved, such a believer must also confess it, with commitment.

For Pentecostals the question of regeneration is the watershed between Christian and non-Christian. If one is born again, one is a child of God - otherwise not. That is why people from other church traditions who cannot assuredly confess that they know they are saved, are considered unsaved, and must hear once again the good news of the total victory of Christ and the resultant certainty of salvation. Arguments such as "I have my church" and "I was baptised as an infant" do not satisfy Pentecostals. Neither church nor baptism save, only Christ alone.

Another clear distinguishing mark of Pentecostals is hope. There is no hint of discouragement, but of a driving hope and trust, that Christ does not only live, but that the Holy Spirit leads, and makes known great and marvellous things to his church. By the Spirit a vision of the future is created in the heart of the church, resulting in a tremendous expectation that the kingdom will be established among us.

4 CONCLUSION

If the church of Christ is in truth a homogeneous body, then one tradition cannot appropriate for itself the role of *primus inter pares*. Brotherhood must be accepted, and the various traditions must communicate with one another. The members of the body have no mandate to rend the body. It is time that the other church traditions offer a helping and teaching hand to Pentecostalism, and that they also learn at the same time from the energy and flexibility of the younger movement, so that their ancient bones can be revitalised.

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THE PROPRIUM OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

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Any genuine and meaningful knowledge of God is preceded by an encounter with God. Only from the context of a continuing experience of God, within which the believer partakes of the salvation (Afrikaans "heil") of God and learns to know Him, by the working of the Holy Spirit, can one practise theology in a meaningful way.

Scripture is the primary source of information concerning God and his dealings with humanity, therefore the Scriptures remain extremely important for a Pentecostal theologian, while allowance is made for its particular nature. God cannot be known, like some empirical object which we can see, hear and research, unless we receive a revelation from him for that purpose. The Bible contains information concerning God's nature and will, but the mere reading of these facts does not in itself constitute a revelation from him, as a revelation must be accompanied by an encounter.

The Bible contains a record of the encounters of certain people, and of the Bible writers themselves, with God; and of the information which has been transmitted in these revelations in various ways. Real information about, or revelation of, God has been obtained since the New Testament age when a person is brought to a personal encounter with God by the working of the Holy Spirit according to the Scriptural pattern. The Bible is a source of information during the process of encounter in which God reveals himself to a person and that person partakes of salvation. Only the believer who has this experience can practise theology.

We see that at the very beginning of the early church the Gospel of the kingdom of God was preached, people were converted, experienced forgiveness and redemption, were baptised and received the infilling of the Holy Spirit, while reflection on how all this happened, how faith works and what God's will is, only took place later. Those who have experienced this salvation of God are enlightened by him to speak about this salvation and about him. A proprium for Pentecostal theology is this, that people must have had an encounter - or rather, should have an ongoing encounter - with God before they can really say anything about him, i.e., before they can do theology.

Since this principle governs the practice of Pentecostal theology, a logical consequence is that abstract or theoretical consideration of God and his attributes is excluded. Believers learn to know God as He comes to them in the encounter. The Bible offers a record of such encounters, but it can only be grasped when the Holy Spirit performs similar deeds in their own life.

The Holy Spirit, who glorifies Jesus, brings the believers into contact with Jesus Christ, and his majesty, power and love, in the encounter which he brings about. This experience generates faith, love and respect for God, among other things, in the life of the believer. Matters such as faith and love are thus directly related to our experience of Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit. Thus understood, faith is more than the acceptance of certain facts, and love more than the doing of good deeds - faith and love are new qualities of life. This quality of life is a direct creation of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes of such people: "We, however, have the mind (nous) of Christ." (Good News Bible, I Cor 2:16).

This is not a surrender of the truth to subjectivism - the Holy Spirit makes the objective work of Jesus Christ a personal reality in the life of the believer. The objective and subjective elements cannot be separated. The subjective is based on and consists in the reality of the objective while the objective is realised and recognised, through the working of the Holy Spirit, in the subjective. The subjective may often be tried by the believers' doubts, but in this case it is precisely the Holy Spirit who helps them cling to the objective. An objectivity which accepts a historical reality by means of reason alone is deprived of that reality which the Bible proclaims, viz. that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, will lead the believers into all truth.

For the Pentecostal theologian subjective experience is important, not because it becomes the grounds of faith, but because it is in this area that truth is realised, the time when the Holy Spirit actualises the salvation of God. When this subjective element is lacking, we are deprived of truth, of salvation, of the power of God in our lives, we remain separate from God and his direct intervention in our lives, and are involved in our own vain philosophical speculations.

The working of the Holy Spirit is, on the one hand, the grounds for the concretisation and practice-directedness of Pentecostal theology, but on the other hand it also emphasises the cardinal importance of such working in the life of the believer. It is the Holy Spirit who glorifies Jesus, reveals Him and makes Him present. The Holy Spirit is the agent of God's total salvation and all his deeds in the believer's life. Reflection on everything the Spirit does is essential, but should also embrace the infilling of the Holy Spirit and the accompanying gifts (charismata) of the Spirit as experienced and practised in the early church - precisely the matters which were not allowed their rightful place in the later development of the church.

This is not to say that Pentecostal theology is an overemphasis of the pneumatological at the expense of other areas such as Christology. It is precisely the Holy Spirit who is active in all these areas, and who leads the believer into a true and genuine Christology and theocracy. For the Pentecostal theologian it is a cardinal truth that it is the Holy Spirit who is "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph 1:17 KJV), and that no-one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Spirit (I Cor 12:3).

Good theology should be, among other things, theocratic, Christocentric and pneumatological. By pneumatological it is not intended that only the doctrine of the infilling of the field of theology be included, but that the entire field of theology be pneumatologically rethought and reworked. This applies to the doctrines of creation, redemption, the church and even eschatology, since God does everything by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit should be continually revealing God to the believer, and making him present. This is the manner in which God comes to us - he does not come in formulae and dogmas, in precisely defined pronouncements, but by the Spirit which, like the wind, blows where he lists. This means that God is always before us, and that he is always more and greater and even other than we can express by means of our most wonderful theology. Although Jesus has revealed God to us, and the Bible contains a record of his will and deeds, and he is subjectively experienced by the working of the Holy Spirit as personal and concrete, he remains the sovereign God who always takes the initiative. This means that the greatest asset of believers is their dependence upon and openness toward God, their readiness to be enlightened and addressed, their readiness to be changed and to be led of the Spirit of God, and to be Spirit-controlled. Believers may often not be understood by the secular or empirical world. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor 2:14).

Because of their dependence upon God and openness toward him, to be led of the Word and his Spirit, there is on the part of the Pentecostal believer a daring freedom from and otherness toward the accepted point of view. This freedom and otherness originates in the objective reality of Christ's life, death and resurrection, on the one hand, and on the other hand in the working of the Holy Spirit which is an anchor in the life of believers.

It has already become obvious that in Pentecostal theology individuals and their experience of God is primary, in a certain sense. Individuals are confronted by the gospel and the working

of the Holy Spirit, and driven to make a personal decision for God. That personal encounter brought personal decision for God. That personal encounter brought about by the Holy Spirit achieves a genuine and meaningful individuality. The encounter creates an opportunity for one to find oneself, and to be able to live in freedom and power for God and one's fellow human beings. This identified individuality is not individualism, since it is precisely a legitimate encounter with oneself which enables one to relate meaningfully with God and with one's fellow human beings. This type of genuine individuality leads to a true fellowship of believers. Thus in Pentecost this strong individuality leads to a strongly charismatic community. Those who, by means of a genuine personal encounter with God, experience themselves as individuals, are added by the Spirit to a charismatic body, viz. the church of Christ. In this charismatic body they can never be alone, but are always part of a larger caring and operating unity.

Encounter with God must have an impact on the life of believers - therefore the quality of life is always important to Christians. Their daily life in practice, and their relationships, bear witness to the truth and reality of the new life of which they partake. Ethics are thus important, but never in the sense of a holiness of works or of merit. In view of the believers' experience of the marvellous work of God by the Holy Spirit, which is operative in them by grace, it is absurd to attempt to achieve merit. Ethics, or the new quality of life, is based on the fact not only that grace is a free gift of God in Jesus Christ for humanity, but that it is an encounter with God in the power of God in the life of believers. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives by means of which the characteristics and qualities of God are realised in them to such an extent that they are able to live according to God's personal will for their lives.

A P P E N D I X B

CONTRIBUTIONS BY SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGIAN ON THE THEME "WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY?"

AN ECUMENICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROPRIUM OR DIS- TINCTIVE ELEMENTS OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY*

HENRY I LEDERLE - SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, UNISA

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1 I HAD A DREAM

Not long ago I had a vivid and significant dream. I was back at university, as always deeply involved in student affairs. I was delighted to be chairperson of an important student body which held public meetings on current affairs. My committee and I were firm supporters of a broadly-based, liberal perspective and we controlled this society and were even influential in the University at large. One fine day while chairing a meeting I realised to my distress that I had been caught unawares by the fact that the constitution required that the election for next year's executive committee be held at the close of that very meeting. Glancing over the packed audience I saw with mounting agitation that most of the people present were not supportive of my particular perspective. On the contrary they seemed to be mainly from

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a troublesome new conservative and evangelical group whom I had of late noticed actively proselytising among the first-year students. Their enthusiastic leader was a fiery young fellow with a mop of red hair and the unlikely name of John Thunder. In desperation I sent off some of my trusted assistants to the residences to try and bring in our supporters before the election. These last-minute attempts proved to be futile. Most of our supporters could not be found or else they made lame excuses and the few who were brought in belatedly were not sufficient to avert the impending disaster. I felt the control already slipping out of my grasp and experienced intense anguish and despair as thoughts raced frantically through my mind.

At last I could postpone the election no longer and proceeded to call for nominations. John Thunder was the first to raise his hand to speak. He said in a calm voice that he thought it would be unfair to hold an election at this juncture. It seemed to him that sufficient supporters of all the various perspectives were not present and that we would not be able to elect a truly representative committee that evening. He proposed a postponement of the election and the motion was passed unanimously. I was stunned. I looked at him and immediately I loved him. With someone of such calibre and sensitivity I could get on - we could work together, co-operate as a team. I felt all my prejudice melting away. Freely and selfishly he had given up his golden opportunity to gain complete control of the committee and I had all the while thought that he had been skilfully engineering a take-over. I felt energised and liberated by the experience. As I sprang forward to embrace him I had this strange sensation of becoming integrated and strong. I could see an action-packed future. John and I would serve *together* on the next committee. With such a combination there would be no stopping our society. We could tackle an army, scale a wall, leap over all obstacles. I had a dream. I believe this dream was from God.

2 INTRODUCTION

"Doctrine divides, service unites" was the slogan of much superficial ecumenical enthusiasm at the beginning of the twentieth century. The many interchurch and interconfessional theological dialogues taking place today, the Lima Document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry of 1982 and the ensuing discussion it has generated, as well as the study programme "Towards the common expression of the Apostolic Faith today" are major contemporary factors which have led to the questioning of this old adage. In 1977 the German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, claimed that *doctrine, in fact, unites* whereas it is the practical issues that are now dividing Christianity. The study of the *propria* of Chris-

tian churches and their theologies is a relatively new and exciting task in Ecumenical Theology. Determining the actual differences between the major confessional groupings of Christianity is essential to any meaningful ecumenical progress. If the aim of Ecumenical Theology is to discover (uncover) and further the unity of the Christian Faith then part of its task will be to express doctrinal convictions in terms of basics and the resulting convergence in truth. Dietrich Ritschl, ecumenist from Heidelberg has recently stated: "Das letzte Ziel der Suche liegt in der Entdeckung ökumenisch konsensfähiger Sätze und Axiome" (1986:19).

In order to find such doctrinal expressions we need to know more accurately how and where we differ from one another before we may discover that others possibly express the same truth in other words or view it from a different angle. Seeking to define propria should thus not be seen as an unhealthy dwelling on what divides us. It belongs rather to the essence of ecumenical enterprise. As we shall see it is usually a pathway characterised by *innovations* or 'surprises of the Holy Spirit' (as Donald Gelpi calls them).

Our task is to discover what the proprium or distinctive element of Pentecostalism and Pentecostal theology is. There is a new urgency to this question in ecumenical circles today. As the unprecedented growth of Pentecostal Churches gradually makes its impact felt on the whole of Christendom many believers from Orthodox and Catholic, mainline and free Protestant Churches show an increased interest in this section of Christianity which has been most maligned and habitually looked down on in the past. The surprising statistics of D B Barrett that Pentecostalism, taken as a unit, has outstripped all the major confessional communions of Protestantism has finally caused the penny to drop - even in the rarified halls of established theological academia.

The fact that this paper is being presented at an annual meeting of the SPS is to no mean degree related to these growing perceptions. In 1983 the Institute for Theological Research at the University of South Africa in Pretoria commenced with a research project on Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement in order to try and understand the growth of this section of Christianity and to take its theological contribution seriously. Unisa, as our University is known, houses the major theological faculty in Africa with close on a hundred full-time teachers (from almost all the different Christian denominations) and about 4 000 students in Theology and Biblical Studies. The research on Pentecostalism is being done in the Department of Systematic Theology.

After a publication on the healing ministry of the church and apart from work on various historical themes, attention has recently been focused on "Prosperity teaching" and Pentecostal distinctives.

There have naturally been many attempts to try and describe the distinctive element of Pentecostalism including especially work by scholars of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. This present investigation is just one of many trying to make headway with this enigmatic task.

3 THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

3.1 The concept proprium in general

I believe the concept of a theological "proprium" or distinctive first requires some clarification. Although the Latin term *proprium* may be somewhat unfamiliar, that to which it refers is not unknown. It is understood today in at least three ways. When people speak of *typical*, *unique*, *distinctive* or *characteristic* elements of a particular theology they mean (a) that which it is known for in the form of *caricature*, (b) that which describes its *essence*, the core of its faith, or (c) that element or those elements which specifically *distinguish* it from other related and similar but not identical theologies.

3.2 The Proprium of Reformed theology

Let me illustrate what I mean by taking a brief look at the proprium of Reformed theology in these three senses. I am specifically choosing to use Reformed theology as an example because I am most familiar with it and I believe the advantages of an "insider" type of analysis far outweigh the disadvantages.

3.2.1 Caricatures are usually the easiest. There is a very common perception that the most typical belief of Reformed Christians is the doctrine of predestination. There even seems to be some historical evidence for such a statement. Reformed people, however, find this description far from accurate. Undoubtedly the spectre of Calvin's "horrible" eternal decree of double predestination or for that matter Barth's high-handed historical supralapsarian view belong to the Reformed tradition. Their impact, however, is negligible today. It would be grossly unfair to see even the various modified versions of what should rather be called the doctrine of *election* as being central to present-day Reformed and Presbyterian theology. The classical doctrine of predestination is certainly peripheral to most of the preaching,

catechising, evangelising or pastoral ministry of Reformed churches - even where it is openly adhered to, rather than serving merely as a skeleton in the doctrinal cupboard. Another, typically South African, caricature of Reformed theology is that it, of inherent necessity, gave birth to the evil system of legalised racial discrimination called 'apartheid'. Equally facile is the attempt to blame all the evils of capitalism on Calvinistic doctrine. None of these descriptions come close to describing the proprium of Reformed theology in a way which would be recognised by most of its inheritors.

3.2.2 Secondly we turn to the usage of proprium to describe the core or *essence* of the faith of a specific group of Christians. How would Reformed theologians express the heart of their theology? I would venture to say quite simply that it lies in the *doctrine of the triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. This too will be a surprise to some. It sounds very general but we are attempting to describe the essence or basic component of the faith of Reformed Christians. It is to be expected that every group of Christians would describe their core beliefs in very 'ecumenical' terminology. As these basic concepts are developed divergent understandings soon appear.

3.2.3 Lastly we turn to what might be termed the 'proper' use of a proprium - the distinguishing element or *distinctives* of a particular theology. What then is characteristic of the Reformed faith? I would suggest that distinctly Reformed theology distinguishes itself with respect to its concept of *Lordship*. This is classically expressed in various ways. I wish to propose that these following formulations capture something of that element: the sovereignty of God our Father, the covenant relationship between God and his people, the all-encompassing cosmic Rule of Christ as the ascended Lord and King, or, more abstractly, the infinite qualitative difference between the Creator and all creation. These ideas are all closely linked, expressing various aspects of the typically Reformed idea of Lordship. In and of themselves these expressions are still extremely general and perfectly acceptable to most other branches of Christian theology. I would, however, submit that Methodist or Lutheran theologians, for example, would intuitively respond to the question: Do you believe in the sovereignty of God? posed by a Calvinist, by saying: Well, yes, of course, but I suspect we may mean something quite different by it. (Naturally many Reformed theologians are also self-critically aware of misunderstandings in such concepts or having them interpreted in unacceptable philosophical frameworks). The truly distinctive nature of the Reformed concept of Lordship lies not so much in its content but rather in the particular way in which it has been integrated in the broader Reformed community throughout the tradition of the

last four centuries. Within the context of the lives of Reformed and Presbyterian believers this distinctive element has received its specific significance and motivation. In fact, it is virtually impossible to pinpoint any *material* divergence regarding the Reformed concept of Lordship. It is rather the particular *emphasis* that Reformed people place on the cosmic Rule of Christ that has led, for example, to a more or less 'Reformed' approach to societal issues which may be contrasted for example with Lutheran or Catholic attitudes.

To the Reformed believer this "Reformed" idea of Lordship and Fatherhood is also directly related to the more basic faith in the triune God. Precisely this connection is the Achilles' heel of the "hierarchy of truths" approach. A Reformed theologian inevitably understands the Trinity in terms of this concept of Lordship, and the converse is also true. In this *reciprocal determination* between the essence and the distinctive elements of a particular branch of Christianity lies the inherent justification for that particular type of theology and ultimately also for the apologetic defence of its ongoing separate existence in an ecumenical age.

The most surprising of all is that even the ultimately distinctive proprium of Reformed theology should reside in something so foundational to the whole of Christianity as the Lordship or Kingdom of God in Christ. If this analysis is accurate one cannot help lamenting the extremes of common caricature mentioned above. The paradoxical realisation that the typically distinctive element is actually something so fundamental and central to Christianity seems to give hope to the fresh search for the common "Apostolic Faith" of all Christians across the globe.

3.3 The proprium of Pentecostal theology

The same method will now be applied to Pentecostalism.

3.3.1 Once again the determination of *caricature* presents no difficulty. With the possible exception of Roman Catholicism it is difficult to think of a group of Christians that has been as unfairly and vehemently slandered as the Pentecostals. Yet even within the most extreme caricature there is often an element of truth. For example the perception of the proprium of Reformed faith residing in a "capricious" predestinating God condemning the reprobate from eternity is certainly incorrect, but it is still possible to see that such a view is not totally unrelated to an emphasis on God's sovereign rule.

Misrepresentations of early Pentecostalism abound and some still linger on after eight decades. Fortunately one seldom hears remarks such as "the last vomit of Satan" any more, but the distinctive elements of Pentecostalism are still perceived of as being hyper-emotionalism, hysterical, ecstatic ramblings (glossolalia) and fanatical enthusiasm (cf. the term of abuse: the "Holy Rollers"). The tragedy of the "Berliner Erklärung" of 1909 probably forms the pinnacle of anti-Pentecostal rhetoric (Eisenlöffel 1979: 23-27). More prevalent have been the paternalistic perceptions of Pentecostalism as: typically childish and naive, superstitious, credulous and characteristic of the lower strata of society and the mentally less gifted and less mature. The degree of this abuse and the extent of the caricature reveals how seriously the threat of Pentecostalism was perceived to be to the basic structure of Western rationalistic Christianity. The most general caricature was to see Pentecostalism as "The Tongues Movement"! This is far from accurate although glossolalia is perhaps not quite as peripheral to the daily walk of Pentecostals as predestination is to the practice of Presbyterians. "Speaking in tongues" is just one of a much wider range of charismata operative in Pentecostal assemblies and is certainly not perceived of as dominating Pentecostal preaching and witness. There are indications that a large number of Pentecostals do not claim to exercise this particular gift (Kantzer 1980:26). Many would limit their experience of it to a single 'once only' occurrence of "initial physical evidence".

Other caricatures picture Pentecostals as "other-worldly" fanatics, stringent moralists or syncretistic sorcerers. Such descriptions are so grotesque that they present a portrayal that is rendered quite unrecognisable to people within "Pentecost" as well as to many "outsiders".

3.3.2 Next we turn to the understanding of proprium as the *essence* or core of one's faith. As an "outsider" at least in the sense that I have never belonged to a classical Pentecostal or independent charismatic denomination I shall attempt to lean heavily on Pentecostal sources, especially oral sources, in these two following sections. I hope that my "experiential" approach as a "participant observer" allowed me sufficient access to really understand Pentecostalism. Others will have to be the judge of this.

I would venture to suggest that the essence of Pentecostal faith lies in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and that it can be found in the specific concentration on *Jesus as Saviour, Spirit-baptiser, Healer and the soon and coming King*. In these traditional four elements (cf. the Foursquare Gospel) I believe we have the epitome of Pentecostal faith.

Although these elements describe, with some accuracy, the heart of what Pentecostals believe, they are also still surprisingly 'ecumenical'. Most Christian theologians would acknowledge that in some or other way they would fully accept each of these basic tenets. Different confessional groups may, however, give differing interpretations to these words. It will be immediately clear that the recognition of Jesus as Saviour and as the One who is coming again belong to the basic components of the Christian gospel. The manner and 'time schedule' of the Second Coming may still be hotly debated and, in fact, are - both within and without the bounds of Pentecostalism. The confession of Christ as Healer, the Great Physician, also seems to be virtually universal in Christianity - both in the sense of his ministry in Palestine and in his healing power for today. Some Christians would, however, prefer to interpret this in a more spiritual and less literal sense than Pentecostals do. Even the seemingly contentious "Spirit-baptiser" role of Jesus is not as exclusive as it may seem. Although it may not be perceived of as a very central element of the faith, most Christian theologians would probably acknowledge that Jesus is portrayed as the One who according to Acts 2:32, 33 received the Spirit from the Father and poured the Spirit out on this foundational day, thereby baptising the Church in the Spirit, evoking "this which you now see and hear".

There would be sharp disagreement regarding the extent to which this event may legitimately be individualised, personalised and repeated in ongoing generations, but that does not per se detract from a recognition of Christ as the Spirit-baptiser.

This 'four-fold' gospel may not seem to be as basic as the 'triune' core of Reformed theology and yet in a sense it is even more fundamental since it proves to be acceptable to evangelical Christians who struggle with the philosophical problems inherent in the technical concept of the "Trinity".

An added advantage of this description of the core of Pentecostal theology is that it is equally acceptable to the three major "3/2/1" theological groupings in Pentecostalism. I here refer to the classical division into the *Three-stage Wesleyan-Holiness Pentecostals*, who acknowledge three distinct events in the Christian life: conversion, sanctification as a step and Spirit baptism; the *Two-stage Pentecostals* (conversion and a subsequent Spirit baptism) who see sanctification as a process; and the *"Oneness" Pentecostals* who argue "that Jesus is the full manifestation of the Godhead in this dispensation" (Dayton 1985:D9). I am indebted to Prof Dayton's lucid paper "Toward a theological analysis of Pentecostalism" presented at the 1985 SPSP meeting for a persuasive defence of defining the four-fold gospel although, since I realise he is not a Pentecostal, I hasten to

add that my choosing of this formula as the essence of Pentecostal theology was influenced by its broad acceptance within Pentecostalism itself. It is the potential for the wider acceptance of the four-fold formula that comes as a surprise. In encompassing a "Unitarianism" of the Second Person it is at least as inclusive as the core of Reformed theology. Differences only emerge as these central concepts are developed and interpreted. The Eastern Orthodox, for example, put a *slightly* (after Klingenthal 1979 - even this may be questioned!) different interpretation on the Third Person of the Trinity and some Lutheran theologians may want to argue with Reformed theologians about the unity of Jesus as a person (even after Leuenberg 1973) but all accept the doctrine of the Trinity. Similarly all Christians may be united with Pentecostals in confessing Christ as Saviour, Spirit-baptiser, Healer and Coming Lord despite varying interpretations of what this entails in detail.

3.3.3 Thirdly we need to inquire what the truly characteristic element of Pentecostal theology is. What is *distinctive* about Pentecostalism? It is here that I wish to rely on some oral testimonies and my personal observation of Pentecostal piety. I seem to discern that *the experiencing of God's presence and power* are characteristic of Pentecostalism. This basic concept can be described in various related phrases: the Holy Ghost came upon us, the reality of God, 'Jesus touched me', the powerful anointing of the Spirit on the meeting, the dynamic power of God in miraculous manifestations, an encounter with the living God. To my mind these phrases capture something of the distinctly Pentecostal element of the Christian faith. Once again we stand amazed at how general they are. This sense of presence and power is not the exclusive property of Pentecostals or charismatics. Confessional groupings ranging from Catholic to Baptist, from Russian Orthodox to the Society of Friends would all recognise something of their own heritage in descriptions like these. But I am confident that most observers would agree that there is something unique about the Pentecostal emphasis on experiencing God in the charismatic manifestations of his power. As the sovereign Lordship of God seems to belong uniquely to the Reformed, so, I would submit, the dynamic presence of God and the experiencing thereof belongs to Pentecost in a very special sense. The truly distinctive nature of this 'touch' of God's power owes much of its depth to its total context in the Pentecostal tradition. It is a communal concept which has received its meaning from the freedom and vibrancy of Pentecostal worship and fellowship over the decades of this century. It is this emphasis on God's reality and the role it plays in the gathered assembly rather than any doctrinal difference concerning God's presence that distinguished Pentecostal spirituality from that of the evangelical and sacramental Christian alike.

Naturally this distinctive element of Pentecostalism is closely connected to what I have called the essence of Pentecostal faith. It is precisely as Saviour, Spirit-baptiser, Healer and Coming King that the presence and power of God is encountered and experienced in Jesus. As the essence influences our understanding of the distinctive element so too the distinctive element receives further definition from the core of Pentecostal faith.

Looking back one can now acknowledge some small element of truth in the caricature of Pentecostalism as ecstatic emotionalism and a Tongues' movement. To the unsympathetic "outsider" these misrepresentations were the clumsy manner of trying to express the unfamiliar immediacy of God's power and presence - a grotesque exaggeration which greatly contributed to the isolation of the Pentecostal community and prevented it, until quite recently, from making a valuable contribution to Christianity at large. If this analysis is in some measure correct it may come as an unexpected shock to many Protestants who value the *coram Deo* of Martin Luther and many Orthodox or Catholic believers who greatly treasure the "Real Presence" in the eucharist that the distinguishing mark of Pentecostalism is the experiencing of the presence of God in Christ Jesus.

In the concluding section of this paper I wish to address the issue of Spirit baptism briefly since it probably represents the major objection to the primary contention of this paper, that the distinguishing element of Pentecostalism lies not in a specific 'additional' doctrine but in a unique emphasis on a very basic component of our common Christian faith.

4 SPIRIT BAPTISM

The Chairman of the Assemblies of God in South Africa, Rev John Bond, who is a much appreciated Pentecostal leader with an apostolic ministry, makes the following statement in his article in Appendix A of this volume, describing the distinctive element in Pentecostal Theology. (The only reason I am quoting from this part of his contribution and not from the much more provocative and valuable contribution which Mr Bond makes concerning a distinctively Pentecostal attitude towards *truth* is that it provides a classic illustration of a common position from which I wish to differ). Mr Bond writes:

The one great distinctive of Pentecostalism is the belief that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a second experience to salvation and that it should be or can be accompanied by speaking in tongues (real languages unknown to the speakers).

Two minor points are interesting in this formulation. First Mr Bond seems to belong to a generation of Pentecostals who do not bother to meticulously replace "baptism of" with "baptism in" the Spirit in an attempt to avoid the misinformed reproach - generally by evangelicals - that Pentecostal theology is Spirit-centred and detracts from the centrality of Christ. The phrase "baptism in" underscores that Jesus (the Agent) baptises people in the Spirit (the element).

Secondly the element of *optionality* with respect to tongues as "necessary" accompaniment seems to betray the influence of the charismatic movement. If this is indeed what he means by "should be or can be accompanied" I can personally only applaud this shift since I believe the "law of tongues" contradicts the biblical evidence in 1 Corinthians 12, invalidating the primary argument of the interdependence of the various parts of the body. If the whole body were a tongue, where would the sense of sight be? (I am aware of the classical counter-argument making a distinction between tongues as a sign and a gift but I find it unconvincing).

The basic thrust, however, of the quotation given above is that Pentecostalism has "one great distinctive", namely the doctrine of Spirit baptism. I have argued in my doctoral dissertation *Treasures Old and New* that a doctrine of Spirit baptism as a second-stage event subsequent to conversion is wide open to the reproaches of elitist 'ultimacy' and an unhealthy event-centredness as well as to significant exegetical objections in the light of New Testament scholarship. I am aware that in claiming this I am saying very little that is new. I recognise all the basic elements of this position in a *minority viewpoint* held *within* classical Pentecostalism and associated with early leaders such as Leonhard Steiner, Jonathan Paul, Christian Krust and G R Wessels, right down to contemporaries like Dr Gordon Fee. Some of them also sought the basis of Pentecostal faith in the experiential, dynamic presence of God and the life in the Spirit rather than in the stereotyped single event "distinct from and subsequent to" conversion, with tongues as the only valid sign.

In my doctoral investigation I have also tried to outline the varying interpretations given to this contentious doctrine of "Spirit baptism" throughout the worldwide charismatic renewal movement, distinguishing a neo-Pentecostal position, a sacramental position (the experiential "release" of the Spirit as the flowering of baptismal grace) and a few evangelical and "integrative" approaches using such concepts for Spirit baptism as the final stage of Christian initiation, the infilling of the Spirit, congregational renewal in the Spirit, breakthrough and human growth experiences, etc.

My own position is that that which has currently but incorrectly become known as "Spirit baptism" is, in fact, the legitimate rediscovery of the charismatic or experiential dimension of the normal integrated Christian life which has been testified to by individuals throughout the history of the Church. Not a definitive "subsequent" event is called for but a recognition of the deeply experiential and doxological nature of the Christian faith and an ongoing openness to the full range of charisms as a present-day reality which the Holy Spirit freely distributes amongst the congregation for the common good.

In this sense "Spirit baptism" and the supernatural charismata are not special doctrines which Pentecostals and charismatics have added to orthodox Christianity but the fresh awareness of basic elements of our common Christian faith, viewed from the perspective of that unique emphasis which is the particular contribution of Pentecostalism to Christianity, namely the experience of the presence and power of God. Here doctrine may be seen to unite rather than to divide Christians.

5 I HAVE A DREAM

It is in this light that I believe that the dream with which I started this paper transcends the merely personal. (In Jungian terminology could one perhaps even see it as emanating from the collective unconsciousness?) In the Pentecostal world there has always been an appreciation for the possibility of prophetic insight being communicated in dreams and visions. I believe God desires unity for his people, the integration of the body of Christ, and oneness in the Spirit. Part of this process, of the answer to the prayer of Jesus in John 17, is surely that experience of grace when we transcend our parochial prejudices in self-denial and in not forcing our own advantage, recognising in a moment of truth in other groups of Christians, in the John Thunders of our lives, the basic elements of our common faith and brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we may work together.

I have a dream: that Pentecostals may become more ecumenical, that the spirit of David J du Plessis may be multiplied a thousand-fold throughout global Pentecostalism. My challenge to Pentecostal scholars is to consider whether our distinctive elements, our theological propria, may not become pathways for mutual enrichment. I believe it is part of our academic responsibility to help open up our communities and prepare our churches for serious theological dialogue and co-operation and to continue to do so.

I have been enriched by what I came to share of Pentecost in the denominational charismatic renewal. I remain convinced that as we return to basics we shall grow in our understanding of the common expression of the Apostolic Faith in God and in our love for one another.

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PLURALISM HITS PENTECOST? CONFLICTING VIEWS AND DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON THE PENTECOSTAL PROPRIUM: A CASE STUDY FROM THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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1. INTRODUCTION

From preliminary observations it is clear that the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa is going through an interesting stage in its development. Issues like a possible stronger structural unity with its so-called daughter churches, the influence of some new independent, non-denominational churches (Rhema Bible Church, Christian City and the Christian Community Centre in Pretoria), leadership changes and so forth, compel the church to think about the direction it should take. It can be assumed that in order for the church to identify the dangers that should be avoided as well as the course that should be followed, it would be helpful to understand more about its own history. The same applies in terms of the future. If the church can at a very early stage identify developing trends within its own ranks, it will be in a better position to give valuable direction to its members.

It is with this purpose in mind that this article was written: to serve the AFM to better understand its own history and to clarify as far as possible the present and future developments or trends.

While efforts are presently being made to ascertain what the Pentecostal proprium from the viewpoint of systematic theology is, it was felt that this particular theological concept could also be utilised in a practical theological way. This opened the door for the researcher to investigate the proprium as it has been understood and even as it has been experienced in the past by those actively involved in Pentecostalism. The same applies to the present. From this perspective the proprium can be analysed in terms of how it is experienced today, and not only in terms of what it, according to church leaders, theoretically should be.

2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 The research group

As this article was also meant to form a preliminary basis for future research it was decided to restrict the people to be interviewed to about 10% of the ordained pastors active in the AFM. Those contacted were specifically selected by five pastors

known to the researcher. These five were independently asked to identify the leading pastors in terms of four given categories: The leadership (group 1); those who obtained advanced theological degrees at universities (group 2); those who are actively pursuing the theological pathway and practice of the so-called Rhema or "hyper-faith" or independent renewal churches (group 3); those who are believed to be conservative or traditional Pentecostals (group 4). These categories were only loosely circumscribed. They were selected on the basis of what is observed to be the current issues in the church.

Although all five pastors asked to give their advice identified more or less the same people who according to them are at present leading figures in the above-mentioned categories, the following should be noted:

1. Some of those identified in one group to a certain extent also represent another category. For example: Some pastors who are part of the leadership of the church form part of the category named "traditional". On the same basis it can be said that some pastors representing one group (e.g. the traditionals) may have strong sympathies towards another grouping (e.g. the Rhema group).
2. It was easier to identify the leadership and academically interested pastors. Their names could actually have been taken from lists which are publicly available. The pastors in the other two groups were identified more on the basis of public perceptions.

Forty two pastors were identified and asked to take part in the survey. Of them 10 were classified as primarily part of the leadership of the church, 12 were selected on the basis of their "faith-movement" connections, 12 belonged to the academic group and 8 pastors were perceived as to be part of the more traditional group. A letter was sent to each one explaining the aim of the project, asking them to react promptly and confirming that their replies would be handled confidentially. A very strict time limit was set for their responses and that may be part of the reason why not more of them took part in the survey.

2.2 The questionnaire

The first question asked consisted of three sections:

1. to identify the hallmarks of the very early stages of Pentecostalism;
2. to say what the hallmarks of pentecostalism should be and
3. to list what the current hallmarks of Pentecostalism are.

A list of 17 possible answers ("factors") were supplied and the respondents were asked to rate them on a 5 point scale in terms of their importance. These probable answers were collected from a general corpus of Pentecostal literature. In order not to influence the answer in any particular way the respondents were invited to rephrase the given possibilities or to add others if they would like to do so (see Appendix 1, section 1).

Another question was added. The respondents were simply asked to list the factors which are at present the greatest threat to the development of the AFM and those factors which can best enhance the development of the AFM. Once again the participants were asked to rate their responses on a 5 point scale. A new set of possible or leading responses were supplied (see Appendix 1, section 2).

3 THE FORMAL REACTION

Of the original 42 questionnaires, 22 were received back (52%). Of these, 5 were from group 1, 9 from group 2, 5 from group 3 and 3 from group 4, the last group being the least satisfactorily represented. This sample is considered to be representative of the group as a whole in terms of the original purpose: to establish the possibility of certain groupings and trends within the AFM. Most of the respondents added commentaries to the supplied answers and three wrote letters to elaborate on their viewpoints. These opinions were analysed, quantified and are used as part of the statistical data.

4 DISCUSSION OF THE RESPONSES: THE PROPRIUM

The interesting feature of the first part of the project is simply that the respondents did not identify any specific issue which can be acknowledged as *the* pentecostal proprium. This applies to the questions relating to the past, to the present and to what the hallmarks of Pentecostalism should be. This statement needs to be clarified further.

4.1 The past: No consensus

When Möller relates the beginnings of the pentecostal movement, he first of all states the fact that people were filled with the Holy Spirit and that they spoke in tongues (1975:15-71). In fact, the emphases on the baptism in/with the Holy Spirit and on speaking in tongues gave this new movement its name: The Pentecostal movement. In contrast to these opinions, it seems that the

respondents have some other views about their own heritage. Only 36% of them are of the same opinion i.e. they underscore factor 3 in the possible responses. The leadership group (group 1) in general subscribes to this (4 out of 5 respondents). Of the academics (group 2) 30% hold the same view but the majority preferred other more general descriptions like the rediscovery of the charismata, the dedicated lives of the early Pentecostals (22% each) and other factors like the emphasis on the assurance of salvation and the distinctive quality of leadership that they were blessed with (a hallmark added by a respondent). Interestingly enough, in the faith group (group 3), only 20% saw this as a hallmark of early Pentecostalism while none of the three respondents in the traditional group (group 4) subscribed to this opinion. The last group felt the early emphasis was on the fact that everybody should have assurance of his or her personal salvation (67%) and on the spontaneous worship services which were held under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These figures specifically refer to the most important proprium as indicated by the respondents (no. 1 on the 5 point scale).

If second choices on the 5 point scale are brought into consideration the picture is altered to some extent. Another 44% of group 2 (the academics) underscore factor 3 as well as one respondent each from groups three and four. This means that 64% of the respondents feel that factor 3 applies to early Pentecostalism. If third choices are considered the percentage rises to 73.

Why this apparent diversity in opinions regarding the most prominent pentecostal roots? Answers to this question can hardly avoid being speculative and more research on a bigger scale needs to be done. One possible answer is simply that the respondents did not really try to indicate characteristics which could specifically identify the Pentecostals and their past practices, as distinct from other believers and their practices. Maybe they did not want to single out the aspect which is popularly used to describe the Pentecostals. The fact that the more traditional group paid the least attention to this factor is even more startling. Another explanation for this discrepancy might be a failure of the respondents to clearly distinguish between the given possibilities. As some respondents actually indicated in their replies, some of the supplied answers actually presuppose or include some others. Although this is true, it does not fully explain why the generally known and accepted Pentecostal proprium namely the baptism with/in the Holy Spirit with the speaking in tongues, did not fare that well in the replies of the research group.

4.2 What the hallmarks should be: Even more diversity

Once again it is obvious that the respondents differ widely in their opinions. The leadership group puts less emphasis on factor 3 (40%) and indicates factors 11 (assurance of salvation) (40%) and factor 7 (the teaching on the sovereign rule of God) as their first choices. If, however, the first three ratings on the scale are brought into consideration, all the respondents in this group refer to factor 3 as important. On the other hand, not a single respondent in group 2 even mentions the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues (factor 3) as the preferable hallmark for Pentecostals today. It simply does not feature as an option on the 5 point scale. Of them 22% mention this factor as a second choice and 11% as a fifth choice but omit the traditionally important aspect of speaking in tongues, thus actually preferring factor 2. This is interesting because it may indicate a shift in emphasis in terms of the two groups' understanding of what pentecostalism is or should be. The different views are highlighted even more by the fact that factor 4 (emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit) is preferred by 44% of group 2 as the most important hallmark while it is not even mentioned as a first choice by any of group 1. Thirty-three per cent of group 1 choose factor 7 - the emphasis on the sovereign rule of God - to be the primary hallmark. The same pattern actually also emerges from the responses of the other two groups.

Group 3 accentuates the assurance of salvation as primary and as second choices factor 2 (baptism in the Holy Spirit) features alongside factor 3, factor 12 and factor 15. The amazing aspect of group 4 is that only once is factor 3 regarded as important and then only as a third choice by one of the respondents. Once again the teaching on the sovereign rule of God (factor 7) is preferred (66%). This is followed by factor 14 (worship services under the guidance of the Holy Spirit) as a first choice.

The overall impression thus remains the same. Although the leadership group (actually a minority of them) chooses factor 3 as being of primary importance there is a shift away from this factor being the Pentecostal proprium. On the other hand, the fruit of the Spirit and the sovereign rule of God, received more attention. In general though, this means that there are a lot of diversified ideas among the members of the research group.

4.3 The present features: different observations

In terms of the first two points on the scale it is obvious that factor 3 once again received the most attention. And once again group 1 and group 2 more or less agree on this point while the

other two groups do not think this factor is featuring prominently today. Only one person in group 3 observes it to be so and only one person in the last group and then only as a second choice after factor 8 (the notion that the relationship with God can be directly experienced). For the rest factor 3 does not feature at all on the scale in these two groups. Something which is well noted by some in these groups (40% in group 3 and 33% in group 4 - both as a first value on the scale) is the more formal worship services and the fact that some pastors are very much aware of their own status. The fact that these observations are not mentioned in the second section of the first question (see the discussion in 4.3) is interpreted as indicating that the respondents do not approve of this. Belonging to the so-called "renewal group" and the traditional group might mean that they do not support this trend. This interpretation can only be substantiated in the light of these respondents' replies to question 2.

It should further be noted that each member of group 1 mentions factor 3 among the first two values on the scale while the same applies only to 67% of the respondents of group 2. Taken on its own factor 3 is not observed by group 2 as to be the most important hallmark of Pentecostalism today. Although 44% would positively affirm this, others feel that factors 1, 4, 5, 8 and 11 are more prominent today.

The overall impression thus once again is: The individuals in the research group differ widely in terms of their observations of present day Pentecostalism. The one issue which is most prominent, although only in group 1 by the majority in the group, is the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The main fact however is that the respondents have diversified views on this issue as well.

5 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

One of the most obvious observations is the difference which the academics see in what the proprium should be and what it actually is. The fact that they also evaluate the teaching on the sovereignty of God, the experiencing of the relationship with God in a direct way and the fellowship of believers to be of more value than factor 3, is of importance. This indicates that they differ from the perspective of those in leadership in distinct ways.

The second observation concerns the unique responses of those in the renewal and the traditional groups. More research should be done and more light needs to be shed on the ideas and observations of these pastors.

6 TRENDS AND INFLUENCES

The second section of the research was aimed at complementing the first but also wished to establish whether there are indeed different trends developing within the ranks of the pastors of the AFM. Hence the second question on present day trends and influences.

It must be noted that because a new set of given possibilities or replies were used, the comparison to the first question and its replies could only be made in an indirect way. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the mere fact that the respondents were classified into certain groups beforehand, to a certain extent leads to the question whether they have replied similarly to what was anticipated.

6.1 Trends: Dangerous as well as positive!

The single most dangerous trend was identified by the academics (30% of group 2) and by the traditionals (100% of group 4). They saw the growing number of heterogeneous churches and the different theological streams which form the basis of this development as detrimental to the future of the AFM. This view is also held by 20% of the leadership group and interestingly enough, by 20% of the faith group. If all the ratings on the 5 point scale are taken into account more of those in groups 1, 2 and 3 underscore this notion. It is, nevertheless, interesting though, that in all of the first three groups there are some who see this very trend as promising to the future of the church. In addition, spontaneous remarks made by some 20% of the respondents (all part of groups 1-3), it is stated in some or other way that a very strong central governing body which in effect hinders the development of freer expressions of Pentecostalism is a problem in itself.

A somewhat related issue, the growing number of so-called "mega-churches" with their diversity of ministries and cell groups, is evaluated differently. It didn't attract the same attention as the previous factor but nevertheless drew the support of 60% of the faith group, 20% of group 1 and 22% of group 3. On the other hand, this very factor was also seen as a danger by 22% of group 2, 40% of group 3 and 33% of group 4.

The other outstanding "dangerous issue" identified was the growing worldliness that is creeping into the lives of the members of the church. Almost 90% of the research group referred to this as a problem.

Other influences identified as being dangerous were mostly the problems regarding church unity and the relationship of the AFM to the Coloured, Indian and Black sections of the church. Pastors representing all the groups (40% of group 1, 77% of group 2, 60% of group 3 and 66% of group 4) see this as a problem. On the other hand, some others (20% of group 1 and 22% of group 2) see this as an issue which can in the long run have a very positive effect on the AFM. This is on condition that the issue should be worked through thoroughly and creatively. If the church is going to avoid the growing demand for structural unity it will in the short term have a positive or calming effect on some members and congregations but in the end it will lead to the AFM becoming irrelevant. That this whole issue should be looked at more extensively is obliquely underscored by the fact that almost 40% of the research group see the development of right-wing politics as dangerous to the AFM.

On the issue of the so-called "prosperity teaching" there was reaction from groups 1 and 2 who for 40% and 44% respectively see this theological emphasis as a problem. On the other hand 44% of group 2 and 40% of group 3 (sometimes known as the "renewal group") see the new developments in worship style, which mostly comes from the churches where the prosperity teaching is preached, as very positive. It should further be noted that group 2 (44%) and group 3 (40%) indicated that the alternative position, namely to return to the old traditional Pentecostal worship, would be bad for the AFM.

What are the present trends which are most acclaimed by the research group as being positive? Without a shadow of doubt the growing emphasis on the equipping of the (other) members of the church, the consequential change in pastoral practices and the development of a variety of ministries within the local body is valued as the most positive development. Only one person (from group 3) in the whole research group sees this negatively and then only as a number 5 rating on the scale. The fact that most pastors see this as a positive future trend is in itself interesting in the light of the fact that Pentecostalism originally brought the benefits of gifts and ministries to the fore. Perhaps there is much truth in the statement that Pentecostalism has for so long concentrated on only some of the charismata and that the development of other gifts and ministries within the local body only recently came to the fore - and then via the influence of some other renewal groups: not for classical pentecostal churches.

Because the development of skills in exercising gifts often takes place in smaller groups and gatherings and because the quality of fellowship is intensified within such groups, it seems under-

standable that a high percentage of the research group valued the growing number of these groups as being positive (80% of group 1, 67% of group 2, 40% of group 3 and 67% of group 4). Some of them specifically qualified their support for this development: It should be under the auspices of the local congregation. This means that they are thus not supporting the growing "house church movement" which tends to be more independently inclined.

In general the influence of television and radio is perceived to be positive (especially by 55% of group 2) although none of the respondents indicated this as to be of primary importance. Because of the fact that in the questionnaire, reference to the influence of the electronic media was only made in general terms, this positive evaluation needs further interpretation. Most probably the respondents had the more frequent and better coverage that the AFM as a church is getting on these media in mind and not the general influence of television and radio on the population as a whole.

Understandably, the fact that a growing number of AFM pastors are involved in studies at post-graduate level - contrary to the emphases in early Pentecostalism - is positively evaluated by those in group 2 (77% of the academics). In sharp contrast to this viewpoint 67% of those in group 3 (the faith or so-called renewal group), see this as being dangerous.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 First of all the results bear out the presupposition that there are indeed specific groups of like minded pastors existing within the AFM. The mere fact that as groups the respondents evaluate certain trends as positive or negative, substantiates this observation. This is particularly true of groups 2, 3 and 4 while it is also clear that the leadership group does not necessarily have the same strong feelings about certain issues as is the case with the other groups. This is in accord with the fact that the leadership is in effect representative of these different groupings.

What this means in terms of the future of the AFM is not clear. One might say that this is an indication of a healthy diversity in the church or it might also be interpreted as an indication of a possible or growing disunity. This should be investigated further before conclusive statements can be made.

7.2 At the same time it should also be taken into account that the respondents have very diversified ideas about the Pentecostal proprium. As has been shown they differ on almost every point:

what the hallmarks were, what they should be and what they are. This does not necessarily contradict the statement about the existence of different groups within the AFM. The fact is that the respondents, and specially the different groups, are more united in terms of evaluating present trends (question 2), than in interpreting their own history, what their hallmarks should be and what they are (question 1). Thus the conclusion can be drawn that in these matters there are a lot of different opinions going around. This calls for further research because the lack of unity on some of these cardinal issues may have some harmful results in the long run.

7.3 It should be noted that while the majority of the respondents see the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the speaking in tongues as important, there is also a de-emphasizing of this issue. *This is important and in the long run might change the face of Pentecostalism considerably.* It also raises a question concerning the unifying factor within Pentecostalism: If this is not *the* proprium, what else can it be? The question is a pressing one in the light of the fact that some of the factors indicated by the respondents will most probably also be preferred by people in the Reformed tradition, i.e. the emphasis on the sovereign rule of God.

7.4 It will be wise for the AFM as a whole to address certain issues. The discussion of factors which indicated a high and intensive divergence, for example the structural unity with other AFM churches, suggests this.

7.5 All in all the whole exercise suggests that the AFM as a Pentecostal church is in a situation of flux and that a lot of research should be done to understand the current dynamics in a better way.

WORKS CONSULTED

Möller, F P 1975. *Die diskussie oor die charismata soos wat dit in die pinksterbeweging geleer en beoefen word.* Braamfontein, Johannesburg: Evangelie Uitgewers.

APPENDIX 1: SECTION 1

THE ESSENTIAL HALLMARKS OF PENTECOSTALISM

Question 1

- 1.1 *According to your opinion, what were the essential hallmarks of Pentecostalism in the past (the first twenty years)?*
- 1.2 *What should the hallmarks of Pentecostalism be?*
- 1.3 *What are the actual present-day hallmarks of Pentecostalism?*

Below a number of possible answers are supplied. Please rate them in order of importance from 1 to 5 (1 being the most important). Rephrase these answers or replace them with some of your own if you would like to do so.

1. The (rediscovery of the) charismatic gifts;
2. The baptism in/with the Holy Spirit;
3. The baptism in/with the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues;
4. The fruit of the Spirit;
5. The notion that God still speaks to his people and that he guides them in direct ways;
6. The notion that physical healing in the Name of Jesus can still occur today;
7. The teaching on the sovereignty of God;
8. The notion that one's relationship with God can be directly experienced;
9. An emphasis on the fellowship of believers;
10. Speaking in tongues as a gift;
11. An emphasis on the notion that every believer should have assurance of personal salvation;
12. The holy, separated lives of dedicated believers;

13. Exorcism and prayers for the sick;
14. Free and spontaneous worship services under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;
15. The power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of Jesus;
16. Formally structured services and an awareness among pastors of their status and importance;
17. Others

(Please fill in the 5 point scale which is provided on the last page.)

APPENDIX 1: SECTION 2

PRESENT TRENDS WITHIN THE AFM OF SA

Present-day trends and their influence in shaping the future of the AFM are looked at in this section. Evaluate these tendencies in the light of the question which is asked. Note that the question has two subsections.

Question 2

2. *Which of the following influences or trends do you perceive to be as*
 - 2.1 *the most dangerous and*
 - 2.2 *as the most positive in terms of the development of the AFM in years to come?*

Rate these factors once again on the 5 point scale in order of their importance (no. 1 being the most important).

1. The growing expectation of Christ's second coming and the numerous end-time prophecies which are currently in circulation
2. The growing emphasis on the equipping of church members as opposed to the more traditional forms of pastoral work; The emphasis on the mutual ministry of believers in the local church;

3. The development of the so-called "mega-churches"; big local churches with a variety of ministries and cell groups (Hatfield, Rhema and other Christian Centres);
4. The growing number of "house churches" and other types of smaller congregations where fellowship and mutual relationships receive emphasis;
5. The growing variety which exists within the AFM among the different local churches; the different forms of renewal which are developing; the different types or streams of theology which are developing within the one church;
6. The development of right-wing politics in South Africa; The development of the Conservative Party and the new "Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk";
7. The role and influence of the electronic media such as the radio and television;
8. The tendency of more and more pastors to pursue advanced theological degrees at universities;
9. The growing worldliness among the members of the church; members who conform to the standards set by society in the RSA and not necessarily those proclaimed by the Bible or the church;
10. The emphasis on signs and wonders as part of evangelism and the building up of the church;
11. The problems concerning church unity and the relationship of the AFM with the other sections of the church (Black, Coloured and Indian);
12. The so-called prosperity teaching with its emphasis on faith, positive confession, health, material prosperity and so forth;
13. The tendency to move back to traditional patterns of pentecostal worship;
14. Others

(Please fill in the last page).