

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 *dunamis* 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 Pentecostalism 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 grassroots 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 Pentecostalism 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 disciples 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 exemplify 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' headgear, 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 spiritu* 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 legitimation 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 Carribean 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-wordly 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 Afrikaans 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