

CHAPTER 8

What is distinctive about Pentecostal theology?

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

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

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

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

8.1 SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS ALREADY REACHED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.2.1 Participation

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

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

8.2.2 Commitment (total surrender)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.3 CONCLUSION

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

PART IV

Notes

NOTES

Chapter 1

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

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

Chapter 2

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

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

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

Chapter 3

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

Chapter 4

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

Chapter 5

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

tation) are limited by the presuppositions of the researchers and seldom define the phenomena in a way that Pentecostals would consider an adequate description of their experience. This problem is greatest where the presuppositions of the social and psychological sciences preclude the dynamic intervention of a personal God in individual or social affairs.

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

Chapter 6

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

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

perspective by among others: Gelpi (1974:254-258), Moody (1965:168-181) and Fung (1980:195-214).

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

Chapter 7

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

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

PART V

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PART VI

Appendices

A P P E N D I X A

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

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

JOHN BOND - ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

J S W Bond grew up in Durban, Natal, and has been an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God since 1944, pastoring various congregations in South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Since 1967 he has been General Chairman of the Assemblies of God, and is at present also the minister of the Assembly of God, Sandton, Transvaal.

Pastor Bond has a B.A. (Theol) from the University of South Africa, and presently represents the Pentecostal churches involved in the Pentecostalism Project on the Board of the Institute for Theological Research at that institution.

1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

2 PRE-SUPPOSITIONS IN PENTECOSTAL THINKING

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

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

3 SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES OF PENTECOSTALISM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.1 The Bible

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

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

3.2 The Cross

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

3.3 Revival - the Work of the Holy Spirit

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

3.4 Miracles

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

3.5 The Demonic

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

3.6 The Sacraments

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

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

3.7 Eschatology

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

3.8 Evangelism

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

4 THE EFFECT OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT ON PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

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

4.1 Faith

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

4.2 Liturgy

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

4.3 The Spectacular

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

5 CONCLUSION

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

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

A PROPRIUM FOR PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

LEMMER DU PLESSIS - FULL GOSPEL CHURCH OF GOD

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

1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

2 HISTORICAL ROOTS OF PENTECOSTALISM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES WHICH RETARD OR FURTHER THE GROWTH OF PENTECOSTALISM

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

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

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

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

3.1 Lack of theology

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

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

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

3.2 Distinction between Word and Spirit

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

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

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

3.3 Distinction between the church and the world

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.4 Distinction between Law and Gospel

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

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

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

3.5 The Holy Spirit and his gifts

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

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

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

3.6 Liturgical flexibility

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

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

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

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

3.7 Communication

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

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

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

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

3.8 Certainty and hope

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

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

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

4 CONCLUSION

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

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THE PROPRIUM OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

JAN HATTINGH - APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF S.A.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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