

CHAPTER 7

The Pentecostal experience

Pentecostal churches such as the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) and the Assemblies of God in the USA are among the largest affiliates of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). B S Triplett points out that the Church of God was part of the meeting held on 7 April 1942 at which the formation of the NAE was first discussed. He further points out that the statements of faith of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America and the NAE are strikingly similar with the exception of one Article in the Pentecostal Statement, namely 'we believe that the full gospel includes holiness of heart and life, healing for the body, and baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance'.¹

Within the Evangelical tradition itself, Pentecostalism is part of the Fundamentalist movement which, according to Louis Gaspar, is the movement that attempted to purge North American Protestantism of theological liberalism by affirming 'orthodox' beliefs such as the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, the atoning sacrifice of Christ's death, literal resurrection, and the second coming of Christ.² While many Evangelicals would also generally agree with these doctrines, the Fundamentalists adopt an extreme literal interpretation of the

1 Triplett, B S *A contemporary study of the Holy Spirit*, 122; Nichol, J T *Pentecostalism* 237.

2 Gaspar, L *The Fundamentalist Movement*, referred to in several places in this work.

Bible. They attempt to restore New Testament-type Christianity³ and generally insist on the 'dispensationalist' theory of interpreting the Bible.⁴

Pentecostalism, which arose in the USA in conjunction with Revivalism and Fundamentalism,⁵ carried this biblical literalism, which R H Anderson called the 'bedrock of Fundamentalism',⁶ to its logical conclusion. Hence, for example, while Evangelicals may either adopt an amillennial or premillennial eschatology, Pentecostals generally adopted a premillennial position only and an extreme futuristic one at that.

As we noted earlier, Pentecostals are influenced either by Baptist or Methodist views of sanctification, as an instantaneous or a continuous work after justification. Their views of the Sacraments are similar to the Baptists.⁷ However, Pentecostalism differed from the Methodist and Baptist holiness movements and from Christendom at large in its affirmation of the Baptism of the Spirit as a 'second experience' subsequent to conversion *and* accompanied by glossolalia as initial evidence of that baptism.⁸

At present, terms such as 'Pentecostal', 'neo-Pentecostal', and 'Charismatic' have emerged. 'Pentecostal' refers to the classical Pentecostalism that emerged in 1901 in USA, which gave rise to numerous independent churches, and whose theology resembles that which is described above. 'Neo-Pentecostalism' is that movement which has emerged since the 1960s. Its theology is akin to the 'Pentecostals' but, while they remain fundamentalist, it does not always stress glossolalia as initial evidence of Spirit-baptism. The 'Charismatic' movement, which also emerged in the sixties, interprets spiritual awakening and the Pentecostal emphasis on the charismata within the theological traditions and frame-

3 Webster, D *Pentecostalism and speaking with tongues*.

4 Sandeen, E R 'Toward a historical interpretation of the origins of fundamentalism', 66-83; also Sandeen, E R *The roots of fundamentalism*. In a recent survey it was found that 68 per cent of North American Protestants are dispensationalists. Refer Radmacher, E D *Understanding contemporary dispensationalists*, 2.

5 Taylor, J V *The go-between God*, 199.

6 Anderson, R M *Vision of the disinherited: the making of American Pentecostalism*, 6. Cf also Edwards, D L *Religion and change*, 267.

7 Calley, M *God's people*, 60. Calley found the West Indian Pentecostal groups in England closest in their theology to the Baptists.

8 Triplett, B S *A contemporary study of the Holy Spirit*, 119-120.

work of the established churches.⁹ This movement has also influenced the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

In view of the impact that Pentecostalism has had on the churches at large, its categorisation within the spectrum of theological traditions becomes increasingly difficult. While 'Pentecostalism' may be labelled 'Protestant', 'Evangelical' and 'Fundamentalist', its emphasis on the charismata and on the immediacy of the Spirit, and its interest in piety and spirituality, are still within a long tradition in Church History. This point has been made repeatedly especially by Catholic Charismatics such as E D O'Connor, K M McDonnell, S Tugwell and K Ranagan.¹⁰

It will not be necessary to list or discuss the *loci* of Pentecostal theology as this has been adequately done by, amongst others, Hollenweger, Bloch-Hoell and Nichol.¹¹ More immediate to the scope of this study are issues such as the nature of the influence exerted by the religious background of Indian converts on Pentecostalism, the theological aspects of their Pentecostal experience and an assessment of the theological character of these Indian Pentecostal churches.

RITUALISTIC HINDUISM AND INDIAN PENTECOSTALISM

Because of the obvious tension between the traditional religious world view of Pentecostal converts and that of revivalistic-type Pentecostalism, the self-understanding of these Pentecostals themselves is important (i.e. how do Indian Pentecostals at the level of religious practice understand their religion).

⁹ Bittlinger, A *The Church is Charismatic*, 10.

¹⁰ O'Connor, E D *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 183; 208-214; McDonnell, K *Catholic Pentecostalism. Problems in evaluation*, 17; Tugwell, S *Did you receive the Spirit?* Tugwell rejects Spirit-baptism as 'second experience' but accepts glossolalia; Ranagan, K & Ranagan, D *Catholic Pentecostals*. This was one of the first books to bring the Charismatic movement to the attention of both Roman Catholics and Protestants; cf also Jones, J *Filled with New Wine: the Charismatic renewal of the church*. Jones places Pentecostal spirituality in the context of Anglo-Catholic church history.

¹¹ Hollenweger, W *The Pentecostals and Handbuch der Pfingstbewegung* (10 vols); Bloch-Hoell, N *The Pentecostal Movement, its origin, development and distinctive character*; Nichol, J T *Pentecostalism*.

For this, the gathering of oral tradition through extensive interviewing and attendance at Pentecostal services and cottage-meetings was given primary importance. Over 300 personal testimonies were studied and these proved to be a most valuable source of information. Representative words and phrases from these sources appear within inverted commas in the text and no further reference is made in footnotes because they were used widely.

The immanence and transcendence of God

A sense that God is totally involved in every aspect of day-to-day existence inheres in all of Pentecostalism irrespective of the ethnicity of the congregations.¹² The 'dependence on the Spirit' and the belief in the accessibility of direct divine revelation to all who are 'filled with the Spirit' are fundamental to the Indian Pentecostal theological understanding, and its understanding of God. Not only are the 'personal attributes' of God vividly described in sermons and testimonies, but those interviewed spoke movingly of the immediacy of God and of His closeness to them.

This understanding of God's closeness is in strong contrast with the traditional Hindu stress upon the transcendence of the Divine.¹³ When converts from Hinduism were asked why they accepted the Christian God, they gave the following answers:

- * Now God is 'real' (the respondents mean 'defined', identifiable within our experience, close to us);

12 This 'closeness' and involvement of God in every aspect of their lives was endemic to the religious understanding of the Pentecostal revivals in North America, the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 and to the type of Pentecostalism introduced into South Africa by J G Lake, R M Turney, A Cooper and others. Cf Fidler, R L 'Historical review of the Pentecostal outpouring at the Azusa Street Mission in 1906'; *The International outlook* January-March 1963; Lindsey, G *The life and times of J G Lake*.

13 This is true especially of ritualistic Hinduism, the religious background of these converts. The earliest source we could find of the institutionalising of temple-based ritualistic Hinduism was the emergence of the sacrificial religious cult of the Brahmanas (one of the liturgical texts of the Vedas) and its eventual merging with the puja ceremonies of the (temple-based) Dravidian religion. *Cultural heritage of India* Vol 1 (eds S K Chatterji, N Dutt, A D Pusalker, N K Bose), 82ff.

- * before we only knew about Him but now we know who He is;
- * before He was in the heavens now He is with us as well. He lives in us, not just in heaven.

The classical Hindu view of God is the Impersonal Divine of Upanishadic monism. However, the majority of Hindus in South Africa, and the vast majority of converts, came not from the philosophical, ashram-based Hindu tradition but from ritualistic, temple-based Hinduism. Even today only a small group of Hindus in South Africa are acquainted with theologico-philosophical Hinduism.

G C Oosthuizen in the extensive survey of the conversion patterns of South African Hindus showed that 71 per cent of those converts he interviewed claimed to have found no help from the Hindu sacred scriptures such as the Vedic Hymns, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads and the Mahabharata of which the better known Bhagavadgītā is a part.¹⁴ Our own investigation found that almost 85 per cent of the converts interviewed had not even read these scriptures. The reason appears to be that these scriptures, especially the Vedas and Upanishads, are too numerous and inaccessible. Traditionally, in any case, the elitist Brahmin caste had always treated such activity as its sole preserve.

Thus for the great majority of the Hindus in South Africa the temple is the centre of public worship. Temple rituals, consulting the astrological almanac, performing certain ceremonies and keeping vows were part of the propitiating process. Unless suitably appeased, some evil would befall the family. The wide gap between the perceptions of God of the Hindu 'in the pew' and the informed or philosophical definition of God in Hinduism is a source of constant concern to the small group of Hindu theologians in this country.¹⁵

It is sufficient for our purposes to sketch the traditional understanding of God in the community and to see how this may have affected Pentecostalism and how Pentecostalism affected the traditional view of its converts.

¹⁴ Oosthuizen, G C *Pentecostal penetration*, 182.

¹⁵ Colleagues at the University of Durban-Westville in the Departments of Indian Philosophy, Oriental Studies and Science of Religion have pointed this out in discussions; also Lalla, B D 'The future of Hinduism in SA' in *The Hindu heritage in South Africa*, 78-80.

For ritualistic Hindus, God is generally remote but he can intervene directly and be directly propitiated. The temple and its effigies represent for the adherent symbols of God, and the cultus and rituals bridge the gap between transcendence and immanence in the mind of the worshipper.

Pentecostalism offered an alternative to the resolution of this tension. The 'Father' is often defined in terms of transcendence while it is Christ who is immanent and immediate to human experience.¹⁶ This understanding of the Father-Son relation would of course be rejected by official Pentecostalism for its formal understanding of the Trinity is the same as that of historic churches. However, here we are investigating the 'average' member's perception of these issues in order to understand how this movement impressed its doctrine on Indians. It should also be mentioned that these views are not peculiar to Indian Pentecostalism, although elsewhere they were influenced by a distinctly different religious background.¹⁷

'The Father' is conceived of in the *tremendum* mould of God in the Old Testament¹⁸ and Christ is the 'mediator', 'intercessor' and 'propitiator'. The crucifixion and even the purpose for the incarnation are often described as an 'emergency' redemptive measure by which God through Christ solved the dilemma of human sin.

The all-pervading presence of evil in the world

Parallel to and resulting from this view of the nearness of God is the understanding of the nearness of evil.

16 A lead line in a popular chorus sung in these churches is, 'God is my father and Jesus is my brother ...' or in testimonies it was often stated 'The Father lives in Heaven but Christ lives within us' or 'lives in my heart'.

17 With reference to the background of African Pentecostals, refer to Sundkler, B *Bantu prophets*, 238, 165f; Hollenweger, W *The Pentecostals* 149ff, especially p 157 where he sees a continuity between the traditional Umoya and the Pentecostal view of Spirit among African Zionists.

18 In Pentecostal sermons references are often made to God the Father as the God of Judgement in the Old Testament. The awesome attitude of the Jews to God in the Temple, for instance, is often the context for Pentecostal reference to the Father during their worship services.

Popular Pentecostalism's view of the world appears to be dualistic: the world and human history are conceived of as the battleground for the conflict between God and Satan, good and evil.¹⁹ Much of the Old Testament is seen as a record of how through the idolatry and apostasy of Israel evil overcame good. The New Testament is seen as the record of the reversal of that process.²⁰ Its doctrine of atonement is a mixture of the 'satisfaction theory' and the *Christus Victor* motif.²¹

Furthermore, the individual's 'heart' and 'soul' are the seat of that conflict. The devil constantly challenges Christ for sovereignty over the human soul. Who eventually wins depends entirely on the individual's decision and quest for holiness.

Thus Satan is believed to be a real and ever-present force and the archenemy of the church. Sickness or misfortunes are readily attributed to demonic agency.

This question of the immanence of evil is probably the clearest link between the ritualistic Hindu world-view and that of popular Indian Pentecostalism.

We should first note that the new converts to Pentecostalism not only accepted Christ but also totally broke with their Hindu past. Temples and former religious paraphernalia were often publicly destroyed. The convert now saw these as the agency of the devil,²² an understanding which does not allow for Hinduism or any other non-Christian philosophy to be a possible *praeparatio evangelica*.

19 Job is the *locus classicus* of their thinking; other biblical records of demonic activity such as the Temptation of Christ narrative also appear frequently.

20 This dualistic understanding of the Old Testament begins with the interpretation of the Eden story. The sin of Israel is a constant reflection of the attitude of Adam to God. Christ overcoming Satan at the Cross and Resurrection, and eventually at the end of time as the Apocalypse intimates, is an important theme in sermons.

21 This is the satisfaction theory that emerged in Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*. The *Christus Victor* theory of Gustaf Aulen (143ff) sees the Atonement as Christ's liberation of man from the strong hold of Satan.

22 Cf Oosthuizen, *G C Pentecostal penetration*, 189.

The reaction of the convert was often so strong that not only was the former religion rejected but so also were many purely cultural features. There appears to have been little or no discrimination between what was religious and what was cultural. For example, purely cultural items such as the *thali* and the *bhotu*,²³ symbols of marriage, were rejected as being Hindu. Conversion was a 'clean start', often manifested in a change of name. New names were usually biblical ones or at least Western.²⁴ Besides the obvious socio-cultural motif behind this name-changing there were other reasons: sometimes the former surname, especially in the early days of Pentecostalism, carried the stigma of being low caste or of no caste at all. Pentecostalism in this sense was also conversion into a casteless society. At the same time, some of the former Hindu names were names of Hindu deities and therefore were now inappropriate.

In view of this conscious break with Hinduism, drawing mere parallels between Indian Pentecostalism and Hinduism is futile.²⁵ *It would be more accurate to go beyond phenomenological comparisons and speak of 'the old' providing the mentality that stimulated innovations within Pentecostal thinking. The underlying rationale is the same but new religious customs were developed often in reaction to the old. To grasp this tension between the old and the new is a vital clue to an understanding of the character of the movement and to an understanding of the reasons why Pentecostalism communicated more successfully with the Indian than 'established' Christianity did.*

On the one hand, Indian Pentecostalism offered a new religion yet maintained a continuity with India: while the services were held in English, songs and prayers were often in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi. Pastor J F Rowlands, the dynamic leader of Bethesda, instilled a sense of pride among his members in their Indian history and culture. He, more than any other, lauded the Indian

23 *Thali*, the necklace used at Indian marriages is the equivalent of the ring; the *bhotu* is the red dot placed on a woman's forehead to indicate that she is married.

24 Names were changed either at the time of conversion or more regularly at baptism. This was fairly common throughout these churches but was more frequent in Bethesda. A further disturbing trend confirms that the shift was not only religious but also socio-culturally conditioned. Many Indian names are considered by the younger generations (even Hindu young people) to be crude within their acquired Western society.

25 For instance, in comparing Hindu trance and the 'Pentecostal Experience' Oosthuizen, *G C Pentecostal penetration*, 278.

family life, social graces and communal solidarity. On the other hand, Pentecostalism by its very nature was a westernised religious form heavily influenced by visiting evangelists, preachers and literature from the USA. It paid only token respect for the culture of the Indians who as a marginal community were caught in culture shock and were becoming increasingly westernised.

In the ritualistic-type Hinduism existing among the majority of Hindus in South Africa, the temple rather than scriptures or meditation is central; priests, not teaching gurus, are the chief functionaries of this religion and ritualism replaces other kinds of creeds. The lack of formal doctrinal definition encourages practices that those bodies influenced by Vedic theology and neo-Hinduism strongly reject. A few of these rituals manifest in trances, evidence of which may be seen in the Kavadi festival, and fire-walking.²⁶ These trances are limited to a few of the devout who are in actual contact with the deities and who often act as diviners. They have special appeal for people who need healing, or who need to uncover the causes of their 'ill luck'.

It is this awareness of evil that is retained virtually intact even after conversion with but one difference: all the former practices are considered demonic²⁷ and the Christian God is seen as the greatest force, able to overcome even the strongest of these 'powers of darkness'. Former diviners or priests told of the hierarchy that they believed existed in the temple structure: a temple is usually dedicated to one deity in particular. When one is overcome by an ill of some kind one seeks the aid of a stronger source to undo the curse of the lesser.²⁸ Now after conversion the Christian God is considered mightier than even the strongest of these forces.

Our point is not that all of Hinduism is tantric, but that this was the type of Hinduism most prevalent among a large section of Hindus in South Africa and among many who had turned to Pentecostalism. *'Superior' forms of Hinduism as 'superior' forms of Christianity did not make an effort or if they did, they lacked comparable appeal.*

²⁶ *Ibid*, 184.

²⁷ *Moving Waters* December 1973, 197; information from various independent Pentecostal pastors; Oosthuizen, *G C Pentecostal penetration*, 189.

²⁸ Information from three former Hindus who became pastors. Here again, whatever the understanding of the Hindu scholar may be, this is how the worshipper understood matters.

J F Rowlands himself, who managed to instil a sense of austerity into Bethesda's Pentecostal expression, taught that 'evil spirits are as real as the Holy Spirit'. He wrote: 'There is a baptism of the evil-spirit, an infilling of satanic power that enables the heathen to perform miracles.' He cited examples of such miracles: 'The possessed man can walk barefoot through red hot fires without a blister and he can pierce his body with nails and needles without a drop of blood being shed.'²⁹

In the light of this understanding of the omnipresence of evil one can understand why the emphasis on exorcism and healing became so crucial for Indian Pentecostalism. Whatever the reasons that highlighted these emphases in the white missionaries' context in North America or Britain, here these corresponded with the world view of the majority of the Indians in South Africa.

Indian Pentecostal movements, especially the independent churches, offered a number of examples of persons claiming to have had the ability to 'cast out demons'. Some ministers even claimed to have had 'the gift of discernment' which enabled them to discern the sources and types of illnesses or problems. In their view, such troubles are normally because of sorcery and they were able to unearth the instruments of this sorcery in the gardens or homes of the 'victim'.

A few ministers are known to pray over water and then sprinkle this 'holy water' throughout the homes and over the afflicted to protect them from evil or sickness. Another example of magico-animistic interest is the attitude in some quarters of these churches to the dead. Pastor Rowlands complained that 'far too many pagan customs had been incorporated into Christian funerals', such as 'turning pictures on the wall back to front, and the habit of men refraining from shaving'. Even after becoming Christians, families are deeply concerned about the assurance of peace for their dead. Hindu families would normally recite certain ceremonial prayers throughout the year to achieve this. Since this concern about the welfare of the departed remained after conversion, Pastor Rowlands substituted the 'Thanksgiving' services for these memorial ceremonies. The focus was subtly but deliberately shifted from remembering the dead to God's concern for the grieving family: a transfer which seems to have been adopted by many other Pentecostal churches instancing what J Bavinck, the missiologist, termed an act of 'possession' by which an old form was filled with a new content.³⁰

²⁹ *Moving Waters*, December 1973, 195, in message to International Evangelism Congress in Mexico City (also *MW* October 1969, 85).

³⁰ J H Bavinck *An introduction to the science of mission*, 178-179.

However, some of the converted families appear to have given these ceremonies much more value than Pastor Rowlands had originally intended. In their anxiety about the welfare of the departed they insisted upon them, believing that a departed spirit which was not at rest could come back to haunt them or to bring misfortune.

Pentecostals justify their preoccupation with the exorcism of demons by referring to Christ's and his Apostles' experience with evil spirits. Such parallels are not difficult for biblical literalists to show.³¹ Furthermore, both Indian and white Pentecostal ministers use these beliefs to distinguish themselves from the 'established' Christian churches that 'believe only half the truth' by ignoring these 'supernatural occurrences'.

Pentecostals services are not only attended for worship but are also focal points for spiritual and emotional help. Very often there are special prayers for sick individuals during the services, and in some congregations members are asked to pray for one another by 'laying hands' on each other. At times the sick or troubled are called to the 'altar' or pulpit and the minister himself prays over them. Very often exorcisms take place during the service but more often occur in the homes of the persons concerned because they are often accompanied by long hours of prayer. This is in obedience to the scriptural injunction; 'difficult cases' are usually preceded by 'much fasting and prayer'.

At the campaigns of some of the independent churches, modelled on the style of North American evangelists such as Oral Roberts and A A Allen,³² people queued in order to 'be delivered from evil' or be healed.³³ Many Hindus, dis-

31 To allow that some of these biblical references to 'evil possession' may be explained psychologically or that some of these may be ordinary cases of epilepsy is rejected by Pentecostals as attempts to remove the supernatural and thus to explain away the miracle.

32 These preachers are well known in these circles through their radio broadcasts and more especially through films of their campaigns. Others include T L Osborne and Billy Graham.

33 During the sixties 'The Miracle Revival Crusade' of Michael Henry in Durban popularised the evangelistic tent campaign with the emphasis on healing. Pastor Rowlands' earlier tent campaigns were aimed at church growth and instilling a revivalistic-holiness ethos in his congregations, although even during this attempt, healing was not excluded but played a smaller role.

appointed with results in their temples, came 'to try the Christian God'. Converts give healing as the single most important reason for converting to Christianity.³⁴ A minister of a Lutheran Indian congregation commenting on the slow growth of his church compared with Pentecostal churches wrote:

It is very difficult to build up stable congregations, ... in the temples people do not find congregational life. They go to the temple when there is need, mainly to change 'bad luck' to 'good luck'. This is mainly a task for women. People can therefore go to the temple, where they think they can get most help, they do not belong to any particular temple ... People 'do' prayers to obtain something. The whole outlook is magical. This is brought into the Christian church. Those groups who appeal to the same sentiments as Hinduism can get many members. Healing, promises of 'good luck', 'Jesus will solve all your problems', 'you will be happy', 'as a Christian you will prosper' etc are things people will go for and also for emotionalism [they need to see] that something is happening.³⁵

While his generalisations about the reasons for Pentecostal growth are not entirely correct, he has made an important observation regarding the continuity that persists in the minds of many persons even after joining the Pentecostal church. The convert's new community still 'appeals to the same sentiments' of his ritualistic Hindu past.

This is further illustrated by the attitude of these Pentecostals to their place of worship. The almost one hundred branches of Bethesda, for example, are called 'temples'. Pastor Rowlands chose such a term in view of the special significance of the temple in the traditional communities. Now, of course, a biblical idea of 'temple' has replaced a Hindu one. It is referred to as the 'House of God', or even the 'Holy of Holies'. Members are cautioned to observe complete reverence when in church so as not to disturb 'the holiness of the place'.³⁶ While there is nothing essentially unacceptable about this attitude, there is often an excessive concern with externals. For example, a woman reported to

34 Testimonies recorded by Oosthuizen, G C *Pentecostal penetration* 182f.

35 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa - Indianwork: a report' mimeographed.

36 O J F Rowlands.

have been miraculously healed in an independent church in Phoenix was said never to have missed a single service at this church since she had been saved. When interviewed, the elderly woman pointed out that she would not miss a single service because by constant attendance she continues to be in favour with God. She gave the impression that she would be ill again if she stopped attending.³⁷ Large sections of these churches seem to regard attendance at church services as accomplishing desired ends *ex opere operato*. (This understanding obviously also occurs among worshippers in established churches in connection with the mass or sacraments quite apart from how those leaders explain these aspects of the liturgy. The aim here is not to isolate religious idiosyncrasies but to explain how these are differently informed.)

The idea of God

All Pentecostals, except the unitarian groups, accept the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity.³⁸ However, in practice the Trinity is 'rationalised' in the following way.

The transcendence of God in his absolute holiness and sovereignty is emphasised but these characteristics are generally attributed to the Father. God the Father is *totaliter aliter* and his main function is to judge. Those parts of the Old Testament that represent God as he who destroys and does not tolerate unbelief or idolatry are therefore especially popular in descriptions of God the Father.³⁹

While the 'Father' is God in judgement who punishes sin and before whom Satan is continually accusing Christians, Christ is seen as God who 'cares and forgives'. Christ is close to them, cares for them and 'lives in their hearts'. He manages their affairs and protects them from evil. They speak openly of Him as their 'friend and companion'. In their testimonies everything from the procuring of a job or car to the receiving of funds to meet a bill is credited to the direct agency of Christ.

³⁷ Interviewed in the presence of the pastor who prayed for her healing: Pastor Ronnie Naidoo, Phoenix.

³⁸ All the available creeds of these churches are agreed on this doctrine.

³⁹ Answers to the questions 'Who is God?' or 'How do you imagine God to be?' were normally coloured by Old Testament narrative and essentially these had 'the Father' in mind.

Pentecostals resolve the tension between transcendence and immanence by unconsciously disregarding the old theological maxim *Opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt* and give the role of 'God in His Love' almost entirely to Christ. On at least three occasions Evangelists in their sermons explained how Christ came to be born. In vivid terms, with great rhetorical effect, they depicted the court of heaven with the angry Father and his attendant angels. Into this scene stepped Christ who offered to go to earth in order to be the 'propitiation' of God's wrath. The physical sufferings of Christ were stressed as being most efficacious. The sermons often culminated in the question, If He could suffer so much to 'save us' why do we not more willingly suffer tribulation for His sake? Thus Christ acts on man's behalf towards the Father; He is the 'loving friend and brother', who makes each member a 'joint-heir' with Him. The work of Christ as 'mediator' and 'intercessor' is therefore stressed.

The name 'Jesus' itself has power over evil. Exorcists declared that in their experiences, the mere mention of the name sufficed to check the boisterous behaviour of the 'possessed' and 'evil spirits were silenced'.⁴⁰ They claim Peter's experience of healing in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6) as the biblical warrant for their practice.

It seems, from the manner in which the third person of the Trinity is spoken of in such circles, that the Holy Spirit is perceived as an invisible, all-pervading force. This, too, is a violation of the orthodox principle of *Opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*. The Holy Spirit is often spoken of as 'it', the impersonal third person pronoun. The impersonal usage is to be found even among some theologically educated Pentecostal pastors, both Indian and white. It was too frequent and too widely spread to represent a mere *lapsus linguae*.

The Spirit is seen as the source of boldness and courage enabling one to witness for Christ and is responsible for the ability to heal or exorcise, and bestows the strength necessary to refrain from sinning. The word that occurred most frequently in connection with the Spirit was 'Power'.⁴¹ Taking their cue from certain biblical texts most Pentecostals believe that the Spirit empowers a

⁴⁰ Ronnie Naidoo, Bible Deliverance Fellowship; Andy Harris, Church of the Eternal Truth; Rachael Abel and others who practise exorcism related these details.

⁴¹ 'Power' occurs frequently in sermons, choruses and testimonies; cf J F Rowlands on 'Pentecost' *Moving Waters* March 1942, July 1942, August 1956.

Christian to do miraculous things, and also that people without 'power' were only nominal Christians and even 'apostate'.

The Holy Spirit is an 'invisible force' that offers protection from evil. The Spirit effectively prevents evil from invading individuals or their homes. In this connection, the heart is seen as the centre of the conflict between Satan and Christ, in which, if the Holy Spirit is not present, evil will easily overcome the individual.

Mystical spirituality

Pentecostals have developed a type of mysticism which is inextricably bound up with, and indeed is, the consequence of this understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. The following are descriptions typical of the experience of 'having the Spirit':

- * It is the *power from heaven that takes control of you* and guides your life to the perfection required by God.
- * One has to be in the perfect will of God, waiting on God and *breathing in the breath of God*.
- * One gets *immersed* in the Spirit.
- * When *the Spirit enters the soul of a person his whole life is filled*.
- * One is imbued with *God's Spirit to such an extent that not our will but the will of God motivates our lives*.

The language used by the Indian Pentecostal groups to describe the experience of the Spirit is not dissimilar to that used by Pentecostals everywhere.⁴² For example, glossolalia is described as 'a song of the depths of the self, bursting the barrier of the unconscious' or 'the uttering of the unutterable in the power of the Spirit'.⁴³ A white pastor of a non-racial independent movement which is

⁴² Hollenweger, W *The Pentecostals*, 12-12; 177-78; 238-38; 321-347. Bloch-Hoell, Nills *The Pentecostal Movement*, 141-147.

⁴³ Lapsley, J N & Simpson, J H 'Speaking in tongues', 12.

markedly influencing Indian Pentecostalism explained glossolalia as 'a direct spiritual communication with God ... a private line of communication between the believer and his God'.⁴⁴

Pentecostals, in the main, claim that an 'experience' of the Spirit makes effectual prayer possible. This 'experience' sets the basis for the rest of Pentecostal life and worship.

Pentecostalism generally, including its Indian expression, also operates with a tripartite anthropology. Such a view is also found in Hinduism itself. The soul is sharply contrasted with the body. The body, the seat of sensuality, is constantly at war with the spiritual inclinations of the soul. The task, then, for the soul (the rider) is to keep the body (the chariot) in subjection for the ascent of the mountain to God-consciousness (moksha).⁴⁵ In Pentecostalism, the soul of the believer is ruled by Christ who is constantly challenged by Satan who uses the body to war against the soul.

This tripartite view and the belief in the immortality of the soul sets the tenor of these Christians' understanding of holiness and affirms the centrality of the believer within that life-long programme of holiness.⁴⁶ The 'sins of the heart' are overcome when Christ rules. Paul's concepts of 'flesh' and 'body' and his call to 'walk in the Spirit not in the flesh' are popular sermon themes.

So, whatever the reasons for emphasising healing and exorcism in the historical contexts of the white missionaries who brought the Pentecostal message, to Indian South Africans that message had a double anchorage - Fundamentalism and ritualistic Hinduism. After fifty years there still exists what may best be described as a dialectical tension between the former ritualistic Hinduism and the new-found Pentecostal-type Christianity. On the one hand, there is open rejection of anything Hindu; on the other hand, the former religious world

44 Pastor Fred Roberts' taped sermon 'The speaking with other tongues'; The Christian Centre, a thriving movement in Durban, was started in the late seventies by Fred Roberts, who left the Full Gospel Church. This highly organised movement has grown so rapidly that it bought a large cinema to house its congregation. A number of Indians have joined this movement having left their former Pentecostal churches.

45 *Katha-Upanishad* chapter 1 section 3, verse 3.

46 Oosthuizen, G C *Pentecostal penetration*, 280; *Moving Waters*, June 1941; February 1946; March 1969; April 1970; April 1973.

view, with its understanding of the immanence of the divine and of evil, still remains.

THE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE OF THE SPIRIT

It has already been mentioned that in the USA the holiness doctrinal position developed to the point at which glossolalia came to be considered a *sine qua non* of Pentecostalism.

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa (COG) and the Assemblies of God (AOG) hold identical positions regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The 'baptism of the Spirit' is consequent to regeneration. It is described as 'the enduement of power from on high, promised to all believers who obey God [Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5-8; 2:38; 5:32] It is the privilege of every believer, as in the early church, to receive this supernatural experience' [Acts 2:1-4; 8:15-19; 10:44-47; 19:1-7].⁴⁷ It is a 'wonderful experience ... distinct from, in addition to and subsequent to the experience of the new birth'.⁴⁸ This experience ensures 'divine direction and enduement of spiritual power for service'.⁴⁹

'Speaking with other tongues' is the initial evidence of this experience. All three churches also affirm that 'regeneration and baptism into the body of Christ' is different from the 'indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer'.⁵⁰ In the USA, from as early as 1915, the Assemblies of God considered the identification of the two experiences to be 'a false doctrine'.⁵¹ Furthermore, the 'nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer' is distinguished from the 'nine-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit' following Spirit-baptism.⁵² Members are urged to 'covet the gifts', since they are given for 'the edification and enlargement of the church'.⁵³

47 Constitution of the Full Gospel Church, Section 16, 27.

48 *Ibid*, 28.

49 *Ibid*; Assemblies of God beliefs and practices, 4.

50 *Ibid*; Apostolic Faith Mission constitution; Full Gospel Church constitution, Clause 2:5; 2:7.

51 Hollenweger, W *The Pentecostals*, 32.

52 Full Gospel Church constitution, 2:18; 2:19, 28.

53 *Ibid*, 19:28.

While the book of Acts [2:4; 10:46 and 19:5] is used as the basis for this doctrine of baptism, the belief is also based on the promise made by Christ in Mark 16:17. Furthermore, glossolalia in these cases in Acts is considered to be the same manifestation which is recorded in 1 Cor 12.⁵⁴

After many interviews with ministers and members from all three churches and attendance at over 550 of their services, it became clear that only the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) and Assemblies of God (AOG) affiliated churches actively propagate this doctrine. Bethesda, the Indian branch of the Full Gospel Church, has a different and unique attitude to this issue.

In the AFM and AOG churches, glossolalia was accompanied by long sessions of fervent prayer, fasting, urgent striving after holiness and in many cases emotional behaviour in worship and prayer. Numerous examples of public and communal tongue-speaking, 'interpretations' of these tongues and 'prophetic' utterances were observed. In the services, a time for 'free worship' is allowed during which the whole congregation participates in praying out aloud, singing, praising God, speaking in tongues and even weeping. Bodily convulsions, uncontrollable jerkings, what appeared to be garbled speech interspersed with repetitive monotonous, and swoonings were sometimes observed. The faintings were termed the 'slaying in the Spirit'. (Very similar phenomena were also observed in white Pentecostal congregations.)

Older ministers and members recalled special meetings that were held regularly at which members in the congregation were encouraged to 'strive after the gifts of the Spirit'. A 'dead church' with 'no warm fellowship and no souls saved' is associated with a lack of these gifts.⁵⁵ For this reason the traditional churches are often contemptuously labelled 'dead churches'.

Bethesda's Pentecostal position

Bethesda, in contrast to the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Assemblies of God and the Full Gospel Church to which it is affiliated, adopted a distinctly different approach. Pastor J F Rowlands is said to have spoken in tongues only when he was very young. This was known only to two or three of his closest

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, section 17.

⁵⁵ This view is based on the interviews and the recorded sermons of these churches.

friends.⁵⁶ Otherwise, he did not speak in tongues publicly nor did he expect it of any of his members.⁵⁷ There is no evidence that he ever imposed the creed of the white headquarters on the Indian branches. He also does not appear to have insisted that 'speaking in tongues' was the initial evidence of Spirit-baptism. Nevertheless, he always claimed to be a 'thorough-going Pentecostal'.⁵⁸ This would indicate that he considered Spirit-baptism to be much more than glossolalia or 'charismata'.

Early in Bethesda's history, Pastor Rowlands pointed out that 'There are some folks ... who do not like Bethesda's Pentecost - perhaps there is not enough noise for their liking or perhaps it is because there is a complete absence of fanatical stamping or clapping.'⁵⁹ In 1942 he wrote: 'Let me say emphatically right now that all this fanaticism [i.e. what was prevalent in Pentecostal circles at the time] is not only most irreverent but quite unscriptural. Noise is not always evidence of blessing.'⁶⁰ He believed that the purpose of Spirit-baptism was to 'equip Christian workers with Power for service and not for selfish spiritual pleasure and enjoyment'.⁶¹ 'The church,' he believed, was facing 'the greatest crisis in her history and without Pentecost and the power of the Holy Ghost she will crumble beneath the battering ram of the enemy Real Pentecost is marked by power, stability and strength.'⁶² He pointed out that 'Real Pentecost brings reverence, but sad to say there is deplorable irreverence in many Pentecostal churches today.'⁶³ As early as 1936 he regretted that some Bethesda members had been influenced by the 'fanaticism' of other Pentecostal churches. He even reprimanded them for attending 'off-the-track services'.⁶⁴

For Pastor Rowlands too, Spirit-baptism was, in true holiness fashion, a 'second experience' subsequent to conversion. However, he made at least three departures from the official position of the Full Gospel Church:

56 OI F Victor.

57 Several early Indian workers in this church agreed with this assesement.

58 MW June 1940, sermon entitled 'This isn't that'; MW December 1964, 95.

59 MW August 1956.

60 MW March 1942.

61 MW July 1942, 76.

62 Bethesda Temple Church Council minutes 14 July 1935; also Oosthuizen, G C MWa 191.

63 MW August 1956 (this is a reprint of an earlier sermon).

64 *Ibid*, in 'A plea for a balanced emphasis in Pentecostal ministry'.

- * He believed that to highlight the Baptism in the Spirit above other Christian doctrines was to encourage 'an unbalanced emphasis' which invariably led to 'fanaticism and the eventual ridicule of God's work'.⁶⁵
- * He affirmed that 'the evidence that a believer has been baptised in the Holy Ghost is a greater evidence than speaking with tongues'; much more than mere speaking in tongues was needed as evidence.⁶⁶ While glossolalia may accompany this experience 'it is only one of the gifts apportioned and divided severally as God wills' [Cor 12:11].⁶⁷ There was no biblical reason for elevating one gift above the others.
- * He consistently reminded his congregations that the sign of the Baptism of the Spirit was ultimately not the 'charismatic gifts'. He pointed out that nowhere in the Scriptures is it mentioned that, 'By their gifts ye shall know them' but by their 'fruits ...'.⁶⁸ He frequently quoted Matthew 7:16.

Pastor Rowlands understood Bethesda's position to lie between the extremes of formalism and fanaticism: 'Fanaticism is the result of an unscriptural approach to Pentecost and Formalism in the result of no approach at all.'⁶⁹ He strongly criticised the formal, structured approach to polity and worship in the established churches. He considered many of these churches 'apostate'.⁷⁰ This appears to be a general trait in Pentecostal thinking. We get the clearest insight into Pastor Rowlands' attitude to this issue in his response in mid-1959 to a few members leaving Bethesda to join a certain 'established church': 'the four-square peg of Pentecost will never fit into the round hole of formal Christianity'.⁷¹ He pointed out that 'formalism' was 'throttling their Christianity because they deny the power of the church, the Holy Spirit'. He compared these members to 'spiritual divorcees' who had 'lost their first love for Jesus and have been remarried to a church'. 'Too many Christians,' he lamented, 'are being rounded-off to fit square backslidden situations.'⁷²

65 *MW* August 1967, 58.

66 *Ibid*; this fact was affirmed by many of the older ministers of this church and especially by A B Arnot (refer to the history of Bethesda in Pietermaritzburg, chapter 2).

67 *MW* January 1976, 11 in 'Yours for the asking'.

68 *MW* June 1959.

69 *MW* June 1959, 67.

70 *Ibid*.

71 *Ibid*, 66-67.

72 *MW* August 1967.

He believed that behind both extremes lay a satanic plot designed to corrupt the church. While formalism made Christians merely 'puppets and pew-warmers where their impotence will be a stumbling-block to the spread of the Gospel', the extreme emotional experiences were 'pseudo-Pentecostal experiences designed by the "arch imposter" to deceive true Christians'.⁷³ Those caught in the latter, he wrote, 'were too busy chasing devils, imaginary or otherwise, to listen to simple reason and plain Scripture'.⁷⁴

From about the late sixties onwards, he found reason to warn more vehemently against emotional excesses among the later independent Pentecostal churches. In contrast, Bethesda was described as being 'qualified by the word "sane"', where 'no appeals to natural feelings or emotions are made and where the Holy Ghost appealed directly to the conscience and [therefore] lasting decisions have been made for the Lord'.⁷⁵

Not the 'gifts' but the 'fruit' were the signs of true Pentecost and the baptism of the person. He listed these 'fruits' as

- * profound humility
- * power not noise
- * love above all other gifts
- * unity not churchianity or denominationalism
- * spiritual urge to win souls
- * innate desire to pray
- * Christlike unselfishness
- * action, movement and progress not stagnation
- * spirituality not carnal-mindedness
- * stability, dependability and reliability not 'weather-cock Christians'.⁷⁶

These, he maintained, will ensure that the Christian becomes 'supernaturally animated and transformed into Christlikeness'.

It is clear, then, that while 'tongue-speaking' has historically become entrenched as a distinguishing feature (Pentecostal churches openly claim this as the most important feature in their creeds), it is quite possible for a church

73 *MW* June 1940.

74 *MW* November 1949, 124-125.

75 *MW* August 1967, 58.

76 *Ibid.*

to place no emphasis on this at all, and yet claim to be truly Pentecostal. What then is the essential 'Pentecostal experience of the Spirit'?

While the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Assemblies of God have isolated the 'second experience' as a distinct, dramatic, and often emotional experience which for them should be accompanied by 'tongue-speaking', Bethesda (and we should remember this is by far the largest section of Indian Pentecostalism) insisted that this 'second experience' is characterised by a transformed life-style. Within Bethesda also, this 'second experience' was often accompanied by such exercises as weeping at the altar, making a public confession, signing a pledge or making a promise to serve Christ totally. This experience was invariably the 'prerequisite' for admission into the activities of the church.

Thus, this 'Pentecostal experience' was ultimately one that enabled the member to identify totally with his church and be intimately involved in its activities. Having had this experience the person felt 'cleansed' and accepted by God and his or her fellow-members. Hence, one finds repeated references to 'guilt', 'sins', 'cleansing' and 'reconciliation' in the sermons, testimonies and songs used by these churches. Of over 150 songs and choruses that are popular at Pentecostal church services, at least 100 were associated with one or more of these four ideas: the clichés 'cleansed by the blood of Christ', 'washed my sins', 'I was lost but Jesus found me', 'saved from darkness and brought into light', 'once I was bound but now I am free' and 'I am a blood-washed child of God' occur frequently.⁷⁷ The two most frequently recurring reasons given for thanksgiving were 'reconciliation to God' and 'physical healing'. Reconciliation is experienced as a real and existential reality. The signs of this reconciliation are understood to be the effectiveness of the person in 'doing something for God'. This common cliché refers to the active involvement in church services and its general activities. These include praying, preaching, evangelism and membership in one or more of the auxiliary ministerial groups. One repeatedly finds in the testimonies something to the following effect: 'I thank my God for using me in this work. I used to be a person of no importance [the person here normally cites examples from his past to illustrate how bad he was] but since I became a child of God my whole life has been changed [here examples of various successes achieved since conversion may be cited].' After this, as an indication of his having been used by God, reference is usually made to healing, a conversion or some other praiseworthy assistance that some person

⁷⁷ Over 300 testimonies at the services were studied. These phrases recur in most of these.

received through his agency. This pattern is representative of these testimonies which are remarkably stereotyped in form and content.

The doctrine of the 'second experience'

The separation of the baptism of the Spirit from conversion is the theological *a priori* of Pentecostalism based on the experience of the Apostles as recorded in the Acts.

Harold Horton maintains that those who had not had this 'second experience' of baptism 'know nothing of ... supernatural things'.⁷⁸ The baptism of the Spirit is believed to be a 'definite and distinct experience' subsequent to regeneration and to having 'a clean heart'.⁷⁹ Associated with baptism is the reception of 'power' to become true Christians, to evangelise and to live daily above sin and unholiness.⁸⁰ As Derek Prince stated, 'In order to become a true Christian, a person must be born again of the Spirit of God. In order to become an effective witness of Christ, a person must be baptised in the Holy Spirit In order to live daily as a Christian, a person must be led by the Spirit.'⁸¹

Certain fundamental problems may be raised concerning the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism as a second experience subsequent to conversion:

(a) Luke's account of Spirit-baptism is given prime importance. In this regard, it is worthwhile to consider John Stott's advice that it is a 'sounder hermeneutical approach to seek guidance in the Bible's didactic rather than its historical parts'. He wrote: 'We should look for [doctrinal revelation] in the teaching of Jesus, and in the sermons and writings of the apostles, and not in the purely narrative portions of the Act. What is described in Scripture as having happened to others is not necessarily intended for us, whereas what is promised to us we are to appropriate, and what is commanded to us we are to obey.'⁸²

⁷⁸ Horton, H *The gifts of Spirit*, 137.

⁷⁹ Chadwick, S *The way of Pentecost*, 36-37.

⁸⁰ This is abundantly stated by Pentecostal writers; for example Slay, J L *This we believe*, 75ff; Barsham, D *A handbook on tongues, interpretation and prophecy*, 34f; Katter, C K *Ye shall receive power*, 18f; Kisumu, F F *The Holy Spirit*, 20; Horton, S M *What the Bible says about the Holy Spirit*, 277f; Jeffreys, G *Pentecostal rays*, 153f.

⁸¹ Prince, D *Purposes of Pentecost*, 39.

⁸² Stott, J *The baptism and fullness of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

James D G Dunn also pointed out the danger of relying unduly upon Luke's account.⁸³ While we cannot adequately evaluate here the significance of Luke's history, it is clear that the epistles contain an important perspective on this issue of Spirit-baptism that Pentecostals have neglected. While Luke emphasises the direct communication the Apostles had had with the Spirit, the epistles describe the life in the Spirit as a new relation to God based on 'sonship', 'liberty' and a new degree of love [2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1; 2 Cor 3:8; Gal 3:5].⁸⁴ Paul stressed that the supernatural elements which the Church in Corinth had emphasised were not the essence of the Spirit-filled life.

J A Schep agrees that the biblical historical events cannot be normative but adds that 'we should always be on our guard not to blur out clear guidelines for the future contained in historical records'.⁸⁵ However, it is important to note that on a point of contention, as is the case here, it is hermeneutically sounder to give more weight to the portions of Scripture, like the epistles, which aim to clarify Christian doctrine, than to give primary importance to the historical sections which did not have the same purpose.

(b) The separation of the Baptism of the Spirit from the experience of regeneration creates confusion about the role of the Spirit in conversion and gives rise to certain ambiguities about the work of the Spirit in general. For example, Dennis Bennet held that,

The one baptism in Eph 4:5 divides into three. In I Cor 12:13 Paul says, 'In one spirit we are all baptised into one body ... and were made to drink of one Spirit'. This refers to the Spirit baptism ... which takes place as soon as Jesus is received as Saviour. This was followed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, in which the now indwelling Holy Spirit is poured forth to manifest Jesus to the world through the life of the believer. Either before or after the baptism with the Holy Spirit there was the outward sign of baptism with water.⁸⁶

83 Dunn, J D G *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 191; cf also 189-196; and his article 'Spirit Baptism and Pentecostalism'.

84 Taylor, J V *The go-between God*, 201.

85 Schep, J A *Baptism in the Spirit according to Scripture*, 42.

86 In Green, M I *believe in the Holy Spirit*, 143f.

Michael Green maintained that Bennet has 'tied himself in knots'⁸⁷ because in his attempt to account for the 'second experience' he violates the very teaching of the text he uses (i e 1 Cor 12:13), namely the one baptism of the Spirit.

(c) Baptism in the Spirit is subsequent to regeneration. Regeneration, the essence of the conversion experience, is according to the Scriptures totally the work of the Spirit. To describe a subsequent experience as 'the threshold to a life of walking in power' as Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan do,⁸⁸ tends to minimise or underplay the work of the Spirit in conversion.

This is confirmed by A A Hoekema who points out that 'the expression "to be baptized in the Spirit" is used in the Gospels and in Acts 1:5 to designate the once-for-all historical event of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost - an event which can never be repeated. In Acts 11:16 the expression describes the reception of the Spirit for salvation by people who were not Christians before. In 1 Cor 12:13 ... for the sovereign act of God whereby all Christians are incorporated into the body of Christ at the time of regeneration. Never in the New Testament is the expression "to be baptised in the Spirit" used to describe a post-conversion reception of the totality of fullness of the Spirit.'⁸⁹

Because the decision for Christ was itself the result of the work of the Spirit,⁹⁰ to speak of a 'second blessing' is a misnomer.

(d) In view of the experience of the Apostles, who were on several occasions imbued with courage by the Spirit, and the claim by Pentecostals and Charismatics in general to have had subsequent to their conversion a 'new' experience of the Spirit, but especially because of the distinct teaching of the Epistles 'to be filled with Spirit', it may be more theologically tenable to affirm 'one Baptism but many fillings'.⁹¹ An individual, subsequent to conversion, will experience over and over again the wonder of the Spirit in greater depth. As

87 *Ibid.*

88 Ranaghan, Kevin & Dorothy *Catholic Pentecostals*, 221.

89 Hoekema *Holy Spirit Baptism*, 25.

90 Cf Tugwell, S *Did you receive the Spirit?* who points out that there can be no 'something extra' beyond the 'basic gift of salvation'; Buttlinger, A (ed), *The Church is charismatic*, 47 who cites Martin Luther's statement on the Third Article for his claim that the separation between conversion and the Baptism of the Spirit is unbiblical.

91 The Scofield Bible uses this expression; cf also Graham, B *The Holy Spirit*, 92-93.

L Suenans stated, 'The Spirit is still on his way, he is already radically present from the beginning of the Christian life, even if awareness of this reality is not present until later'⁹²

Affirming the possibility of 'many fillings' views the Christian life as dynamic and always open to a fresh understanding of God and of his will. To programme the experience of the Spirit has the effect of focusing on 'the experience' not on the ongoing creative work of the Spirit.

(e) A corollary to this dynamic view of the Spirit is the doctrine that sanctification is a continuous and progressive work. While one is indeed sanctified in Christ, one is always being sanctified also. Christian discipleship obtains in the tension of 'being' and 'becoming'.

The Pentecostal view, on the other hand, is that the baptism of the Spirit occurs when the believer is pure and holy. J L Slay, stating the view of the Church of God, wrote, 'baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to a clean heart'.⁹³ This view contradicts the other Pentecostal belief that the Holy Spirit also *sanctifies* the believer.⁹⁴

Speaking in tongues as initial evidence of Spirit-baptism

As we have repeatedly observed, Pentecostalism affirms as its distinguishing belief the doctrine of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit.⁹⁵

⁹² Suenens, L J *A New Pentecost?*, 83. Green, M *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, 143, points out that 'it is very understandable how an experience of a new gladness, a new power in ministry, in healing, in preaching, a liberty in prayer and worship, a crossing of denominational backgrounds' can be called 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' but all the same it is mistaken ...'.

⁹³ Slay, J *This we believe*, 85.

⁹⁴ Stiles, J E *The gift of the Holy Spirit*, 81-93. Stiles, while affirming the traditional Pentecostal position, is very aware of the problems associated with the teaching that the Holy Spirit is given on the basis of individual holiness and consecration; Bickersteth, E H *The Holy Spirit; his person and work*, 143; also Katter, C K *Ye shall receive power*, 18. Katter maintains that 'being filled with the Spirit of God is an endless and continuous process. We need spiritual food just as we need natural food for our physical bodies, or we could atrophy spiritually as we would atrophy physically.'

⁹⁵ Horton, H *Gifts of the Spirit*, 131. Kisumus, F H *The Holy Spirit*, 20. Slay, J *This we believe*, 88. Brumback, C *What meaneth this*, 261.

This doctrine is based chiefly on Mark 16:17 and Acts. J Slay, for instance, cites F F Bruce to support the Pentecostal interpretation of Acts 10:44 and 45. He writes, 'The descent of the Spirit on these Gentiles was outwardly manifested in much the same way as it had been when the original disciples received the Spirit at Pentecost: they spoke with tongues and proclaimed the mighty works of God. Apart from such external manifestation, none of the Jewish Christians present, perhaps not even Peter himself would have been so ready to accept the fact that the Spirit had really come upon them.'⁹⁶ Slay concludes that 'Bruce is certainly making a strong point in favour of ... tongues being the initial evidence'.⁹⁷

Some critics of this doctrine of 'initial evidence' have pointed out that glossolalia is not for every Christian but that it had been a sign to unbelievers in the days of the Apostles and served to authenticate the Apostolic message. W McRae cites Hebrews 2:3-4 to back his claim that 'tongues' confirmed the Apostolic message. He further argues that Paul's use of the middle voice in describing tongues in 1 Corinthians 13:18-13 suggests that glossolalia was not intended to be a permanent feature.⁹⁸ René Pache asserts that the present context of the church is different from that of the Apostles, the New Testament and the experience of the church where 'the Spirit had been spread abroad in accordance with the promise of Joel 2:28'. No one would claim the sign of a 'mighty wind' or of 'tongues of fire' experienced by the 120 (Acts 2:1-4). Similarly, this single experience at Pentecost provides no basis to claim for all the gift of tongues. Unlike Cornelius in Acts 10:45-47 who needed this external sign to confirm that Gentiles were also admitted into the Church or that the Spirit had been granted to them as well, we do not.⁹⁹

To counter this line of argument, Pentecostals claim that tongue-speaking is both a sign for the unbeliever and a gift to believers,¹⁰⁰ conferring on them boldness and power,¹⁰¹ the ability to pray effectually¹⁰² and to express deep feelings and thoughts, in the language that God understands.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Bruce, F F *New International Commentary: Acts 10:45-46*.

⁹⁷ Slay, J op cit, 95.

⁹⁸ McRae, W *The dynamics of Spiritual gifts*, 90-91.

⁹⁹ Pache, R *The person and work of the Holy Spirit*, 86; Dillon, J *Speaking in tongues*, 23-25 takes a similar position to Pache.

¹⁰⁰ Slay, J *This we believe*, 36.

¹⁰¹ Horton, Stanley, M *What the Bible says about the Holy Spirit*, 277.

¹⁰² Basham, D *A handbook on tongues*, 34.

¹⁰³ Christenson, L *Speaking in tongues and its significance for the Church* cited in Quebedeaux, R *The new Charismatics*, 189.

There appears to be confusion over whether the experience of speaking in tongues is xenoglossia or glossolalia. Both views have wide support. McRae and Horton¹⁰⁴ argue that real languages are spoken and that 'speaking in tongues' is not, as Stevenson had asserted, gibberish or gobbledegook.¹⁰⁵ William Samarin, in a sympathetic appraisal of tongue-speaking, claims that glossolalia 'is a meaningless but phonologically structured human utterance believed by the speaker to be a real language but bearing no systematic resemblance to any natural language, living or dead'.¹⁰⁶ Ira Martin claims that Luke misunderstood glossolalia for xenoglossia because he did not have personal knowledge of the phenomenon.¹⁰⁷ Cyril Williams at the risk of presumption concludes that the phenomenon at Jerusalem was glossolalia and that 'in spite of the vast separation in time it is in fact basically similar to modern manifestations in Pentecostal or more recently neo-Pentecostal circles ...'.¹⁰⁸ Citing the view of A von Harnack in his commentary on Acts, Williams concludes that what we have here is a 'miracle of hearing' that is, that glossolalia miraculously manifested itself to the hearers in their own language.

Again as on the issue of Spirit-baptism, the Acts narrative is the sole scriptural basis for the doctrine of 'initial evidence' since the only other applicable text is 16:9-20. The latter is generally considered to be a later edition; F Stagg, for example, considers these verses a reflection of second-century interests in speaking in tongues, handling of serpents, drinking poisons and healing.¹⁰⁹

In the three accounts in Acts [2:4; 10:46; 19:1-7] in which speaking in tongues followed the Baptism of the Spirit, it has been shown by D F Brunner and J Stott,¹¹⁰ amongst others, that on all three occasions speaking in tongues was not essentially proof that a Christian had received the Spirit but a sign that the

104 McRae, W *The dynamics of Spiritual gifts*, 75. Horton, H *The gifts of the Spirit*, 277-278.

105 Stevenson, I in *Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research*, 60 (1966) 300-303.

106 Samarin, W J 'The linguisticity of glossolalia', 49-75; also his major study, *Tongues of man and angels*, chapter 5.

107 Martin, Iva J *Glossolalia in the Apostolic Church*, 61.

108 William, C G *Tongues of the Spirit*, 41f.

109 Stagg, F, Hinson, G, Oates, W *Glossolalia*, 23-24.

110 Bruner, D F *A theology of the Holy Spirit*; Stott, J *The Baptism and fullness of the Holy Spirit*.

Spirit had been granted to the Jews (Acts 2:4) and the Gentiles (10:46). The incident involving John's disciples (Acts 19:1-7) does not detract from this opinion since there is no proof that they were Christians¹¹¹ or that they had had adequate knowledge of the Christian faith. It is hardly likely that they did.¹¹²

The only other reference in the New Testament to the presence of glossolalia is 1 Corinthians 14 which refers to it as one of nine Spiritual gifts and indicates that Paul had spoken in tongues also. But this chapter should be read with caution since the aim of 1 Corinthians 14 in the first place is to discourage glossolalia and to encourage the use of prophecy as a much nobler gift. Hence Michael Green, while allowing a place for tongues, states that 'it should neither be given undue attention nor despised. Since it is the lowest of the charismata it should not be a matter of surprise that it is so common.'¹¹³

Also, the church at Corinth should not be too readily used as an example for all time. It was the most 'carnal' of all the churches under Paul's jurisdiction and had indulged in several unChristian practices. In this regard F D Bruner's generalisation about the Corinthian mentality being similar to that of present day Pentecostals is rather wild and unfounded.¹¹⁴ But it cannot be denied that the Corinthian congregation appears to have favoured ultra supernaturalism.¹¹⁵

Moreover, it is very probable, as Cyril Williams in his study of tongue-speaking maintained, that 1 Cor 14:10-11 refers to glossolalia¹¹⁶ and not xenoglossia, since Paul was at pains to regulate its use. Paul listed eight rules governing the use of tongues:

111 Käsemann, E *Essays on New Testament themes*, 141-142. Käsemann thinks they were only disciples of John and were not Christians.

112 Henchen, E *Essays on New Testament themes*, 141-142.

113 Green, M *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, 198; cf also Hoekema, A A *Holy Spirit Baptism*, 48-49.

114 Bruner, D F *A theology of the Holy Spirit*, 319.

115 Knox, R A *Enthusiasm*, 11.

116 Williams, C *Tongues of the Spirit*, 42; however, Gundry, R H in 'Ecstatic utterance' in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 306 maintains that 1 Corinthians 14 refers to xenoglossia. The question regarding Paul's attempt to control its usage and his preference for prophecy remains unanswered in Gundry's alternative.

- * 1 Cor 14:19; five words spoken with understanding is better than ten thousand in tongues;
- * 14:27: only two or three should speak in tongues during a service;
- * 14:27: only one at a time should speak;
- * 14:28: there must be no speaking in tongues without an interpreter;
- * 14:32: glossolalia must be subject to control;
- * 14:33: glossolalia must not produce confusion;
- * 14:34: women must not indulge in it publicly in church;
- * 14:40: glossolalia must be done 'decently and in order'.

There seems to be no good reason why the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 should be emphasised to the almost total neglect of the other gifts of the Spirit which are qualitatively as important for the edification of the individual, the Christian community and society at large. The lists of gifts we refer to are those in Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:11. In the Corinthian description of the gifts also, Paul concludes that neither any of the gifts nor 'the tongues of men or angels', but *love* only is the chief indication of spirituality (1 Corinthians 13:1).

What then is the significance of glossolalia? This is difficult to ascertain, especially since in our study, the fastest growing Pentecostal church, Bethesda, has played down glossolalia and has still achieved all that Pentecostals usually attribute to glossolalia alone, namely vital commitment, sincerity, love for prayer and suchlike.

Nonetheless, it appears that glossolalia, or in the case of Bethesda, a crisis spiritual experience, may serve as a catharsis, a fact which Pentecostals admit. Ray Hughes, a leader in the Church of God USA, held that 'to deny that glossolalia provides psychological release would be to admit that one knows little about the nature of man. Tears of repentance, confessions of sin, and other religious exercises provide for a cathartic effect, because the whole man is affected by true religion.'¹¹⁷

William Samarin in his study of 'tongue speaking' maintains that glossolalia signals and symbolises *transition* as Evangelical conversion does. It is a 'linguistic symbol of the sacred - a symbolic, pleasurable, expressive and therapeutic experience'.¹¹⁸ This view runs counter to the older traditional

¹¹⁷ Hughes, R 'glossolalia in contemporary times' in *The glossolalia phenomenon* (H Horton; H Wade ed), 175.

¹¹⁸ Samarin, W J *Tongues of man and angels: the religious language of Pentecostalism*, 199.

notions that glossolalia indicated psychological pathology, suggestibility, hypnosis or was the result of social disorganisation or deprivation.¹¹⁹ These notions we have already rejected (cf Introduction).

However, if we allow that glossolalia may have a therapeutic value for the individual believer then glossolalia is not in itself a religious activity *per se*. This view is substantiated by Cyril Williams in *Tongues of the Spirit* who argues that:

- * glossolalia as vocalisation can be an expression of hope, joy, awe or any of the emotions which dominate the unconscious and which can be aroused in the religious context by the sense of the numinous;
- * even within the congregation ... the criteria for testing the authenticity of the glossolalia act are exterior to it ... when the believer speaks in tongues and receives the approval of the congregation he knows he is accepted by the group and more important[ly] by God, that is, it may act as a psychological manifestation within the context of 'divine superintendency';
- * while other activities may have also achieved similar effects one must allow that beliefs concerning the character of glossolalia will have a decided effect upon the quality of the inner experience of the believer himself.¹²⁰

If this is the function that glossolalia may play in the individual's religious practice, can prayer, worship and devotion not achieve the same results? While tongues cannot be rejected outright as unbiblical, there appear to be no biblical grounds for making glossolalia the central tenet of any Christian creed. Morton Kelsey agrees with this assessment when he writes that '... tongue speaking can become a short cut to religious and psychological growth which stunts it instead of giving it full measure. If the experience is seen as the centre of Christian life, then Christ, in whom no experience takes precedence, is displaced as the center, and Christian wholeness gets lost. Growth towards Christian maturity means ... patience and suffering ... [or] people get caught in tongue speaking and never go further.'

¹¹⁹ Cf, for example, Cutten G B *Speaking in tongues: historically and psychologically considered*.

¹²⁰ Williams, C *Tongues of the Spirit*, 227-230.

Glossolalia at most may be a *terminus a quo*; it could never be the goal of Christian spirituality or 'a sign of deep spirituality'.¹²¹ It is a *rite d'entrée*¹²² not an end in itself. It is for this reason that Bethesda's approach to Pentecost, an approach that emphasised the fruit of the Spirit, is biblically more defensible than that of the other Indian Pentecostal churches or even traditional Pentecostalism.

THE ANTITHETICAL STRUCTURE OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY AND THE ROLE OF THE 'EXPERIENCE' OF THE SPIRIT

Germane to Pentecostal theology are certain basic tensions not unlike the 'antitheses' which G Ebeling described as 'the play between the harsh opposition of opposing thesis and the spirit of compromise which reconciles both sides of the issue'.¹²³ There appear to be at four such antitheses:

- * The problem of authority - Scripture, revelation *and* the Pentecostal Hermeneutic.
- * The problem of freedom - the relationship of 'works' *and* 'grace'.
- * The problem of history - the idea of the chosen remnant *and* the Pentecostal concept of church.
- * The problem of certainty - the crisis of faith in Pentecostalism.

Scripture, revelation and the Pentecostal hermeneutic: the problem of authority

The Bible is believed to be totally and verbally inspired, making the Pentecostal view of Scripture a strictly Fundamentalist one. Every text and every word is equally inspired. This is most clearly seen in the way scriptural quotations are used to substantiate statements in Pentecostal sermons and testimonies. Proof texts from several parts of the Bible, irrespective of their differing contexts, are grouped together in order to substantiate or justify a particular doctrine or practice.

121 Culpepper, R H *Evaluating the Charismatic Movement: a theological and biblical appraisal*, 163.

122 Kelsey, M *Tongue speaking*, 231.

123 Ebeling, G *Luther*, 11.

Behind the insistence on the literal meaning of the text is the issue which James Barr has identified as the insistence upon the inerrancy of the Bible; Fundamentalists insist not that the Bible must be taken literally but that it must be so interpreted as to avoid any admission that it contains any error.¹²⁴ As Barr puts it, the Fundamentalist 'oscillates between literal and non-literal approaches' for, 'given his principle of inerrancy, fed in as the architectonic control in his approach to the Bible, it is obvious that the meanings he discovers are to him the "plain" meanings. Thus he is not being in anyway insincere.'¹²⁵ This preoccupation with the inerrancy of the Bible is linked with the need for an absolute authority and with a hermeneutic which must necessarily make every part as authoritative as the whole.

The hermeneutical task is how to harmonise Scripture.¹²⁶ An admission of an error, no matter how small, would for the Pentecostals amount to questioning the inspiration of the entire Scriptures. Any other approach, even if not historico-critical, is rejected as 'liberal'.

To use Scripture in this way does not appear to Pentecostals to be haphazard because every text has binding value. Yet this procedure often reduces the Bible to a compendium of proof texts, 'a holy Book with loaded words'.¹²⁷ Hence attempts to distinguish between the circumstances of Acts and those of Corinthians when discussing charismata with Pentecostals are rejected as 'an attempt to let one part of the Bible have more meaning for today than another'.¹²⁸

Given such an approach, it is quite logical for Pentecostals to believe that the 'established' churches fail to obey all parts of Scripture and place 'doctrine above Scripture'. Their call to go 'back to the Bible' expresses their rejection of the agnostic or sceptical attitude of these churches to miracles, the super-

124 Barr, J *Fundamentalism*, 40.

125 *Ibid*, 52.

126 The trend in many writings by Pentecostals is to substantiate their beliefs vis-à-vis other Christian denominations, not to test them. Dispensationalism is the main means by which to help this process of harmonisation of Scripture.

127 Oosthuizen, G C *Pentecostal penetration*, 270.

128 This was how the head of a large Pentecostal denomination in South Africa responded.

natural and the charismata. They insist, therefore, that Christians must repudiate those churches and their creeds which have 'rejected Scripture in their doctrine and practice', and must instead 'listen to the Bible'.

This emphasis admits an antithesis within Pentecostal thinking. While on the one hand the Bible is given paramount authority as 'the final word' on any matter of faith, ample room is allowed for the Holy Spirit to reach and guide over and above the Scriptures. While some will say that this is not possible in view of their belief in the 'closed canon' of Scripture, they also have to admit an inconsistency in the *de facto* acceptance of the Spirit as having 'much greater authority' than the Bible.

In order to account for this tension some leaders of the Pentecostal churches maintain that the Spirit points only to Christ who gives the Bible its authority. Nevertheless, congregations generally understand that the Spirit can, and does, communicate the will of God directly and not necessarily in the words of the Scriptures. Numerous examples of this openness to the new revelation of the Spirit were found in the congregations; 'tongues' and their interpretation, and 'prophecy' are the chief 'gifts of the Spirit' and are occasions for such revelation.

Interpretations were often accompanied by silence and much solemnity in the congregation as these were considered to be the times during which God was speaking to that particular congregation. Glossolalia and interpretations were strategically located within the framework of the whole service. They often occurred after the sermon or when a rousing or provocative matter of doctrine or ethics was raised, thus confirming or sanctioning the point the preacher was making.

While glossolalia and prophecy purport not to 'add to Scripture', they are certainly accepted as authoritative. Sometimes one or another of these 'charismatic revelations' gave individuals or whole sections of congregations a mandate to leave an existing church and found their own,¹²⁹ or they resulted in a

¹²⁹ Leaders of the independent churches who have led groups out of other Pentecostal churches almost always explain their actions by referring to the 'leading of the Spirit'. Even if this is not openly admitted and the reason for the secession was administrative, the individual accounts for his new status within the independent group in the following way: 'Where the Spirit is, there is liberty' - meaning that the Spirit was not in his former group because his liberty was curbed.

person leaving his or her secular employment and entering the ministry full time.

Such revelations also play an important function at the individual level because the revelation of the Spirit is considered to be the ultimate guide to understanding the Scriptures, even without formal theological education. This view is widely accepted by pastors and members alike. One minister pointed out that without the 'experience of the Spirit' one could not understand the Scriptures. He quoted Paul for good measure: 'A natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit.' While a case can be made for the view that the insights in Scripture are constantly made accessible by the Spirit who witnesses to Christ,¹³⁰ in these circles the identical 'form' of argument means something quite different. Clearly, a definite pattern of mysticism has emerged here: a mystical experience is able to resolve the tension between the two 'authorities' of the inspired scriptures and the 'revealed messages'.

The relationship of 'works' and 'grace': the problem of freedom

This experience of 'being filled with the Spirit' which is central to Pentecostal self-understanding has an obverse side that is the role the believer is expected to play continually. The antithetical tension that exists between 'works' and 'grace' which has always been present in Christian theology also emerges in Pentecostalism but is governed by new sets of circumstances.

Although all Pentecostals affirm that salvation is by grace not works, the actions of the believer are decisive throughout. This stress is especially clear in the general emphasis on 'holiness' and 'having faith' as prerequisites for the 'Pentecostal experience'.

The following quotations are typical statements of their belief of this apparent *activitas et opera hominis conditiones gratiae Divinae*:

Upon request, the moment *the believer makes the necessary spiritual and practical preparation*, he will be filled.¹³¹

¹³⁰ A standpoint widely accepted in conservative theological circles, for example, Hendry, G S *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*, 72ff.

¹³¹ *Moving Waters*, November 1949, 124-125.

In order to be baptised with the Spirit, *let us cleanse and sanctify our lives in as practical a manner as Jesus cleansed the temple.*¹³²

In order to be filled *it is for us to sanctify ourselves.*¹³³

The tension is most evident in the explanation for why so many do not receive this experience. The most common answers given were that they did not have enough 'faith' or that they had some 'hidden sin' in their lives.

Thus the quest for holiness is both the *raison d'être* of Pentecostalism and its rationale. The sacraments take on a special significance here. They are seen primarily as a means for cleansing. While water baptism signifies a public confession by which one is admitted to full membership of the church, it also carries the connotation of being a moment of purification. The following are typical statements gleaned from our interviews:

Baptism shows the world that one has received remission of sin.

After Baptism one feels convicted when one does wrong.

Baptism is a symbol of respect to God and to my fellow man.

When I came out of the water I promised God that I would serve Him in Spirit and truth.

Baptism inspired me to witness to the public.

Being baptised is a prerequisite for participation in the Eucharist, normally called the 'holy communion' in these circles. Participation is also directly linked to the preoccupation with cleansing for holiness. 1 Corinthians 11:23 is almost always read and verses 28 and 29, 'let a man examine himself ... lest he eat unworthily', are taken as a call for careful introspection and confession before partaking of the communion. 'For this reason many are sick and many sleep'

132 MW, January 1976, 11.

133 MW, September 1976, 171.

(v 30) is stressed to create awareness that to take part in the communion without being 'right with God' is to invite judgement upon oneself.

Thus in the solemn build-up to the communion a number of people were seen to pray openly for forgiveness and also to weep. In this way the monthly communion is in effect a 'rededication service'.

Fasting and prayer are part of the 'striving after holiness' which enables one to receive the 'power' of the Spirit.¹³⁴ While Pentecostals strongly affirm salvation by grace through faith alone, there is at work also a kind of synergism. Human effort plays an important part in conversion (salvation is only effected when the person believes) and more clearly in the 'baptism of the Spirit' which is only possible after a person has demonstrated sincerity.

Pentecostals also reject the doctrine of the 'perseverance of the saints'. This doctrine, which they more commonly call the doctrine of 'eternal security', states that God who has called and saved will give believers grace to persevere victoriously until the end. Pentecostalism generally maintains that a believer may through a lack of 'watchfulness' over 'living a sanctified life' lose salvation. This process is commonly referred to as 'backsliding'.

Special services are frequently held to restore 'backsliders' and it is widely believed that persistence in unholiness could lead to God relinquishing one 'to a reprobate mind'.

This view of holiness and possession of the Spirit sets up a tension within the church community as well. While all who believe are 'saved', the truly spiritual have in addition the 'power' to live 'overcoming lives' and they possess the 'gifts of the Spirit' by which are chiefly meant the nine miraculous gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12.

Thus a 'more spiritual group' within the congregation emerges. While this too will officially be denied, one finds that there does exist a kind of 'cryptognoicism' which divides the congregation into those who are regarded as spiritual (*pneumatikoi*) and those who are alleged to be unspiritual (*sarkikoi*). Those who had the Pentecostal experience were a 'super-spiritual' group amongst the other 'ordinary' members. They took part in charismatic manifestations during services and were normally the more active and vociferous members of the congregation. When an 'ordinary' member 'spoke in tongues' or 'prophesied' this became proof of his or her spirituality. That person then had a good chance of being absorbed into active participation in the organisation.

¹³⁴ Oosthuizen, G C *Pentecostal penetration*, 297.

What is remarkable is that Pentecostals, despite their 'double experience', do not seem to have eliminated this division of 'spiritual' and 'ordinary' that has plagued every other Christian tradition. Ordinary members are constantly encouraged to 'strive after the baptism of the Holy Spirit'. A lack of zeal to evangelise or to speak publicly of Christ is in their opinion because of the diminishing number of the 'spiritual' within the church.

The idea of the chosen remnant and the Pentecostal concept of Church: the problem of history

The church is understood primarily as the *communio sanctorum* and this is aligned closely with the view that Pentecostalism as compared with other churches is the guardian of the whole truth. The *communio sanctorum* is thus also the *defensor fides*. The belief that they are the chosen remnant is evidenced by the following:

- * There is a strong reaction against the 'established' churches which are considered to be 'lacking in the Spirit' because certain charismata are not publicly evident. They are accused of being too steeped in traditional ideas and of emphasising established doctrine at the expense of dependence on the Spirit.
- * There is extreme caution over involvement in any ecumenical endeavour and over the formation of alliances with non-Pentecostal churches.
- * Their choice of names makes an implicit claim to uniqueness: for example, the *Full Gospel Church*, the *Church of the Eternal Truth*, *Trulife Fellowship*, the *Free Church of Christ*.
- * Such choices, together with claims to go 'Back to the Bible' or to be 'Bible-believing' or to be 'the church of the Apostles', imply a negative view of the development of the Church; the Church with time has accommodated itself to the world and neglected its biblical mandate. Church history is thus the history of the caricature of the church: a history largely of the decadence of the Faith, though a small spiritual remnant has always been preserved to keep the apostolic faith alive.

Not only in Southern Africa, but also in North America, Pentecostals such as Charles W Conn and Carl Brumback¹³⁵ believe that Pentecostalism is essen-

¹³⁵ Conn, C W *Pillars of Pentecost*, 22-27; Brumback, Carl *What meaneth this*, 98-115.

tially a Back-to-the-Bible movement. W H Horton insists that the New Testament character of its ministry is the distinguishing factor of the entire movement.¹³⁶

The antithesis is evident here: on the one hand, it is claimed, as Charles Conn does, that 'there is no evidence during any period of the Pentecostal revival that the people even considered themselves other than simply, orthodox Christian believers'.¹³⁷ On the other hand, Pentecostalism makes a sweeping judgement on almost 2 000 years of church history: credal developments are often ignored; the liturgical history of the church is often seen as a history of inhibitions on the Spirit; and theological development is generally considered to be intellectualism opposed to the working of the Spirit. There has been, therefore, a widespread suspicion of 'theology' - what is important is the simple structure of the church in Acts and the life of the Spirit in which all members are equal because each is filled with the Spirit.

The 'remnant' mentality is best illustrated by the way in which Pentecostal writers generally view Pentecostalism in relation to church history. The following may serve as illustrative examples:

Horton believes that 'in every age' since the Apostles, 'when ... the church has lost her holiness and spiritual zeal, she has tried to substitute something to replace the Spirit's power ...'.¹³⁸ Robert C Dalton maintains that as early as the Ante-Nicene Fathers 'it is evident that the miraculous element in early Christianity passed into gradual declension to continue intermittently in isolated areas through the centuries'.¹³⁹ These 'isolated areas', he notes, include the Montanists, the Camisards, the prophets of Cévennes, the Quakers, the Readers, the Methodists and the Irvingites in the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁰ It is maintained that in AD 313, with 'the favour of the Empire smiling upon her, the church began a long downward journey into ritualism, formality and superstition'.¹⁴¹

While claiming to be 'spiritual heirs of the reformation',¹⁴² the 'intermittent ... outpourings of the Holy Spirit' are also accepted as 'remnants which preserved

136 Horton, W F *The gift of the Spirit*, Foreword.

137 Conn, C W op cit, 23.

138 Horton, W F *Gifts of the Spirit*, 47.

139 Dalton, R C 'History of the Theological Discovery', 23.

140 *Ibid*, 24.

141 *Pentecostal Holiness Church Manual*, 7.

142 *Ibid*, 24.

the truth' in the following instances: St John of the Cross, St Theresa of Avila, Savonarola, St Francis of Assisi, John of Parma, St Francis Xavier, Fenelon, St Vincent Ferrer, Madame Guyon, the Cathari and the Albigensians who 'attest to the persistence of this spiritual power'.¹⁴³

The crisis of faith in Pentecostalism: the problem of certainty

The antitheses we have discussed thus far have always had the potential to become open contradiction. But this does not occur in Pentecostalism. We must now consider why?

In the holiness movement, proof of the 'full measure of the Spirit' was the believer's own testimony backed by his or her pattern of holy living.¹⁴⁴ A M Hills, in his study of the holiness position, described the belief that God would sanctify individuals, so that they could be made perfect, and then they 'simply waited for the feelings of assurance to come'.¹⁴⁵ All this is very subjective and open to self-deception.

It also raises an important theological question: where does authority lie in matters of faith? Pentecostals who claim to be 'Bible-believing Christians' answer, '*The Bible* is the final authority'. But the problem is much deeper.

To say that the Bible is the final authority is to say very little by way of a precise answer. For instance, in response to Calvin's view of Scripture as *extra eam nulla revelatio*,¹⁴⁶ a critic pointed out that the Bible is 'nasus cereus' (waxen nose) which one can shape to his own fancy. Calvin appears to have been aware of this, and therefore added another criterion to the question of scriptural authority. He said the Word is like an 'instrument by which the Lord dispenses to believers the illumination of His Spirit'.¹⁴⁷ The Westminster Confession states the issue thus: '... our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, the divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing by and with the word in our hearts (*testimonium spiritus*

143 Foster, F J *Think it not strange*, 22.

144 Lapsley, J N & Simpson, J H 'Speaking in tongues' *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* LVII February 1965, 6.

145 Hills, A M *Holiness and power for the church and ministry*, cited in Lapsley and Simpson, op cit, 6.

146 Calvin, J *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I, 9.

147 Cited in Preiss, T 'The inner witness of the Holy Spirit', 259-280.

sancti internum).¹⁴⁸ Over and above the many theological justifications that have been produced for this statement of belief, it highlights an element which allows room for the believer's experience to play an important role. Ultimately, the acceptance of authority becomes an inward work. Little wonder then that D F Strauss considered this issue of the 'inner witness of the Holy Spirit' to be the Achilles' heel of Protestant theology.¹⁴⁹

Hendrikus Berkhof has isolated this ambiguity in the Reformers, when he pointed out that the Lutherans described the Spirit as working *per verbum* (through the word), that is, where the Word is, the Spirit is. But the Word does not always create faith. Therefore, the later Lutherans ascribed the lack of faith to a certain degree of freedom of the will by which a person can resist the Spirit.

The Reformed theologians found this answer unacceptable. They maintained that the Spirit works *cum verbo* (with the Word), but the Spirit can work outside of the Word and the preached Word can remain without effect. The consequence of this position is that some have been inclined to give less heed to the Word and to wait for the inner signs of the opening of the heart. This inclination is illustrated in the Reformed Pietism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when, as Berkhof stated it, there occurred 'a basic introversion and, accordingly, a lack of certainty of faith'.¹⁵⁰

Berkhof summarises both problems thus: Lutherans are correct in maintaining that the Spirit is present and active in the Word but are wrong in maintaining a kind of synergism in which the initiative passes from the Spirit to the hearer. In attempting to correct this synergism, the Reformed churches allow the possibility of the working of the Spirit being separated from the Word itself.

The implications of such an ambiguity is clear in Pentecostalism as well where there is an inherent tension in the understanding of the authority of the Spirit and of the Word. As Theo Preiss in his discussion of the 'inner witness' pointed out, 'there is an inherent contradiction that literalists or Bible believing people' must invariably feel because Scripture itself affirms that revelation can be recognised only by the inner test of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵¹

148 *The Westminster Confession* chapter 1, article V; Preiss, T op cit, 259.

149 *Ibid*, 261.

150 Berkhof, H *The doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 38.

151 Preiss, T 'The inner witness of the Holy Spirit'.

For Pentecostal fundamentalists the problem Preiss singles out is inevitable: it inheres in a view of the Bible that petrifies the question of authority and of inspiration. Pentecostals expose themselves to becoming bibliolatric: they, too, can 'end in a paper pope, a word of God which man can carry in his pocket'.¹⁵² How then can one be certain of correct interpretation or, for that matter, of one's own salvation?

The question of *certainty* of salvation was also at the heart of Wesley's preoccupation with the question of perfection. The believer's certitude of his salvation is the witness of the Holy Spirit from above, but the testimony of his own heart to having the Spirit is supported by the signs of his adoption, such as a broken and contrite heart, humility and love.

V Synan, the historian of the North American holiness movement, concluded that 'the problem [was] proving to oneself and to the world that one has received the experience ... hence it was the logical conclusion to call for holiness',¹⁵³ as an outward and visible proof.

It appears that Pentecostals have taken this holiness position one step further. In the Wesleyan position the ultimate test was based on the believer's inner feelings of assurance. For Pentecostals the test is more specifically defined and concretised in the experience of glossolalia. The line of reasoning is that one is baptised by the Spirit only if one is holy and the sign of that baptism (and of holiness) is glossolalia, to which experience the individual and often his or her community may refer as 'proof' of this baptism of the Spirit.

A popular Pentecostal minister from Durban put it thus:

Speaking in tongues is the initial outward witness to the reception of the Holy Ghost. By this evidence the believer knows he has received the promised gift of the Father.¹⁵⁴

What we have referred to as the 'Pentecostal experience' is thus based on a definite, identifiable moment in the religious experience of the individual. The following are typical of the import of that moment for the individual:

152 *Ibid.*

153 Synan, V *The Holiness-Pentecostal movements*, 122 footnote 10.

154 Roberts, F Taped sermon, Initial evidence of the Spirit, Durban: Christian Centre.

Tears fell from every eye ... all testified that it was the outstanding spiritual moment of their lives.¹⁵⁵

If you have had the experience you can never again be unfaithful to God.

When you have had the experience you will understand your Bible better.

All your doubts and fears are gone when you are baptised by the Spirit.

People argue and debate over doctrine and are doubting because they have never had this personal experience.

When you have had the experience you will know it in your heart.

One minister claimed that this experience of the Spirit would 'always be a reminder to the individual in times of temptation and doubt'. As baptism was for Luther, this tangible experience of the Spirit, more than a 'reminder', also enables the Pentecostal to cope in times of temptation and doubt.

Thus Pentecostals resolve the tensions in their faith by appealing to this experience. They 'concretise' the evidence and inner witness of the Holy Spirit in the public act of glossolalia rather than only in a life of discernible holiness. In their extreme forms, both are equivocal or can be gainsaid: glossolalia as nonsensical invention; holiness as cranky or fanatical behaviour. Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of this whole approach is the way in which the Spirit may cease to be a witness and may become a possession; an experience becomes the cornerstone of faith. Faith may cease to be what Luther meant by *fides in Spiritu per verbum donata* in which faith itself is also the work of the Spirit. The *fruitio mystica* is elevated above faith as 'unconditional trust and unconditional obedience'.¹⁵⁶ Instead of the Spirit 'sending the believer back to Christ and to the Scripture', which T Preiss maintains is the biblical understanding of 'inner witness',¹⁵⁷ 'the experience' can become an end in itself.

155 *Moving Waters*, July 1941.

156 Brunner, E *The divine-human encounter*, 50.

157 Preiss, T 'The inner witness ...', 259.

Assurance is thus concretised in an event. The Pentecostal experience of the Spirit, besides providing repeatable, demonstrable 'proof' of salvation, also acts as the 'talisman of divine approval'.¹⁵⁸

The possibility of trivialising faith inheres in the way in which Pentecostals describe their own commitment: for example, George Jeffreys writes that 'Christianity is a religion of signs and wonders from the beginning to end. It is essentially a religion of the supernatural. Signs of regeneration are to be seen in the changed lives of its real converts. *If signs are not seen, the converts are not producing the evidence that they have exercised real faith in Christ. It is the real faith that produces the evidential signs.*'¹⁵⁹

Wade Horton believes that 'the Pentecostal experience puts one into a new realm of faith, adds new dimensions to one's freedom and gives expansiveness to one's spiritual fullness, freed from terrifying fears and doubt'.¹⁶⁰ J E Stiles in his discussion of Spirit-baptism writes: 'The Holy Spirit is received by faith, exactly as salvation is received ... *now faith is built up in the candidate by correct instructions which make clear to his mind what the Word of God teaches.*'¹⁶¹ Then he adds:

since the receiving of the Holy Spirit is entirely a matter of faith, what can we do to help one receive the Holy Spirit? ... tell the candidate that he is to expect the Spirit to move on his vocal organs ... he is to speak in co-operation with the Spirit ... tell him to throw away all fears ... tell the candidate to open his mouth wide and breath in as deeply as possible, at the same time telling God in his heart "I am receiving the Spirit right now". ... Absolutely insist that he shall not speak a single word of his natural language. Then, when you see the Spirit moving on his lips and tongue, after he has taken several deep breaths, tell him to just begin recklessly speaking whatever sounds seem easy to speak, utterly indifferent as to what they are. *That is faith.* If you feel this foolish read Ps 119:131, 81:10 and Job 29:23. ... In recent years we have had hundreds receive the Holy Spirit when we gave them correct instructions and fixed conditions which aided faith.¹⁶²

158 Lapsley and Simpson in 'Speaking in tongues' use this idea to speak of the psychological implications of glossolalia.

159 Jeffreys, G *Pentecostal rays*, 153-154. The italics are ours.

160 Horton, W H *Pentecost, yesterday and today*, 92.

161 Stiles, J E *The gift of the Holy Spirit*, 94.

162 *Ibid*, 105-106.

L Christenson reiterates this view when he declares that:

speaking in tongues is *a venture of faith*. You lay aside any language which you had ever learned, then lift up your voice and speak out. The 'risk' is that you will say nothing more than bla-bla-bla. But when you take this step of simple faith, you discover that God indeed keeps His side of the bargain Once this initial hurdle is cleared ... you will find your Spirit wonderfully released to worship the Lord as your tongue speaks this new language of worship. The first test usually comes almost at once: the temptation to think, 'I am just making it up'. This is a natural thought ... [because] it is hard to draw a clear line between my speaking and His prompting One who receives the gift of tongues must from the beginning take this stance. God has given me a gift which I shall use to worship Him all the rest of my life.¹⁶³

It is obvious not only how a trivialisation of faith is possible but also how faith can so easily become an exercise in 'positive thinking'. D E Harrell who made a study of popular Pentecostal evangelists in the USA came to a similar conclusion.¹⁶⁴ This arbitrary ordering and systematising of the Spirit has no biblical or theological justification whatsoever.

This view of faith results in a kind of synergism for which it is also difficult to find any biblical warrant. This synergism is clear in the statements of Pentecostal leaders themselves. Derik Prince writes:

Some believers make ... [the] mistake [of thinking] at the time of seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit ... that the Holy Spirit will move them so forcefully that they will be literally compelled to speak with other tongues, without any act of their own will.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Christenson, L *Speaking in tongues and its significance for the church*, 127-131.

¹⁶⁴ Harrell, D E *All things are possible*, 238.

¹⁶⁵ Prince, D *Purposes of Pentecosts*, 7.

In the same vein W S Deal writes:

We must ever be on guard against depending too much upon God and doing too little in cooperation with Him to produce the result of a truly well rounded life¹⁶⁶

Faith is in danger of ceasing to be *gratiae gratis datae* and the 'experience of the Spirit' becomes, as F D Bruner stated, *ultima fides*.¹⁶⁷ Bruner's expressed concern that the Pentecostal insistence on evidence of Baptism 'in addition to faith before one could have God in his fullness' bordered on heresy. He writes, 'the moment any rite, any obedience, any experience, no matter how buttressed with Scripture or with "angels from heaven" becomes a supplement to faith or a condition for fullness before God, then the anathema must be pronounced and the warning to avoid the false teaching urged with all seriousness'.¹⁶⁸

Bruner draws a parallel between the problem with the Pentecostal view of the 'experience' and the Jewish attitude to circumcision which Paul warns about in Galatians 5:2-12. Paul was not rejecting circumcision *per se* as he himself had been circumcised. He was, however, rejecting the belief of Christian Jews that circumcision or any rite made them complete before God.¹⁶⁹

The problem of authority and Pentecostal ecclesiology

The ambiguity that we referred to in the Reformers' view of 'authority' resulted in an extreme individualism which had serious implications for the doctrine of the Church. In their anxiety to affirm that the doctrine of Scripture was not dependent on the authority of the Church, the Reformers opened unwittingly the possibility of the individual being the measure of all things.

¹⁶⁶ Deal, W S *Problems of the Spirit-filled life*, 136, points out that to depend too much on our own works is also wrong. However, we cited his view here to illustrate the synergism that is present.

¹⁶⁷ Bruner, F D *A Theology of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal experience and the New Testament witness*, 115.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 282.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 283. Bruner here cites the view of Albrecht Oepke to back his interpretation of Galatians 5:2-12.

Lindsay Dewar confirms this view. He accuses both Luther and Calvin of being 'too individualistically concerned ... [and] not adequately representing the teaching of the New Testament, where the doctrine of *objective* fellowship or *koinonia*, of the Spirit is fundamental'.¹⁷⁰ He writes: 'Unfortunately the attempt of Luther and Calvin to counter the ultra-authoritarianism of the papacy by subordinating the Church to the Word speaking to the heart of each believer opened the door wide to individualism and sectarianism, as subsequent history has shown.'¹⁷¹

Although Dewar has overstated the case here, Wesley's position is a clear indication of where Calvin's doctrine of the inner witness can lead. In his sermon 'The Witness of the Spirit', Wesley held that 'this *witness* is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am the child of God'.¹⁷² It is therefore not difficult to see how the 'radicals' of the Reformation such as George Fox could affirm 'Inner illumination' as the basis of revelation. Hence Dewar concludes that: 'The paradoxes of ... grace ... have been largely created by our inveterate habit of regarding grace as the result of a solitary encounter between God and the Individual; instead of being as it were, triangular, viz the relations between God, the Christian community, and the individual, *in that order*. If, as happened so often in Reformation theology, the community is placed third in order of time, as being merely the result of the coming together of converted individuals, the problem becomes a stark antithesis between the grace of God on the one hand and the liberty of the individual on the other - an antithesis which cannot be resolved.'¹⁷³

Gregory Dix, in his study of the liturgy, realised that such an antithesis existed. He wrote: 'The real eucharistic is for Calvin individual and internal, not corporate. It is one more example of the intractability of the scriptural sacraments to the Protestant theory, and the impossibility of adapting to "a religion of the Spirit" and pure individualism the "religion of incarnation" which presupposes the organic community of the renewed Israel.'¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Dewar, L *The Holy Spirit and modern thought*, 137.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 139.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 212.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 210.

¹⁷⁴ Gregory, Dix *The shape of the Liturgy*, 633 cited in Dewar, L op cit, 141.

The Pentecostals who, on the one hand, believed that they were the *defensor fides*, the chosen remnant, being convinced that the established churches were apostate, shunned ecumenical alliances and claimed to be the true representatives of the New Testament church.¹⁷⁵ They dismiss almost the whole of the history of the church as irrelevant.

On the other hand, we noticed that their group solidarity does not last longer than ten to fifteen years and that these Pentecostal churches displayed a tendency to proliferate, usually because of personal, organisational or financial disagreements not theological ones (cf chapter 4).

The 'democratisation of the Spirit' appears to have fostered individualism to the extent that there is no serious appreciation of the ecumenical or catholic dimensions of the church. The sense of community appears to endure only as long as the revival fervour lasts or the founders are alive. New churches are formed in an attempt to re-establish a sense of 'liberty'.

Individual liberty becomes all too soon divorced from community. The tension between community and liberty is lost. Paul Ricoeur understood this tension to be essential for a sound understanding of the nature of the church. He wrote: 'Is it not the most urgent task of those, whoever they may be, who direct the destiny of the Christian community, to maintain the level of this vital conflict and to guarantee for all a flow of life between the institutional and the non-institutional? For, today, the Church is on both sides. To recognise and to live this fact is a primary duty.'¹⁷⁶

The Orthodox theologian A Schemann reiterates this when he points out that: 'When people tire of structures and institutions, they are quick to take refuge in a kind of illusion of freedom, not realising that in shaking one set of structures they prepare another one. Today's freedom will become tomorrow's institution, and so on *ad infinitum*.'¹⁷⁷

Inversely, several Catholic theologians have clearly seen how Pentecostalism can contribute positively to their own hitherto hierarchical and institutionalised church polity. The Pentecostal movement has had an ameliorating effect, observes E D O'Connor, by highlighting the fact that the Spirit is not the special privilege of 'extra ordinary persons or privileged places' but 'ordinary

175 Cf p 399f; this view recurs in Pentecostal sermons.

176 Suenans, L J *A new Pentecost?* 4.

177 *Ibid*, 19.

endowments of the [local] community'.¹⁷⁸ The Catholic Church has absorbed Pentecostal spirituality and the Pentecostal emphasis on the charismata into its own historical tradition, thus enriching its own life and thought.¹⁷⁹ As R H Culpepper points out, 'Catholics have been careful to baptise the charismatic element into the best traditions of their churches. Protestants, on the other hand, have brought much of Pentecostal doctrine and practice undigested into their churches with the result that the charismatic dimension has appeared as a "foreign body" incompatible with the basic faith and practices of the denominations involved.'¹⁸⁰ Hence it is not surprising that the established churches have also experienced schisms when certain of their congregations became more inclined toward the Charismatic Movement.

In the absence of a sound doctrine of the Church, the Pentecostal affirmation of the individual's freedom of the Spirit easily deteriorates into a sectarian individualism. Dewar explains that 'the koinonia provides the only complete satisfactory context for the growth and development of human nature ... where the self-asserting and the self-denying tendencies in men find their harmony in those who by personal devotion to Christ are united to one another, for they live to a centre outside themselves which draws them all together as if by a magnet. Another way of putting this is to say that the Christian community or Church is the guardian of freedom; for freedom can be fully experienced only in so far as these two tendencies are balanced.'¹⁸¹

The lack of a sound ecclesiology and the overemphasis on the personal experience of the Spirit have contributed greatly to the proliferation of the churches in this study.

SOME OF THE MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF PENTECOSTALISM TO CHRISTIANITY TODAY

Because Pentecostals have emphasised glossolalia as the initial evidence of Spirit-baptism their critics have tended to judge them solely on their pneumatology. Pentecostalism cannot be so easily dismissed, for it has

178 O'Connor, E D *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 201.

179 *Ibid*, 189-214.

180 Culpepper, R H 1977 *Evaluating the Charismatic Movement: a theological and biblical appraisal*, 166.

181 Dewar, L *The Holy Spirit and modern thought*, 198.

refocused attention on several issues of fundamental importance to Christian faith and practice, issues that have suffered neglect in many established churches. Some of the more important appear to be:

(a) A renewed interest in the doctrine of the Spirit. Traditional Christianity has tended to append pneumatology to discussions on the Trinity only.¹⁸²

The renewed emphasis on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit has drawn approval from several theologians and church leaders of traditional churches.¹⁸³ For example, L Newbigin viewed Pentecostalism as an important component in the whole church, its emphasis on the Spirit contributing to balancing the emphasis of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism on personal salvation and on membership of the church respectively.¹⁸⁴ H P van Dusen referred, in similar vein, to Pentecostalism as the 'Third Force' in Christendom;¹⁸⁵

(b) Introduction of a sense of vital fellowship and communal solidarity (in spite of the danger of individualism).

This quality of Pentecostal churches has been amply illustrated in our study and finds strong scriptural support. A C Winn, commenting on the work of the Spirit within the church, wrote, 'Though it flies in the face of individualism that so strongly marks ... western culture, I believe that the Spirit's primary work is the bestowal of shared life on the community. I believe this to be the correct understanding of Scripture as a whole.'¹⁸⁶

182 For example, Berhof, L *Systematic Theology*, 82-99; in this well-known work only 17 pages of some 738 pages are allocated to the doctrine of the Spirit.

183 For example, Williams, J R 'The upsurge of Pentecostalism: Presbyterian Reformed Comment' *The Reformed World* 31(8) December 1971.

184 Newbigin, L *The Household of God*. The whole work carefully analyses how all three emphases are indispensable to a correct understanding of Christian church.

185 Van Dusen, H P 'The Third Force in Christendom' *Life* 6 June 1958.

186 Winn, A C 'The Holy Spirit and the Christian life', 50. Cf also Bennett, D and R *The Holy Spirit and you*, which also repeatedly makes this point; Culpepper, R H, *Evaluating the Charismatic Movement*, 159-162.

(c) An alternative to a purely intellectual Christianity which does not address itself to the whole person, his or her desires, emotional upheavals, joys and frailties.

H Ervin sees Pentecostalism as the alternative to both the antisupernaturalist approach of liberal theology and to 'the doctrinaire orthodoxy' of conservative theology.¹⁸⁷ While the former sometimes led to scepticism and intellectualism, the latter fostered rigidity of creed and liturgy to the point of preserving moribund ritual. Hence O'Connor believes that a lively faith in the Holy Spirit has been discarded by the sophisticated theology from Enlightenment and by demythologisation.¹⁸⁸

This lively faith has much too often been missing in the life and liturgy of churches in our times. Betty Schaf, the sociologist, claims that the vast majority of mankind is not going to find God through such a cerebral religion as the Christianity it has so far encountered.¹⁸⁹ It is not surprising that the sub-unit of the WCC on Renewal and Congregational Life which met at Stony Point in 1978 pointed out that the Charismatic renewal represented 'the longing for a truly spiritual life, in reaction to an over-cerebral Christianity ... a longing for strength, in reaction to a Christianity which denied or explained away the miracles and mighty works attested to in the New Testament'.¹⁹⁰

(d) A re-affirmation of spirituality, piety and devotion in an age of much apostasy and nominal church membership.

According to John Lancaster 'the essential Pentecostal view of holiness is more than doctrine, more than membership, more than isolated experiences of spiritual blessing. It is to be filled with the Spirit in such a way that the resurrection life of Christ is continually asserting itself in our experiences, so that the death-shattering, pure, gracious, winsome, uncomprising, holy, effective, transcendent life of God Himself is the mainspring of all we are and think and say and do. This may seem to be pure idealism, but it is the goal to which we must ever strive.'¹⁹¹

187 Ervin, H *These are not drunken, as ye suppose*, 225-226.

188 O'Connor, E D *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, 263.

189 Schaf, B R *The sociological study of religion*, 221.

190 Bittlinger, A (ed) *The church is charismatic. The WCC and the Charismatic Renewal*, 9.

191 Lancaster, J *In Spirit and in Truth: principles of Pentecostal people*, 44.

(e) A timely reminder to the church that Christianity is essentially transforming and renewing. Pentecostals in affirming a renewed and circumspect life style seek to manifest that transformed existence.

J V Taylor confirmed this when he wrote that 'The whole weight of New Testament evidence endorses the central affirmation of the Pentecostals that the gift of the Holy Spirit transforms and intensifies the quality of human life, and that this is a fact of experience in the lives of Christians.'¹⁹² Pentecostal-type Christianity is a religion of great immediacy, a factor which has led researchers like L Gerlach and V Hine to characterise it by its ability to 'transform personalities'.¹⁹³

(f) A rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers, a cardinal biblical truth.¹⁹⁴ This crucial doctrine of Reformation became neglected with the emergence of Protestant Orthodoxy in the seventeenth century. This rediscovery has also spread to the Roman Catholic Church as the *Lumen gentium* document of Vatican II amply illustrates. The church at Vatican II was redefined as the 'people of God' and the 'mystery of God' was not confined to the narrow limits of the hierarchy.

(g) New ecumenical possibilities. Hendrikus Berkhof believes that Pentecostalism has shown that the Holy Spirit is at work beyond the acknowledged major denominations.¹⁹⁵ He goes on to say that Pentecostalism has also shown that the Spirit is not restricted only to justification but extends to equipping a person to become 'an instrument for the ongoing process of the Spirit in the Church and in the world'.¹⁹⁶

It is unfortunate that Pentecostalism at large, and certainly Indian Pentecostalism, has refrained from participating both in the ecumenical movement and in dialogue with other churches and, as we have shown, has unnecessarily separated personal transformation and the renewal of society.

¹⁹² Taylor, J V *The go-between God*, 199.

¹⁹³ Gerlach, L P 'Pentecostalism: revolution or counter-revolution' in Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious movements ...*, 665; 680; 683; also Gerlach, L P and Hine, V H *People, power, change: movements of social transformation*, 99-100.

¹⁹⁴ Refer, for instance, to Newbigin, L *The household of God*, 117-118.

¹⁹⁵ Berkhof, H *The doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 87.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

Nevertheless, as Philip Potter had stated at the Bosey Consultation of the WCC in March 1980, great possibilities for ecumenical dialogue have been created by the renewal experienced as the direct result of the emergence of Pentecostalism.¹⁹⁷ In fact, as early as 1952, the World Conference of the International Pentecostal churches had submitted a statement to the Enlarged Committee of the International Missionary Council which met at Willigen in 1952, in which it claimed that 'After nearly half a century of misunderstanding and ostracism, for which they recognise they have not been entirely without blame on their part, the Pentecostal churches offer their fellowship in Christ to the whole of His Church in this grave hour of her history. They believe they have something to gain by larger fellowship with all who truly belong to Christ.'¹⁹⁸ This attitude of the World Conference has taken an unduly long time to filter down to the local Pentecostal churches. While, with Evangelicals in general, these churches may accuse the Ecumenical Movement of gross imbalance in favour of social action, it is obvious that they have abrogated their responsibility in redressing that imbalance.

(h) Pentecostalism, as we have intimated, has already been the greatest single factor that influenced the emergence of the Charismatic - or as it is sometimes called - the 'Renewal' Movement, throughout the church. This positive influence has also been acknowledged by Catholics such as Kilian McDonell, John Sherill, Simon Tugwell and especially Arnold Bettlinger.¹⁹⁹

These benefits to Christianity at large have been amply illustrated within the community that formed the subject of this study. All these churches, both the older denominations and the younger independent groups, acted as a revitalisation movement within their society. These churches, and Bethesda in particular, caused both the established Indian denominations and some neo-Hindu groupings to introspect and re-evaluate their message and their mission.

¹⁹⁷ Cf Bittlinger, A (ed) *The church is charismatic* (documents of the Bosey Consultation) 50f.

¹⁹⁸ For the full statement of Goodall, N (ed) *Missions under the Cross*, 249-250.

¹⁹⁹ McDonell, Kilian *Catholic Pentecostalism: problems of evaluation*, 22; Sherill, J L *They speak with other tongues*; Tugwell, S *Did you receive the Spirit?*; Bittlinger, A *The church is charismatic*, 123-129.