

# **Spiritual Experience in Orthodoxy and the Pentecostal Concept of the Works of the Holy Spirit.**

## **A Comparative Study**

***“Experienție spirituală în ortodoxie și concepția penticostală despre lucrarea Duhului Sfânt. Studiu comparat”***

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# 1. Reasons for a comparison of Pentecostal and Orthodox Pneumatologies

## 1.1. Introduction

Various theologians, specialists on Pentecostalism and some Pentecostals too have noted before that a substantial amount of common convictions exists between Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy<sup>1</sup> which the general conviction that it would be well worth to fathom these agreements, in particular to the benefit of Pentecostal theology, which is still in the process of being academically “formalised”.<sup>2</sup> However Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy are worlds apart. A wide chasm of different cultures, styles, origins, patterns of theological and metaphysical thought, of self-conception, of sociological composition and of reasons for being there in the countries of their distribution, as well as mutual strangeness to tradition, separates both churches.

It is aggravated by the intrusion of Pentecostalism into countries of age-old Christian tradition, which is justified on the Pentecostal side by the revivalist claim to bringing a more personal or purer form of Christianity, whereas Orthodoxy widely perceives this as the intrusion of a somewhat heretical sect, bent on destroying the unity of a Christian people of the same faith. It thereby joins the chorus of Roman Catholic and Classical Protestant churches in whose realms this robust newcomer has likewise made major intrusions. This is no situation for an amicable theological dialogue, as between long established churches which have staked their respective claims to „canonical territories" long ago. On the whole sympathy is neither held by the elder churches nor by the Pentecostals, whose movement is barely 100 years old. To most of them Ecumenism would amount to losing their own *raison-d'être*, of overcoming a “fossilised" state of Christianity in the power of the Holy Spirit. This state is evidenced by the scarcity of literature which takes both traditions into view as well as of the paucity of references to common traditions in such comparisons.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hollenweger, Walter J., *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997: Hendrickson Publ. Inc. p. 218

<sup>2</sup> loc. cit. p. 399

<sup>3</sup> loc. cit. p. 219

Dialogue between elder churches and Pentecostalism has therefore developed only in the latter half of the 20th century, usually out of situations of protracted contact.<sup>4</sup> Between Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism cautious steps of dialogue have begun since about two years, in the context of the World Council of Churches, where Orthodox and Pentecostals have found themselves in surprising mutual agreement against Classical Protestant Churches on various issues and occasions.

Seeing that the issues involved here are of significance in particular to Christian pneumatology this article is dedicated to assessing the fields of agreement and possibly fruitful dialogue in view of the wealth of agreement, that has been variously felt to exist,<sup>5</sup> in spite of fundamental differences in ecclesiology and of theology of the sacraments, which are closely entwined with the understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Both churches are, in fact characterised by a distinct perception of the specific work of the Holy Spirit, which is immediately significant to the spiritual and liturgical practise of the Church, and ultimately of every Christian. Both churches have developed a distinct practise and culture of religious experience based on the Holy Spirit, which is of immediate and experientially verified significance to the believers. This distinguishes Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism from other churches, in which the Holy Spirit, practically speaking, has merely the significance of a metaphor. There is agreement and comparable practise as to sanctification as a holistic spiritual development<sup>6</sup> and about the Holy Spirit as a perceptible force, beyond its reduction to a cognitive disclosing itself through belief in Christ, or later, in a rationalistic age, through convictions of Christian ethics.<sup>7</sup>

Pentecostal and Orthodox experience of the Holy Spirit is based on an agreement in cosmology, which does not reject the supernatural as “mythological” or “pre-enlightened”, but accept it in accordance with the common Christian experience of all ages as a dimension of action and experience of the Holy Spirit. There is thus a distinctness of the Holy Spirit in the form of experience, based on the notion of the procession of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox theology, and likewise, though on a different

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<sup>4</sup> Hunter, Harold (ed.), *WCC Consultations with Pentecostals*, URL: <http://www.pctii.org/wcc/> (Pentecostal-Charismatic Theological Inquiry International)

<sup>5</sup> loc. cit., p. 224

<sup>6</sup> loc. cit., p.143

<sup>7</sup> Heron, Alistair, *The Holy Spirit*, Philadelphia, 1983: Westminster Press, p. 105 ff.

doctrinal basis, in Pentecostalism. It is not symmetry in dogma but in spiritual experience and liturgical practise.

This article does not develop an argument about the ontological possibility of a “spiritual sphere”. This would involve a host of unresolved issues in recent cosmologies, which are based on some evidence which does not fit in with the materialistic world-view of Enlightenment, but which has not yet led to any new, commonly accepted synthesis. It may however be stated, that the specific spiritual phenomena which are considered to be results of the work of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy alike, are being taken more seriously than half a century ago. We may therefore enter the analysis by accepting reports of these phenomena for what they claim to be, and in the way they appear in the reality of experience, without entering considerations about what they might be “in reality”.<sup>8</sup>

The change of approach may be illustrated by an incidence, related by W. Hollenweger, a prominent scholar on Pentecostalism, which happened during the time, when R. Bultmann's approach of an “existential interpretation” of the “mythological” accounts of the Bible was at its height: David du Plessis, a Pentecostal minister, who was the foremost pioneer of bringing Pentecostalism into ecumenical dialogue, was taunted in Germany, about the Pentecostals’ claims to paranormal spiritual experiences:

*“He was asked by a disciple of Bultmann: ‘What is your programme?’ Du Plessis replied, ‘To demythologise the Scriptures.’ Curious at such a reply, his questioner asked ‘How will you do this’, to which du Plessis responded: ‘It’s very simple, we Pentecostals take the things in the Bible that you say are myths and we make them happen today so that they are demythologised.’”<sup>9</sup>*

Pentecostal scholarship is likely more differentiated today, but the basic approach remains the same. This is echoed in testimonies of Orthodox literature, in particular since the early 19th century. Reference is made to it here, since it was written during a time, when modern Enlightenment was also the intellectual horizon also for an author like the anonymous writer of the “*Russian Pilgrim*” whose

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<sup>8</sup> James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901–1902*, London, 1902: Longmans, Green & Co., chapt.. 3

<sup>9</sup> Hollenweger, Walter J., *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 352

masquerade of simplicity barely disguises the keen awareness of contemporary discourse on religion. Therefore the Orthodox adherence to a “supernatural” cosmology cannot be dismissed as “pre-enlightened”, as it is commonly done among Western theologians. It should rather be taken serious as an experientially based stance with a well reflected epistemology.

As the issue of a distinct “spiritual realm” is at the centre of much renewed post-secular interest in religion in the West, the author of this essay, being neither Pentecostal nor Orthodox, but German Protestant of South African origin - writing from the experience of both cultural horizons - will focus on this cosmological convergence between Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism, in particular, since it has brought both confessions into an proximity in the context of international ecumenism, which both are likely not to have expected. This point of agreement is investigated in the wider context of Orthodox and Pentecostal doctrines of the Holy Ghost. Here the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as distinct in action and in the spiritual experience and liturgical practice is another common trait.

The task of this essay is to provide some information on the dynamic and multifaceted movement of Pentecostalism in the context of ecumenism, and a brief look at the gradual ecumenical involvement of Pentecostalism, to ascertain the extent of agreement or closeness in pneumatology and its associated spirituality, to describe the soteriological background and the implications for the doctrine of the sacraments associated with the work of the Holy Spirit, to evaluate the influence of culture on the emergence of Pentecostal Pneumatology and associated practise and to describe their closeness from a phenomenological perspective, with a view to its significance in the contemporary context.

Pentecostalism is not understood to be a part of Protestantism, in spite of its emergence from Neo-Protestantism, and of the continuing association of many Pentecostal Churches with Evangelicals, often for secondary reasons. The dynamics of Pentecostalism, in particular in the independent Third-World Churches and essential features of its emergent doctrine disprove the categorisation of Pentecostalism as “Neo-Protestant”. Harsh criticism of Pentecostalism by Evangelical fundamentalists<sup>10</sup> warrants

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<sup>10</sup> Rose, Seraphim *Charismatic Revival as a Sign of the Times*, URL: <http://returntoorthodoxy.com/charismatic-revival-sign-times-seraphim-rose/>

this opinion. In Classical Pentecostalism the process of perceiving the own faith as being distinct from Protestantism is well under way, but not completed, unlike in the Independent Churches of Africa and other Third-World countries.

It is understood that most of Pentecostalism, apart from a small group of unitarian Christo-monists, is not heretic. This is the result of decades of scrutiny by the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. The polemical label of a “sect” should be laid aside, as not reasonable. As to its connotation of “a small band of dissenters” the mere size of the Pentecostal movement also shows that in spite of its inner disunion, it has become a major confession world-wide, after Roman Catholicism, ahead of Orthodoxy and possibly of the Protestant churches too – with the precaution that reliable figures of membership are hard to get and Pentecostal self-estimates may be exaggerated. Of course, size is not an argument about truth. However it demonstrates the ability to convincingly mediate the Christian message and testifies to the strength of the spirituality it practises.

## ***1.2. The size and composition of the Pentecostal community***

When comparing Orthodox and Pentecostal positions it may be useful to consider which entities are being compared and secondly, which reasons there may be for such comparison, in particular since Pentecostalism is still widely regarded as a “sect”, either in a sociological or a doctrinal sense. Therefore one may briefly consider the size and importance of this new Christian denomination or movement.

Pentecostalism, being just about a century old is a multifaceted denomination with some common defining characteristics. Yet, since it is organised in a multitude of churches, some large, comprising several millions, others small, many just independent congregations, Pentecostalism does not have clean defining limits, but rather a core of „Classic Pentecostal Churches" with a more or less long history of self-identification as “Pentecostal” and a fringe of churches which have a marked Pentecostal or charismatic influence, many of these being “Third World” Churches, often with strong influences from their indigenous cultural and spiritual traditions, which have been “Christianised” in various ways.



According to reliable statistics,<sup>11</sup> Pentecostals in this wider definition are estimated at about 533 million, which is 26% of world Christianity. This places the Pentecostal denomination second to only the Roman-Catholic Church. In Latin America they comprise more than 10% of the Christians, with 20% in Brazil and Chile and up to 40 % in Central America. These figures are rising, since Pentecostalism has experienced an exceedingly rapid rise in Latin America. Here Pentecostals have established themselves as a major societal force across the layers of society with important politicians in their ranks. In Europe Pentecostals have remained small in numbers, however they have established themselves firmly even in countries like Russia,<sup>12</sup> Sweden, Romania or France as significant minority churches.<sup>13</sup>

Within the Pentecostal movement some 140 million are “Classical Pentecostals” in a stricter sense. This figure is to be viewed with caution, since there is no unanimous agreement among Pentecostals about who belongs rightly to their movement. In tum not all charismatic independent churches would identify themselves as Pentecostal<sup>14</sup> although traits of their theology and liturgical practise characterise them as such.

Almost 400 million Christians are members of such “Third World” Churches. Of these a large part are summed up as “African Initiated or Independent Churches” (“AIC”s). The concept covers a wide range of churches of similar phenomenology of pneumatic practise but with soundly diverging theologies ranging from Evangelism to syncretism. In many African countries they are either the majority or the strongest Christian denomination, e.g. 40% in South Africa. They and similar churches in Asia are dynamic in missionary growth both in Africa and in Asia.<sup>15</sup> These churches, of which some

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<sup>11</sup> Barrett, David B. and Johnson, Todd M., “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2001”, in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25:1 (January 2001), 25, quoted by: A. Anderson, “The Globalisation of Pentecostalism”, in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 14, art. „Pentecostal Churches”, (Paper delivered at the 2002 Meeting of the Churches’ Commission on Mission. Sept. 14 – 16. 2002 in Bangor Wales), URL: [http://www.geocities.com/ccom-ctbi/ccom\\_AGM\\_files/020913-15\\_CCOM\\_AGM\\_Allan\\_Anderson.htm](http://www.geocities.com/ccom-ctbi/ccom_AGM_files/020913-15_CCOM_AGM_Allan_Anderson.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Lunkin, Roman, „Die euphorischen neunziger Jahre – Pfingstler und Charismatiker in Russland” in: *Glaube in der 2. Welt*, 1 (2002), p. 26 - 31

<sup>13</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 377

<sup>14</sup> [art.] „Pentecostal Churches”, in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 14, Cambridge, 1974: Encyclopedia Britannica Co. Ltd., p.32

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, Allan, *The Globalisation of Pentecostalism*, (Paper delivered at the 2002 Commission Meeting of the Churches Commission and Mission. Sept. 14 – 16. 2002 in Bangor /Wales), URL: [http://www.geocities.com/ccom-ctbi/ccom\\_AGM\\_files/020913-15\\_CCOM\\_AGM\\_Allan\\_Anderson.htm](http://www.geocities.com/ccom-ctbi/ccom_AGM_files/020913-15_CCOM_AGM_Allan_Anderson.htm)

have become members of the World Council of Churches, are viewed upon with disdain by Classical Pentecostal churches, which mostly reject closer ecumenical involvement, in particular with the churches of elder tradition.<sup>16</sup> With regard to ecumenism this distribution of the relative size of Classical Pentecostals and African Initiated Churches and related Independent Churches in Asia and worldwide is a fact to be recognised. Classical Pentecostalism does by far not represent the whole Pentecostal movement. It is evidently far from having attained homogeneity, in spite of steps towards union in a world federation.

A multitude of differences, of varying theological, spiritual, cultural, political, racial and intellectual traditions among themselves and their traditional wariness of central organisations<sup>17</sup> hamper this process. The multitude of churches and of conflict lines both among Classical Pentecostals and between them and other “Third World” Churches of Pentecostal character may be attributed to a stage of “fermentation” in this young tradition, which is characteristic of any formative stage of development. So there is reason to hope that an ecumenical dialogue, if achievable, can be particularly effective in establishing shared convictions and a common ground of concepts, besides overcoming mutual misconceptions.

### ***1.3. The Charismatic movement and the Roman Catholic - Pentecostal dialogue***

Pentecostal ideas and practises have spread into elder traditional churches as “Charismatic Movement”, which has exerted a major influence on parts of the Roman-Catholic and Classical Protestantism as well as in Orthodox congregations in America.<sup>18</sup> In particular the Roman-Catholic Church has deliberately integrated charismatic spirituality and liturgical practises which have originated in Pentecostalism into its fold. Some Roman-Catholic lay movements are of strong charismatic inspiration. This was one of the

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<sup>16</sup> Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogues (1977. 1982): A Study in Developing Ecumenism, vol. 1.* Frankfurt a. M., 1987: Verlag Peter Lang, p.333. (Series: *Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums / Etudes d'histoire interculturelle de christianisme / Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity* – vol. 44)

<sup>17</sup> [art.] „Pentecostal Churches“, in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 14 , 1974, p.31

<sup>18</sup> Rose, Seraphim, *Charismatic Revival as a Sign of the Times*, URL: <http://returntoorthodoxy.com/charismatic-revival-sign-times-seraphim-rose/>

reasons for the Roman-Catholic Church to familiarise herself with Pentecostalism and to enter into formal theological dialogue with Pentecostalism. Accordingly Charismatics were included in the delegations on both sides. On the Pentecostal side even a Greek Orthodox priest was among the Charismatic members of the informal Pentecostal commission in the first dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup> The theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and representatives of Pentecostal Churches during the last decades, since 1972, began in the context of the Second Vatican Council and has been upheld since. The growing awareness of the size and dynamism of the Pentecostal movement was a major factor for the historical churches in the West to take a closer look at it. To evaluate this dialogue one should keep in mind the fierce competition between the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostalism in Latin America.

#### ***1.4. Pentecostalism in dialogue with Protestantism and the World Council of churches (WCC)***

Pentecostalism as an offspring of revival movements and historically aligned with the Evangelical movement, views Ecumenism with definite distrust. For a long time therefore Pentecostals have not entered into Ecumenical dialogues.<sup>20</sup> Historical churches have largely considered Pentecostalism more or less outspokenly as nothing but a sect of somewhat bizarre ecstatic practises and certainly of no serious theology.

It is only of rather recent times that the mutual disdain between Pentecostal and historical churches<sup>21</sup> has begun to decrease to make way for theological dialogue and a clearer perception of what both sides teach and believe.

Historical Protestantism has been rather reluctant to enter into any form of ecumenical dialogue with Pentecostalism. This situation has persisted well through the sixties. Finally the awareness of its missionary achievements and coexistence as neighbours as Christian churches in Third World countries have brought about interest in Pentecostalism from churches of the Lutheran World Federation, which decided to

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<sup>19</sup> Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogues (1977. 1982): A Study in Developing Ecumenism*, vol. 1. Frankfurt a.M., 1987: Verlag Peter Lang, p. 150

<sup>20</sup> loc. cit., p. XCV

<sup>21</sup> [art.] „Pentecostal Churches", in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 14, 1974, p.34

overcome its reluctance and to enter into a dialogue with Pentecostalism.<sup>22</sup> The Reformed churches followed suit.

This development has gained momentum, and in recent years Pentecostals, especially from Latin America and Asia, and African Initiated Churches have gained increased attendance, though sometimes controversial, and acceptance by the World Council of Churches, beginning 1991 in Canberra, and especially at the 8th General Assembly of the WCC in Harare.<sup>23</sup> As a result some Pentecostal churches, from Latin America and African Independent Churches, or more properly: „African Initiated Churches" (AIC's), such as the Kimbanguist Church of the Congo have been admitted as Members to the World Council of Churches.<sup>24</sup> However major Classical Pentecostal churches of the United States and Europe, such as the Assemblies of God are strongly opposed to such ecumenical involvement, in particular with the WCC,<sup>25</sup> as they consider that it is not committed to faith.

### **1. 5. Pentecostal Churches and Orthodoxy**

In the recent years, tensions have arisen between Traditional Protestantism and the Orthodox Churches in the World Council of Churches on matters of spirituality and consensus-finding. In these debates Orthodox delegates have found themselves in agreement with Pentecostals and AIC's, as well as with Evangelical Protestant Churches on issues of faith and ethics, in particular on the demand for unity of mission and evangelism, as well as in the protest against the principle of decision taking by majority. This unexpected agreement has evidently contributed to a budding mutual interest, which has found its expression in the decision of the Orthodox and the Pentecostals to

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<sup>22</sup> Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogues (1977. 1982): A Study in Developing Ecumenism, vol. 1.* Frankfurt a.M., 1987, p. XCVII

<sup>23</sup> Hunter, Harold D., *Report of the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches December 3 – 14, Harare, Zimbabwe*, 1998: World Council of Churches official press release, URL: <http://www.pctii.org/news/harare.html>

<sup>24</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 386

<sup>25</sup> loc. cit., p. 349

begin informal talks, scheduled as from 2001 onwards, as well as between Orthodoxy and Evangelicals.<sup>26</sup>

Besides the essential agreements between Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism (including the AIC's) in pneumatology, there are profound differences, amongst others in ecclesiology, the doctrine of the sacraments, anthropology, of the Mother of God and the saints and the role of tradition. Similarities exist in the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a distinct agent in the work of the Divine Trinity, in the acceptance of the distinct manifestations, in the spiritual experience of the believers and the practise of the church, in their pneumatic Biblical hermeneutics, in the essential role of spiritual experience, in the doctrine of man's free will and of his own role in the process of sanctification as in theosis, with the emphasis on spiritual growth, and finally in the religious cosmology, which includes both dimensions of reality: the visible and the invisible world and their respective manifestations. Most points of agreement are situated in the field of Pneumatology. This proximity has been noticed by Pentecostal scholars and scholars of Pentecostalism alike.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Excursus on Orthodox-Pentecostal relations at the time of publication of this essay, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2015***

At the 8th General Assembly of the WCC in Harare “informal talks” were envisaged between Pentecostal and Orthodox Churches.<sup>28</sup> These initiatives have since gained some momentum with a very gradual, reluctant admission and realisation of fundamental similarities in pneumatology. These have been expressed since in a passionate contribution by V. Vassiliadis in a Festschrift for the Metropolitan Damaskinos of Athens:

*“It is true that Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism form two quite opposite Christian traditions; but only when one looks at their practice, spirituality and everyday life, especially their mission praxis. If, however, one looks at the theological production that is being published by Pentecostals in various*

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<sup>26</sup> Hunter, Harold D., *Report of the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches December 3 – 14, Harare, Zimbabwe*, 1998: World Council of Churches official press release

<sup>27</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 218f.

<sup>28</sup> loc. cit., *ibid.*

*ecumenical books and journals, one gets a completely different picture; the similarities even in theological terminology are tremendous. Within the ecumenical movement the Orthodox have always been the main proponents of Pneumatology, an issue that is dynamically brought into the foreground also by Pentecostals. Therefore, I firmly believe that the time has come for a more profound encounter and an honest theological dialogue between these two streams of Christianity.”<sup>29</sup>*

Vassiliadis does not deny the felt antagonism between these families of churches, but points out to the structural agreements in pneumatology. In spite of this affinity, mutual encounters have chiefly taken place in multilateral contexts. Thus Vassiliadis reports on a statement he made as participant in the *World Mission Conference* in Athens from 9-16 May 2005,<sup>30</sup> as an Orthodox delegate:

*“The pneumatological dimension of our Christian identity is being slowly but steadily developed in ecumenical theology and in contemporary theology of mission. And to this end the 2005 Mission Conference has contributed a lot. Pneumatological emphasis is evident in both preparatory working documents: “Mission as ministry of reconciliation” and “Healing and Mission”.<sup>31</sup> In the ecumenical dialogue, of course, the consolidation of the trinitarian theology as a useful tool in almost all ecclesiological, sociological, moral etc., and above all missiological reflections was a further evidence. The trinitarian revolution in contemporary Christian theology, is strongly felt across denominational boundaries – from post-Vatican II Catholicism to evangelicalism – and is in fact*

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<sup>29</sup> Vassiliadis, Petros, *The Importance and Necessity of an Orthodox-Pentecostal Dialogue (A Positive Message from Athens)*, in: *Festschrift “Church-Ecumenism-Politics” for Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreou*, Athens, 2007, URL:

[https://www.academia.edu/1903417/THE\\_IMPORTANCE\\_AND\\_NECESSITY\\_OF\\_AN\\_ORTHODOX-PENTECOSTAL\\_DIALOGUE\\_A\\_Positive\\_Message\\_from\\_Athens\\_](https://www.academia.edu/1903417/THE_IMPORTANCE_AND_NECESSITY_OF_AN_ORTHODOX-PENTECOSTAL_DIALOGUE_A_Positive_Message_from_Athens_)

<sup>30</sup> *Documents of the World Mission Conference 2005*, URL:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism>

<sup>31</sup> *“You Are the Light of the World “(Matthew 5:14). Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches, 1980-2005*, Geneva 2005: WCC Publications, pp. 90-126 and 127-162 resp.

*due to the rediscovery of the theology of the Holy Spirit of the undivided Christian Church*<sup>32</sup>.

Vassiliadis refers here mainly to the contexts, of mission, of spiritual healing, and to the surge of Charismatic movements in various churches. He also points out at changing epistemological attitudes in post-modern culture, which give acceptance for pneumatic phenomena long cherished by the Orthodox Church and widely practised by Pentecostals, of

*“a more holistic understanding of mission in post-modernity. In addition, a new holistic understanding of healing, even of a miraculous healing, widely (and for some successfully or effectively) practiced by Pentecostals challenges – and of course is challenged by – an overwhelming rational attitude of modernism, to which the majority of western Christianity was forced to surrender, or at least accommodate itself.”*<sup>33</sup>

He also polemically points out to a structural imbalance – from an Orthodox point of view – with regard to trinitarian theology, which he observes in Roman-Catholic and Traditional Protestant Churches, which he feels are being corrected by Pentecostalism of *“a Christocentric universalism, in some cases developed into a christomonistic expansionism”*.<sup>34</sup>

This mutual interest in the global ecumenical context is situated on the background of mutually polemical relations in many traditionally Orthodox countries, where the entry and growth of Pentecostalism at the expense of the traditional churches have created tensions.<sup>35</sup> This awareness of similarity, even of agreement and of possible inspiration has grown ever since, especially among Pentecostals.<sup>36</sup> Theological

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<sup>32</sup> Vassiliadis, Petros, The Importance and Necessity of an Orthodox-Pentecostal Dialogue (A Positive Message from Athens), in: *Festschrift “Church-Ecumenism-Politics” for Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreou*, Athens, 2007

<sup>33</sup> loc. cit., ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Vassiliadis, Petros, “Beyond Christian Universalism: The Church’s Witness in a Multicultural Society,” in *Scholarly Annual of the Theological School of Thessaloniki*, n. s. Department of Theology, Vol. 9 (1999), pp. 309-320.

<sup>35</sup> Hunter, Harold D., *Report of the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches December 3 – 14, Harare, Zimbabwe*, 1998: World Council of Churches official press release, URL: <http://www.pctii.org/news/harare.html>

<sup>36</sup> Rybarczyk, Edmund, *Beyond Salvation: an Analysis of the Doctrine of Christian Transformation Comparing Eastern Orthodoxy with Classical Pentecostalism*, (PhD. Diss. Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999), published as: Rybarczyk, Edmund, *Beyond Salvation: Eastern Orthodoxy and Classical Pentecostalism on Becoming Like*

dissertations by Pentecostals have explored the range of inspiration to be gained from Orthodox Pneumatology. However the difference between the Orthodox model of “theosis” and the motif of “fall – conversion - transformation and sanctification” of the Wesleyan and the Holiness Movement traditions also makes itself felt as reason for difference in spite of much inspiring agreement.<sup>37</sup>

Not much however has happened in terms of formal dialogue between Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches. In spite of a growing sense of convergence on pneumatology, spiritual practise, world view and related fields, even a sense of fruitful inspiration to be expected, especially by Pentecostals, cultural and doctrinal difference as well as competition in mainly Orthodox countries seem to preclude any intensive dialogue between these churches so far.

Dialogue remains on a low level, in spite of some steps toward ecclesiastic approval on both sides. Thus a recent report by the *Society of Pentecostal Studies* reports on an initiative towards dialogue by the foremost Pentecostal scholar of systematic theology and church leader, Harold D. Hunter,<sup>38</sup> shows the mode of progress and communication towards this goal:

*“Pentecostal talks with a view of moving forward toward a bilateral were launched when Dr. Harold D. Hunter took a Pentecostal team to Constantinople on October 3 - 7, 2010. The immediate context for the start of these talks came as a result of a private audience granted Dr. Hunter with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in June 2009. The second round of Bartholomew in June 2009. The second round of talks met October 28- 29, 2011 hosted by the Church of Crete, and the third round of talks hosted in 2012 by the European Theological Seminary. This dialogue has been formally endorsed in a letter submitted by the Pentecostal World Fellowship.”<sup>39</sup>*

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Christ, Eugene, Or., 2006: Wipf & Stock Publ., (Paternoster Theological Monographs), and: Coulter, Dale M., *Surprised by Sacraments*, (2013), URL: <http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2013/11/surprised-by-sacraments>

<sup>37</sup> Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification*, Collegeville, Minn. 2004: The Liturgical Press, p. 109ff.

<sup>38</sup> Hunter, Harold D., *Curriculum Vitae*, 2015, URL: <http://www.pctii.org/vita.html>

<sup>39</sup> *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (SPS History) adapted from an article written by Kate McGinn and D. William Faupel, which appeared in the December 1998 issue of *Ecumenism*, revised by Lois Olena, February 2012, URL: <http://storage.cloversites.com/societyforpentecostalstudies/documents/history.pdf>



The mode of achieving progress here certainly testifies to the immense distance in terms of structure and culture which make such encounters hinge upon the initiative of individuals.

### **1.6. The „African Initiated Churches" / "African Independent Churches" / "African Instituted Churches" (AIC's<sup>40</sup>) as part of the Pentecostal movement**

Before continuing with an assessment of the scope of understanding between Pentecostals (or rather: Pentecostal-type churches), the inclusion of "African Initiated Churches" (AIC's) into this comparison has to be explained: The admittance of Pentecostal-type churches from the Third World to the World Council of Churches confronted historical churches of European culture with the issue of how to evaluate theological views and practises of „African" origin in Pentecostalism and the AIC's. After a stage of deep suspicion<sup>41</sup> the insight grew that these elements had themselves been thoroughly Christianized.<sup>42</sup> This has been supported by the work of theologians of different confessions, and recently especially by Pentecostal scholars, like I. Daneel and A. Anderson.<sup>43</sup> An acceptance grew that Christianity could not be equated with contemporary Western cosmology.

For the purpose of our study this is relevant on account of the numerical weight of the AIC's compared to Classical Pentecostals, but also for a more intrinsic reason: It was realised that these African elements<sup>44</sup> were central to Pentecostalism itself<sup>44</sup>, mediated by Afro-American traditions in the formative stage of Pentecostalism.<sup>45</sup> Similar processes of fusion and inculturation have happened in Christianity before too, with the cultural and

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<sup>40</sup> Pobe, John S, art.: "African Instituted (Independent) Churches" in: World Council of Churches (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Grand Rapids, 2002: Wm. Eerdmans, URL: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/church-families/african-instituted-churches/african-instituted-independent-churches>

<sup>41</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 77

<sup>42</sup> Sundkler, Bengt, *Bantu Propheten in South Africa*, Stuttgart 1964: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, p. 286ff. (original: *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London, 1961: Oxford University Press)

<sup>43</sup> Anderson, Allan, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African context*, Cape Town, 1991: University of South Africa, p.121

<sup>44</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, pp. 25ff.

<sup>45</sup> loc. cit., p. 27

spiritual heritage of the peoples leaving their mark on Christianity as it was adopted with the specific sensibilities and gifts of various nations.

Both Classical Pentecostal churches and African Initiated churches share a common heritage. Yet there is not much harmony between them. The former Charge the latter of not being pure enough, perceiving them to be either too Catholic or too much bound to pre-Christian traditions.<sup>46</sup> This repeats charges by Protestant churches, which have been overcome in principle by the admittance of the Kimbanguist Church to the WCC in 1969 and of other African Instituted Churches since.<sup>47</sup> The awareness of these Churches of African origin has raised the new issue of evaluation of their cultural, spiritual and metaphysical traditions in an ecumenical context.

### ***1. 7. On the significance of cultural factors in assessing the Pentecostal movement***

Here cultural factors have to be taken into account. They are not external to a theological assessment of Pentecostal doctrine. It became clear that not only do the majority of Christians in the Pentecostal movement adhere to either African Independent Churches or to black Charismatic or Pentecostal churches in North and South America, with an admixture of pre-Christian spiritual traditions and cosmology of varying degree, but that the essence of Pentecostal teaching and liturgy has come about by an interaction between Evangelical Revivalist hermeneutics of the Bible and African (Afro-American) spiritual traditions.<sup>48</sup>

It is highly likely that the practise of the “speaking in tongues”, of glossolalia and its associated ecstatic practises in Pentecostal worship, which are distinguishing elements of Pentecostal confessional identity,<sup>49</sup> stem from these African roots. This point has been

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<sup>46</sup> Oral communication by Rev. Ebenezer Quaye, *The Church of Pentecost* (Ghana), Stuttgart 2003

<sup>47</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 80

<sup>48</sup> loc. cit., p. 29

<sup>49</sup> *Agreed Account of the Roman—Catholic, / Pentecostal Dialogue, 3.-7-Oct. 1977, Rome*, repr. in: Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogues (1977. 1982): A Study in Developing Ecumenism, vol. 2*, Frankfurt a. M., 1987: Peter Lang Verlag, p. 90

strongly made by the foremost European researcher on Pentecostalism, by Rev. Walter Hollenweger.<sup>50</sup>

This interpretation has been embarrassing to many in white Pentecostal churches, who pointed out that the first case of glossolalia occurred in a completely white context of C. F. Parham's Bible School of Topeka, at the turn of the last century, and his fundamental Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in (foreign) tongues as “initial evidence” of the Holy Spirit had been prior to the second founding event of Pentecostalism, the famous “Azusa Street Revival” of 1906, in the Holiness Church in Los Angeles, which was led by the black preacher J. L. Seymour, where in this congregation of people of all races and social standing experienced glossolalia as an event in common worship.<sup>51</sup> Here speaking in tongues became the central element of liturgy in Pentecostalism and it spread from here all over the world. Seeing that Seymour strongly employed Negro elements of gospel song and praise, which in his time was not done in a mixed congregation, it is likely that he moulded Parham's idea of a revival of Biblical glossolalia into the traditional forms of African ritual ecstaticism.

It is therefore justified to consider not only AIC's to be of deeply African character, but Pentecostal churches altogether, regardless of their cultural self-perception. This justifies the inclusion of the African Independent Churches with the Classical Pentecostal churches in a comparative study, especially since the central element of Pentecostal spiritual practise and its understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit is concerned.

Such processes are, of course, not new in Christianity, seeing that the development of Christian ritual and imagery has been strongly influenced by the various European cultural and spiritual traditions that were integrated by Christianity in its growth. A paradigmatic evaluation of such confluence has been expressed by O. Clement, with regard to Romania:

*“En Roumanie, le merveilleux archaïque a persisté parfois jusqu'à nos jours avec le sens de la nature comme théophanie... Pourtant, grâce à la conception hévchaste de la ‘contemplation de la nature’ une nature secrètement baignée par lumière de la Transfiguration, grâce à l'expérience monastique du ‘retour*

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<sup>50</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 29

<sup>51</sup> loc. cit., p. 21

*au Paradis' grâce à la dimension cosmique du christianisme oriental, cet apport archaïque a été largement assumé et purifié par l'Église."*<sup>52</sup>

This retrospective evaluation may provide a guideline for the judgement of similar processes of "inculturation", or, more precisely, of formative pre-Christian and extra-Christian spiritual influences in the development of Christian churches and confessions in various times and places.

Of course the delimitation of the boundary between Integration and syncretism is a sensitive issue, given to controversy. However the Orthodox position that the Logos of God is already present in creation, therefore in natural man, and has never been completely lost here,<sup>53</sup> as presented by Fr. Staniloae, is of essential value in coming to terms with such findings, without compromising the essence and fullness of the Christian faith.

## **2. On Baptism, the doctrine of the sacraments and justification**

### ***2.1. Introduction: on baptism with water and on conversion***

The central element of Pentecostal doctrine and practise relates to the work, of the Holy Spirit. Here the so-called "Second Baptism" or "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" is the focal point of Pentecostal spiritual experience and of its theology about the work of the Holy Spirit. In Pentecostal theology much of what is ascribed to water baptism in Orthodox and traditional Christian theology has been transferred to this second baptism with the Holy Spirit

Since this is preceded by baptism with water and since the name "Second Baptism" refers to a first baptism, the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism shall be described in comparison to the Orthodox position. The function of water baptism in Pentecostal theology is defined by the Assemblies of God as follows:

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<sup>52</sup> Joantă, Romul (Metropolitan Serafim), *Roumanie: Tradition et culture hésychastes*, (préface d'Olivier Clement), Bégrolles-en-Mauges 1987: Éditions monastiques, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, p. 16

<sup>53</sup> Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Bd. 2, Gütersloh, 1990 : Gütersloher Verlagshaus, p. 15 (original: *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, Bucharest, 1978)

*“Some churches use the term sacraments instead of ordinances. Sacraments, however, carries for many people the idea that a spiritual work takes place in a person when the sacrament is received or experienced. The Assemblies of God chooses to call water baptism, and Holy Communion ordinances because they are religious practices ordained or established by Jesus himself.*

*In fulfilling these spiritual duties Christians are reminded of an important work that has already taken place in the heart of the believer. ... The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (not sprinkling) is commanded in the Scriptures (Mark 16:16). All who repent and believe in Jesus Christ as a personal Savior and Lord are to be so baptized. This act of baptism symbolically declares to everyone that the old sinful life and life-style of the baptized believer died with Christ at salvation and a new spiritual being has been raised with Christ (in His resurrection) to live a new life (Matthew 28: 19; 14 Mark 16.-16; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4). ... Water baptism is a one-time event in which the new believer announces publicly that he is now a child of God who has identified with Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection.”<sup>54</sup>*

This states clearly that Pentecostal theology understands water baptism not to be fully effective by itself, due to the work of the Holy Spirit alone in the person baptised. The self-effectiveness associated with „sacrament“ is not ascribed to baptism. Baptism, as a symbolic act, is framed in the synergetic concept of Pentecostalism, where the working of the Holy Spirit and man's voluntary decision interact Accordingly it is only understood as a secondary confirmation of the work of the Holy Spirit. When a person experiences the desire to convert or to hand over his life to Christ, and then asks for baptism, it has already taken effect, but to do so, human participation is required, which is expressed in deliberate conversion, either from non-belief to Christian faith, or, with a regular Christian in the desire to proceed to a higher level of faith by deliberately “handing over” one's life to Christ, as a sign of conversion from natural ways.

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<sup>54</sup> *Statement of Beliefs, chapt. 6: The Ordinances*, The First Assembly of God, Ponca, Okl., URL: [http://www.ag.org/top/beliefs/statement\\_of\\_fundamental\\_truths/sft\\_full.cfm#6](http://www.ag.org/top/beliefs/statement_of_fundamental_truths/sft_full.cfm#6) , cf.: *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 6.: The Ordinances of the Church*, Bethany Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-6.htm>

In spite of this emphasis on human free will, and the concept of synergy in their approach, Pentecostals also adhere to the idea, that the grace of God through the Holy Spirit precedes man's moves, as

*“the righteousness before God, solely the result of his justification by faith in Christ, enables the sinner to receive holiness from God, to participate in His holiness. Therefore the sinner must have access to that spiritual realm where the holiness dwells in order to experience its reality”.*<sup>55</sup>

This applies to the various steps Pentecostalism distinguishes towards full participation in salvation. It must, of necessity also apply to the initial step, to the conversion which precedes baptism, since Pentecostalism also adheres to the idea of man's utter loss of the imago Dei in the original fall of man. Man's own contribution to this initial step of his salvation, his conversion consists in his becoming aware of his utter depravity, which can make him yearn for salvation. This will lead him to the surrender of his own self-reliance, which marks conversion in the Pentecostal tradition of “sanctification by crisis”.<sup>56</sup> *“Until he surrenders his self-righteousness and accepts Christ alone as his surety before God, he shall remain outside the realm of sanctification.”*<sup>57</sup> This surrender is celebrated in Pentecostalism and forms an important element of revivalist biographies.

Conversely the Orthodox position might rather be described as an “awakening” of man, whose tarnished “imago Dei” in him begins to become illuminated by contact with the presence of God's uncreated energies as mediated to him in various ways. In a sense man's initial reaction to the presence of God's grace is like that of nature, of which he too. On account of the view that God is forever present in this world through the Holy Spirit, which precedes the timely coming of Christ in his incarnation, as in the Old Testament or even in Paganism, and which succeeds Him to fulfil His work,<sup>58</sup> man can react to this presence like nature does, on account of the Logos inherent in nature.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Tuppen, Kristian, *Notions of Sanctification*, Kent 2002, p. 7, URL: [http://www.enterhisrest.org/doorway/notions\\_sanct.pdf](http://www.enterhisrest.org/doorway/notions_sanct.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> loc. cit., p. 18

<sup>57</sup> loc. cit., p. 7

<sup>58</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, *Die Mystische Theologie der Morgenländischen Kirche*, Graz 1961, p. 199f (original: *Essai sur la théologie Mystique de l'Église d'Orient*, Paris, 1944: éd. du Cerf)

<sup>59</sup> Stăniloae, Dumitru, *The Experience of God — Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Vo. II.- The World: Creation and Deification*, Brookline 2000 p. 5 (original : *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, București, 1978)

Since man is moreover created in the “image and likeness of God” he is also capable of proceeding beyond such natural participation to a “personal” relation with God, as Zizoulas has particularly pointed out,<sup>60</sup> which finds its fulfilment in Christ through the Holy Spirit before he arrives at a “personal” relation to God. This may precede his entering a conscious relation with God “in Christ”, through baptism and following it. Seeing that man participates in God's grace in this relation to Him as a member of the “body of Christ” he does not only participate in His grace through Christ, but also fulfils a task of spiritualising both his body and the surrounding nature, which has been assigned to Adam at creation.<sup>61</sup> Such considerations of the cosmological and anthropological significance of baptism and conversion are somewhat beyond the view of Pentecostal theology of baptism on account of its loss of an ontological perspective on the significance of baptism and of the narrow “personalist” concept it shares with much of its theological forebears.

## **2.2. On conscious participation and the issue of infant baptism**

The “personalism” and emphasis on the conscious person in Pentecostalism is expressed in the requirement that only a person, to whom baptism symbolises deliberate conversion to Christ and “the request for the receiving of the Holy Spirit”<sup>62</sup> should be baptised. Therefore Pentecostals emphasise the whole immersion as a sign of new birth and criticise infant baptism.<sup>63</sup> They emphasise that in early Christianity the rituals of initiation: baptism, laying-on of hands/ chrismation and the Eucharist had followed in a sequence<sup>64</sup> in which an initiate participated consciously.

Fr. D. Staniloae too emphasises that baptism only comes to its full salvific effect through faith, in that a Christian becomes equal of form to Christ in death, as symbolised

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<sup>60</sup> Tuppen, Kristian, *Notions of Sanctification*, Kent 2002, p. 28, URL: [http://www.enterhisrest.org/doorway/notions\\_sanct.pdf](http://www.enterhisrest.org/doorway/notions_sanct.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> Stăniloae, Dumitru, *The Experience of God — Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Vo. II.- The World: Creation and Deification*, Brookline 2000 p. 48

<sup>62</sup> *Agreed Account of the Second Dialogue Session (1973), Rome*, in: Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogues (1977 - 1982), vol. 1*, Frankfurt a. M., 1987, p. 86

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

by Baptism and in resurrection (Rm. 6:5).<sup>65</sup> Therefore he argues for the baptism of infants on account of the constitutive interrelatedness of a person with his family and surroundings by which an infant becomes a Christian when growing up in a Christian family. In view of neo-protestant positions Fr. Staniloae argues it is not justified to withhold baptism to a child if it grows up in a surrounding of believers, for here it participates in the faith from the beginning.<sup>66</sup>

Fr. Staniloae's view is reflected by C. Yannaras who declared that according to the Greek Church fathers personhood is primarily determined by the relations in which a person finds himself. The idea of an „autonomous" individuality is dismissed by him as a fiction which denies the fact that a person is constituted through the dynamic relations in which a person finds himself.<sup>67</sup> Baptising infants acknowledges this reality of a faith in which children can grow up. In a sense the Pentecostal rejection of infant baptism treats children to be little heathen faith, even if they grow up to in the Christ, as they are considered not to have the capacity to repent their natural state of sinfulness and to ask for rebirth, as testified by adult baptism. The issue, whether infants too, or only adults and elder children should be baptised is, however, not central to the theology of Orthodoxy, for baptism is essentially designed for candidates of conscious age,<sup>68</sup> adapted for application to infants.

### ***2.3. On baptism as a first step of Christian initiation***

There is common ground with Pentecostalism for an understanding of baptism as the first stage of initiation in Christianity. Moreover it appears that a closer acquaintance with the highly differentiated steps of the Orthodox ritual might be of benefit to Pentecostals, as it clearly expresses the idea of renunciation of evil in exorcism, re-enacts the transmission of the life-giving Spirit in the insufflation, dramatically demonstrates the necessity of laying off the “natural person” in the stripping of the candidate, aligns the candidate

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<sup>65</sup> Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Bd. 3, Gütersloh, 1990: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, p. 54

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Yannaras, Christos, *Person und Eros: Eine Gegenüberstellung der Ontologie der griechischen Kirchenväter und der Existenzphilosophie des Westens*. Göttingen, 1982: Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, p.24 (original: *Τὸ πρόσωπο καὶ ὁ Ἔρως*, Athens, 1976: Δόμος)

<sup>68</sup> Heitz, Sergius, *Mysterium der Anbetung*, vol. III, *Die Mysterienhandlungen der Orthodoxen Kirche und das tägliche Gebet der Orthodoxen Gläubigen*, Köln, 1988: Luth Verlag, p. 21



consciously with the fullness of the Holy Trinity and with the church as the body of Christ in the recitation of the Creed, and confers upon the candidate the dignity of participation in Christ's kingdom in the anointment preceding baptism.<sup>69</sup> In Pentecostalism these elements and what they symbolise are not expressed ritually.

In view of the meaningful sequence of steps in the Orthodox rite of baptism which are directed at conscious experience, one might argue from a Pentecostal view that they require conscious awareness by the participant. It may be replied however that Christians usually do not live in isolation. Thus they will participate in the baptism of others and will be reminded of baptism as a primordial element of their lives. Baptism does not stand alone by itself, but is succeeded by other mysteries in the course of life. They require baptism and do thus refer back to it. They add new qualities to baptism and unfold its significance in the life of the Christian.

It is certainly the merit of Pentecostalism to have renewed the awareness that baptism was conceived as a rite to be undergone as a conscious and deliberate act of initiation. In the context of Christianised societies Pentecostalism restored baptism as a deliberate personal act meant to be a transformational experience, as would otherwise only be reserved to converts of an adult age. Yet Pentecostalism too can't avoid that its practise of baptism becomes a superficial ritual without deeper effect in the baptised. This problem has been discussed by Pentecostals in relation with their highest initiation to the work of the Holy Spirit, in the Second Baptism, with regard to its effects.

Pentecostalism's Claim to reviving an original Christian practise cannot be dismissed offhand, but requires careful consideration, as above by Fr. Staniloae. The introduction of the rite of confirmation presents an attempt to resolve the issue. However it lacks the ritual depth and full significance of the rite of baptism.

#### ***2.4. On the symbolism of baptism and the participation in it***

According to Fr. Staniloae the idea of restoration of the image of God in man is important; in baptism

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<sup>69</sup> Cabasilas, Nicholas, *The Life in Christ*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press, II., p. 62f (original: Νικόλαος ο Καβάσιλας, *Περι της εν Χριστω ζοη*)

the image of Christ, in which the image of God in man is restored, is imprinted,<sup>70</sup> as a basic for growth in faith towards a full attainment of deification. In baptism we are united with the image of Christ, as with a shape of Christ which is given to us that we may appropriate it and grow in its form.<sup>71</sup> In Orthodox opinion baptism combines two operations: the unification of the person baptised with Christ, with the body of Christ in an ecclesiastical sense, thus as the initiation into the Church, in the personal sense as formation in the image of Christ, and, secondly, the initiation as the beginning of restoration of the original creation of man in the image and likeness of God, whereby the latter is to be subsequently developed in life. The common ground for these two movements is Christ incarnate as the archetype of man.<sup>72</sup>

This approach is completely different from Pentecostalism's since the latter does not think about baptism in terms of restoration of an original state and destiny on account of its doctrine of man's utter corruption through original sin. There is consequently no movement of a return to an original state and destiny which accompanies spiritual progress, as in Orthodoxy, but only the idea of progress, as a movement out of a state of complete doom to salvation. It may be up to concrete theological dialogue to establish whether the complex and differentiated Orthodox teaching about baptism may be acceptable to Pentecostals. Such hope is based on the observation by scholars of Pentecostalism, that it does not think metaphysically and towards a comprehensive system, but that it rather employs a biblical "temple theology" (A. Anderson), i.e. an application of biblical motifs to situation according to the lines of its spiritual traditions. Therefore one may not assume symmetry of equally developed systems and structures of theology between these two confessions of such different age and formative circumstances of their development. This asymmetry leaves space for constructive dialogue, which extends beyond an exchange of hardened positions.

The symbolism of death and rebirth does not refer to the birth of a new person who has nothing to do with the former, but that rebirth brings about a quality of man which was lost through hereditary sin in natural man and is restored through the relation

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<sup>70</sup> Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Bd. 3, Gütersloh, 1990: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, p. 46

<sup>71</sup> Cabasilas, Nicholas, *The Life in Christ*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press, II., p. 62f

<sup>72</sup> Nellas, Panayotis, *Deification in Christ: The Nature of the Human Person*, Crestwood, N.Y., 1977: St. Vladimir's Press, p. 34ff (original: *Ζωον Θεοποιημένοι*)

to Christ, by which the Christian regains an original, “paradisiacal” quality,<sup>73</sup> in being related to God.<sup>74</sup> This being clothed in the garment of Christ and being formed in His shape, or being unified with His death and resurrection has a salvific quality in Orthodoxy since the Christian thus partakes both of Christ's death and of his resurrection in rising from death.<sup>75</sup> It is this successive identification which forms the essence of theosis.

Accordingly baptism is understood as a ritual of initiation, as the first in a sequence of mysteries,<sup>76</sup> in the full sense of the word: of epiphany, of meeting and of experience of union with the Godhead, of inner transformation or metamorphosis.<sup>77</sup> It is followed by chrismation in Orthodox ritual which is performed closely after baptism confers the qualities of the anointment of Christ.<sup>78</sup> This may be loosely equated to the Pentecostal idea of a „second baptism”, the „Baptism of the Spirit- which has to follow water baptism in order to attain the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

## **2.5. On or the issue of sacraments ordinances**

Another point of difference between Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy, as to baptism, apart from the aspect of conscious participation, is that Pentecostalism does not share the idea of “sacrament”. Accordingly it does not define baptism and the eucharist as sacraments, but as “ordinances”, i.e. as rituals “ordained” to be performed by Christ as significant reminders of his work through the Holy Spirit.<sup>79</sup> In linguistic terms, Pentecostalism defines baptism as a metaphor but not as a “performative act”. The Orthodox understanding comprises both aspects. In Pentecostalism the quality of the sacrament as an Instrument of mediating God's grace is not sufficiently perceived so as to understand baptism as a sacrament.

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<sup>73</sup> Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Bd. 3, Gütersloh, 1990: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, p. 46

<sup>74</sup> Cabasilas, Nicholas, *The Life in Christ*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press, II., p. 80

<sup>75</sup> loc. cit., p. 65

<sup>76</sup> loc. cit., p. 67

<sup>77</sup> Eliade, Mircea, *Geschichte der religiösen Ideen: Bd. 1.- Von der Steinzeit bis zu den Mysterien von Eleusis*, Freiburg, 1994, p. 276ff (original : *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses: 1. De l'âge de la pierre aux mystères d'Éleusis*, Paris, 1976: Ed. Payot)

<sup>78</sup> Cabasilas, Nicholas, *The Life in Christ*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press, p. 67

<sup>79</sup> *Statement of Beliefs, chapt. 6. The Ordinances*, The First Assembly of God, Ponca, Okl., (ed.), URL: <http://www.poncafirstag.com/Beliefs/6.htm>, cf.: *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 6.: The Ordinances of the Church*, Bethany Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-6.htm>

This is somewhat astonishing, since Pentecostalism has an intensive practise of blessing in the course of services and of ministry to the individual in all sorts of afflictions. The transmission of the healing and salvific power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and through prayer is a vital element of Pentecostalism, far more so than in Protestantism, comparable in scope to Orthodoxy. It is practised with a strong sense of effectiveness. Pentecostalism's reticence to accept the idea of sacraments may thus be questioned. It may provide a fruitful point for theological dialogue.

## ***2.6. On the roots of the Pentecostal conception of baptism in the Spiritualist and Pietistic traditions***

This charge of a „contradiction“ has to be accounted for: There is a general reason in the history of Pentecostalism. It has to be understood on the background of the reclamation" of a distinct experience of the Holy Spirit in the Spiritualist and Pietistic movements and of their demand to man's conscious and deliberate participation in it.

The Pentecostal conception arose out of a reform movement within Protestantism, which tried to remedy the consequences of the “objectivism” of Protestantism in its doctrine of justification by faith in combination with the doctrines of man's unfree will and, of predestination. Like its predecessors in the dissenter movements of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, as in Arminianism, the Holiness movement of Methodism, Pentecostalism teaches freedom of will, also in matters of salvation. This places the responsibility for a dedicated pursuit of salvation with the individual, who cannot be confident that the Holy Spirit will see to that automatically, in accordance with God's will, as long as one basically accepts one's sinfulness and one's sole dependence on salvation through Christ. This doctrine had been comforting to those who despaired of their own ability to such pursuit, in view of their own deficiencies, as human beings, like M. Luther<sup>80</sup> who found scriptural evidence in Rm 1:17 for his concept of a “passive justice”, of our righteousness granted to us solely by God through faith in Christ, following 1. Cor. 1:30.<sup>81</sup> However this doctrine, in spite of all its seriousness, of its

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<sup>80</sup> zur Mühlen, Karl Heinz, Art. „Luther II“, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopadie (TRE)*, (Müller, Gerhard et al. eds.), Vol. 21, Berlin 1991: W. de Gruyter Vlg., pp. 530 – 567, p. 531ff.

<sup>81</sup> loc. cit., p. 532

severe claims to relinquishing of all self-reliance in spiritual matters, and its ethical rigour, proved simply comfortable to those of less earnest disposition, who were relieved of the demand to seek the salvation of their souls through personal spiritual effort. Against their declared intentions spirituality had, in a sense been rendered dogmatically irrelevant towards salvation – even if on the assumption that human spirituality had been considered as a too uncertain and basically corrupted foundation to build any certitude of salvation on it. The result, however was, that one's own personal spiritual efforts had become basically irrelevant to the question of salvation, except as a secondary token of being filled with the Holy Spirit and thus elected to salvation, the experiential side of spirituality was basically limited to earnest repentance of sins and to fundamental trust in God's predestination, which was assured to be granted to those who earnestly confide in Him. The rest of the experiential side of spirituality was reserved to an ethically sound and devoted civil life.

The vacuum and dis-functionality of an interior spiritual life aroused vital protest, as from the 17th century onward, expressed in Pietism and its offshoot, in Methodism. A renewed call for experientially deepened spirituality, for spiritual growth and the demand that such spiritual and Christian ethical effort, beyond sound civility, be acknowledged as relevant to salvation, were passionately expressed in these movements, who dissented with their churches of origin, either to form distinct subcultures within them of some organisational autonomy, as Pietism<sup>82</sup> did, or to complete severance with the mother churches, as in Methodism.

In their spiritual and dogmatic reorientation and revival Pietism and Methodism deliberately turned to Orthodox<sup>83</sup> and to Roman Catholic traditions and teachings of spirituality, to Hesychasm and to Spiritualism<sup>84</sup> with their notions of spiritual growth and synergetic responsibility of the Christian in the process of salvation. Through Methodism<sup>85</sup> Pentecostalism is an heir to this tradition.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Brecht, Martin, art. „Pietismus“, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie (TRE)* (eds.: Müller, Gerhard et al.), vol. 26 Berlin, 1996: W. de Gruyter, pp. 603 – 631, p. 610f.

<sup>83</sup> loc. cit., p. 615

<sup>84</sup> loc. cit., p. 620

<sup>85</sup> loc. cit., p. 612

<sup>86</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, pp. 144ff.

The sacramental theologies of Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism have not been received. Reception took place only on the basis of the spiritual subjectivism of this revival movement. In consequence the ecclesiology of these churches has neither been received, as it is inherently linked to the sacraments through the conception of blessing. Neither is the idea that the Holy Spirit can bind itself to an earthly institution, as the church, and to its tradition, or to objects as means of grace acceptable to Pentecostalism. The idea of sacraments as objectively effective means of grace is criticised by Pentecostalism as reminiscent of an “objective” theory of salvation, which it rejects. Neither Roman-Catholic nor Orthodox nor Lutheran or Anglican theology are followed, but rather H. Zwingli's symbolic Interpretation of the sacraments.<sup>87</sup>

Pentecostalism's emphasis is on personal spiritual experience and on conversion. Its conception of workings of the Holy Spirit is focussed on the present and it is individualistic, in keeping with the tenets of the Revivalist tradition of personal piety in distinction from historical churches and their Institutes.

### ***2.7. On sacrament and the body of Christ: deficiencies of the Pentecostal understanding of baptism from the Orthodox view***

The Pentecostal understanding of baptism suffers from a deficit of ontological meaning, as seen from an Orthodox point of view: on the basis of Pentecostalism it is hard to explain why baptism should be a singular event with definite salvific effects on a person.

In Orthodoxy baptism is related to the doctrines of incarnation and of theosis. In baptism the candidate becomes an element of the Body of Christ which is the Church and does thereby participate in the eternal work of Christ in incarnation and resurrection. In such participation a Christian shares in the fruit of incarnation, in the union of divine and human nature, which is the basis of theosis and unites man with God, (see: 2 Peter 1:4).<sup>88</sup> Becoming part of the body of Christ in baptism enables to enter in thus union, however imperfect it may be realised in this life. It is understood as an ontological act. Baptism thus provides the basis for the Holy Spirit to take effect and to lead the Christian to a

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<sup>87</sup> loc. cit., p.226

<sup>88</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, “Redemption and Deification”, in: Lossky, Vladimir, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press p. 96. (original: *A l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu*, Paris, 1967: Aubier Montaigne)

personal union which God as the goal of salvation. The sacramental quality of the life of the church relates to that. Of course a distinction of quality exists between our participation and Christ's hypostatic union. We participate in God's "uncreated energies", through the Holy Spirit,<sup>89</sup> whereas Christ unites the human and divine nature in incarnation and resurrection. Yet incarnation provides the model for salvation by uniting the human and the divine. Through Christ's kenotic movement, in particular, our anabasis,<sup>90</sup> our ascent to God is made possible by our sharing in the paschal mystery, through faith and through participation in sacraments.

With regard to the aspect of salvific participation, the "body of Christ" thus also has a semiotic quality: as a paradigm for the union of man with God, in divinisation (theosis), towards which man can strive, guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

### **3. On the Pentecostal doctrine of salvation and the justification by faith**

#### ***3.1. Introduction: on baptism and salvation in the Order of economy***

Another factor determining Pentecostal understanding of baptism is the background of Classical Protestant doctrine of justification by faith with subsequent sanctification as its fruit.<sup>91</sup> It provides a key to the understanding of the Pentecostal theory of baptism and its consequences.

In the major Pentecostal tradition sanctification has become a distinct stage which follows voluntary conversion,<sup>92</sup> confession of sins and "regeneration" and is expressed by baptism. These two stages, which precede and follow baptism place the emphasis in salvation with man's own action:

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<sup>89</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit", in: Lossky, Vladimir, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press p. 90f.

<sup>90</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, "Redemption and Deification", in: Lossky, Vladimir, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press p. 97

<sup>91</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 249

<sup>92</sup> loc. cit., p. 248

*“While a new relation with God is formed at justification, notions of sanctification seek to enunciate how the new character which corresponds to this new relation is subsequently produced in the Christian. Consequently notions of sanctification have also been important means of expressing both the nature of holiness ... and the measure of holiness to which the Christian ought to aspire.”<sup>93</sup>*

Even though Pentecostalism declares that the work of the Holy Spirit has begun before a person converts and repents, the emphasis has shifted towards conversion before baptism and its subsequent stage of sanctification, which may lead to the fulfilling second Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The emphasis on baptism as an objective act, as in Orthodoxy and in other traditional churches with the precedence of the work of the Holy Spirit over man’s will and insight, is thus supplanted by a different emphasis.

The difference between the Pentecostal and the Orthodox approach to salvation and thus also of baptism might be also described as one of perspective: in Orthodoxy sanctification is connected to the sacraments, which initiate and accompany the sanctification of man in the process of divinisation, whereas Pentecostalism interprets baptism without its sacramental significance on the basis of the Classical Protestant doctrine of sanctification by faith, with the difference that it assumes the free will of man. (The latter appears as a contradiction to a classical Protestant, as the teaching of justification by faith was historically bound up with a firm rejection of any free will of man.)

The Pentecostal insistence on conscious experience and volitional participation in salvation necessitates the sequence of conversion, accompanied by baptism, and then baptism as a sign of the conversion of the candidate with the salvation in Christ granted by the Holy Spirit. In keeping with the idea of growth, derived from the revivalist and Spiritualist traditions, described above, this is followed by the „Baptism in the Holy Spirit“, as a full participation in the Holy Spirit, at a later stage, following sanctification.

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<sup>93</sup> Tuppen, Kristian, *Notions of Sanctification*, Kent 2002, p. 5, URL: [http://www.enterhisrest.org/doorway/notions\\_sanct.pdf](http://www.enterhisrest.org/doorway/notions_sanct.pdf)



This initial act of conversion and subsequent baptism is followed and unfolded by salvation in Pentecostal theory, as is expressed in a doctrinal Statement by the Assemblies of God on “the experience of salvation” as follows:

*“The Salvation of Mankind:*

*Salvation is deliverance from spiritual death and enslavement by sin. God provides salvation for all who believe and accept His free offer of forgiveness. Mankind's only hope of redemption from the fallen sinful state is through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son-blood that was shed as Jesus died on the Cross. [The account of the crucifixion of Jesus is recounted by four of His contemporaries: Matthew (chapter 27), Mark (chapter 15), Luke (chapter 23), and John (chapter 19).]*

*The Experience of Salvation:*

*Salvation is received as a person (1) repents before God for his sins and sinful nature or inclinations, and (2) believes or has faith in the fact that the death and resurrection (supernatural restoration to life) of Jesus Christ removes and brings forgiveness for his sin. In response to placing faith in God's love and freely given salvation, one experiences the washing of regeneration (or spiritual rebirth), the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, and is declared righteous (right with God). Regeneration, renewal, and justification (justified, or made right with God) are words describing what happens at salvation. At the moment of salvation, a person becomes heir to God's promised hope of eternal or everlasting life (Luke 24:47, John 3:3; Romans 10: 13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:71, 3:5-7).*

*The Evidences of Salvation:*

*The inner evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Holy Spirit giving one the assurance that God has accepted him (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence, visible to others, is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12). In other words it is living a life totally committed and pleasing to God.*

*Importance of this doctrine:*

*The restoration of relationship between God and fallen mankind is the central message of the Bible. The entire story from Genesis through Revelation points*

*to a God who loved fallen mankind so much that He gave His Son to die, that those who believe in Jesus Christ and His work of providing salvation might have never-ending spiritual life. Every true Christian experiences salvation and becomes a new person in Christ. Without this doctrinal truth, all other doctrinal statements are empty and without meaning. More importantly, without this experience, one's life is empty and without real meaning.*"<sup>94</sup>

Pentecostalism's introduction of the free will of man into the traditional Protestant doctrine raises man's spiritual and ethical progress to the rank of dogmatic relevance. Now such visible change of the way of life towards a more holy life and faith has the significance of indicating that the Holy Spirit is effective in a person, and to which extent. The doctrine of justification by faith is now inextricably bound up with visible and intentional sanctification.

This gives Pentecostalism a good deal of its dynamics as it not only requires an ethical and sanctimonious lifestyle of its adherents, which produces visible effects for everyone to see, but that it also rewards such efforts as clear signs of participation in the Holy Spirit and of salvation. This has both worldly and ethical implications: The success of Pentecostalism in Latin America is fuelled by the visible overcoming of poverty and low morals by its adherents. This holistic integration of holiness and worldliness is a strong point of Pentecostalism.

It has led to a doctrinal problem: What of those, who confessed and converted, and have become sinners again? As a result the doctrine of two-stage sanctification has been introduced: that the initial conversion and „regeneration", leading to baptism, must be followed by the experience of sanctification, as a subsequent rooting out of Sin.<sup>95</sup> Some Pentecostals believe that initial conversion provides “eternal security”, in spite of sin, others point out that sins which are truly confessed are forgiven.<sup>96</sup> The tension which arises between the „objectivist" slant of the classical Protestant doctrine of justification by faith and the Pentecostal link between visible sanctification of the life of the believer

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<sup>94</sup> *Statement of Beliefs*, Chapt. 5: “The Salvation of Man”, The First Assembly of God, Ponca, Okl., URL: <http://www.poncafirstag.com/Beliefs/5.htm>, cf.: *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 5: The Salvation of Mankind*, Bethany Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-5.htm>

<sup>95</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 249

<sup>96</sup> *ibidem*, p. 24

and his degree of salvific participation in the Holy Spirit in accordance with the doctrine of man's free will, the subjectivist side of Pentecostalism, is evident.

The Orthodox and Pentecostal positions agree in the assumption of a free will of man and accordingly also in the notion of necessary spiritual growth of man towards more complete sanctification. Pentecostalism shares with Protestantism the assumption of man's utter corruption by the Fall of Adam. The notion of a reconstruction of the image of God in man through Christ through baptism in which natural man "*assumes the form of the deified human nature of Christ*"<sup>97</sup> is strange to this tradition. There is no idea of a gradual transformation in Christ, which may be initiated with infant baptism. Emphasis in Pentecostalism is on conversion and the understanding of baptism is derived from there. According to the notion that Christ's sacrifice is decisive for the redemption of man, and not his incarnation and victory over death in death<sup>98</sup> Pentecostalism understands salvation as „*being washed in the blood of Christ*" — an expression profusely used.<sup>99</sup> It is associated with baptism as a conscious act of repentance and request for renewal and symbolises a deliberate transition of man and his subsequent purification through the Holy Spirit by Christ. This of course is revivalist protestant heritage.

In Reformation theology sanctification is part of the process of justification by faith as it takes effect in the believer through the Holy Spirit. Accordingly the aspects of contrition and confession as prerequisites of the acceptance of the message of salvation through Christ and the transformation of the believers life in the Image of Christ were not separated as distinct acts in a procession of spiritual ascent, but considered as elements of a single event brought about by Christ through the Holy Spirit, which extends its influence through time in the life of the faithful, but not as a sequential development. Seeing that the sovereign and sole agency of God was emphasized, the aspect of human participation had less relevance for the question of salvation.

For Reformation theology, sanctification was seen as a logical element of the process of justification of the sinner through Christ: the Calvinistic doctrine states that

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<sup>97</sup> Nellas, Panayotis, *Deification in Christ: The Nature of the Human Person*, Crestwood, N.Y., 1977: St. Vladimir's Press, p. 122

<sup>98</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press p. 101

<sup>99</sup> The First Assembly of God, Ponca, Okl., *Statement of Beliefs, Chapt. 5: "The Salvation of Man"*, URL: <http://www.poncafirstag.com/Beliefs/5.htm>, cf.: Bethany Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 5: The Salvation of Mankind*, URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-5.htm>

such faith must of necessity be accompanied by works of sanctification,<sup>100</sup> or similar in Lutheran doctrine, with more emphasis on a “necessity of obedience” in faith, as expressed in the Augsburg Confession.<sup>101</sup>

### **3.2. On freedom of will and personal spirituality**

Accordingly both the inner emotional, spiritual involvement and the outward ethical behaviour, although considered to be an essential element of justification by faith as its fruit, bore less systematic importance as it could in no way be regarded to be a prerequisite of salvation, because this was perceived as infringing God's sovereignty.<sup>102</sup>

This position which laid all emphasis with God while requiring the discipline of ethical behaviour according to the standards of good order in the world, has given rise to various developments. Among these is Pietism's protest against a state of broad piety which was perceived as being empty of emotional, personal involvement and of personal striving towards progress in sanctification. A piety which is both emotionally charged and devoted to a serious, ethical and moral Christian life resulted. Methodism has followed this line,<sup>103</sup> drawing on Roman Catholic literature on spiritual exercise and progress. In the process, the „objectivist" doctrine of salvation, based on the teachings of divine predestination and of the sole agency of God in salvation, accompanied by opinion that man has no free will in matters of salvation and faith, as declared by M. Luther and reaffirmed at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618) against the Arminian defenders of the free will – this doctrine was in practise, though only partially in theory, supplanted by a „subjectivist" emphasis on human participation and suggestions of individual striving as essential to salvation. Pentecostal theology stems from this tradition. It shares the unresolved difficulty that the common Protestant doctrine of man's utter and complete corruption in the Fall of Man can hardly be reconciled with the assumption of a free will of man in matters of faith, which places responsibility for salvation with man.

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<sup>100</sup> *The Heidelberg Catechism*, Question 64 (present edition: A. Pery (ed.), *Der Heidelberger Katechismus, mit Erläuterungen*, Neukirchen, Neukirchener Verlag, p. 84

<sup>101</sup> *The Confessio Augustana*, Art. 6 (present edition): L. Grane (Ed.), *Die Confessio Augustana: Einführung in die Hauptgedanken der lutherischen Reformation*, Göttingen, 1970: Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, p.56

<sup>102</sup> Heron, Alistair, *The Holy Spirit*, Philadelphia, 1983: Westminster Press, p. 109

<sup>103</sup> loc. cit., p. 110

An „oscillation" between a chiefly objectivist doctrine of faith and its subjectivist augmentation characterises neo-protestant spirituality<sup>104</sup> as well as Pentecostalism. Pentecostals find it inconceivable that justification should not involve a distinct personal calling through the Holy Spirit – the “Baptism in the Spirit” or “Second Baptism" which is distinct and outwardly manifest in “pneumatic phenomena”, accompanied by a specific conversion which precedes them and followed by discernible sanctification of life attitudes and practise.

In the footsteps of Pietism and Methodism Pentecostals severely attack the classical protestant practise emphasis on faith as insufficient,<sup>105</sup> as neglecting conversion, sanctification and endowment by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore classical Protestant churches are considered to be almost devoid of the Holy Spirit – a charged which is levied against many Christian churches.<sup>106</sup>

Following a suggestion by Martin Hauser a second line, besides the Arminian, should also be taken into account in this genealogy of Pentecostal emphasis on faith: Theodor de Beza’s reflections on the “syllogismus practicus”.<sup>107</sup> The suggestion to include de Bèze’s position is warranted since it became formative for Calvinism and thus for the confessional environment of revivalism in which Pentecostalism evolved in the United States of America. In the theology of John Calvin this link of attaining reassurance of one’s election by looking at one’s works of faith was not of central importance. De Bèze worked this issue out, to balance the assurance by a reflection on one’s good works in life with that gained by reflection on one’s faith. Both aspects are unfolded in the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) which was affirmed by the Synod of Dordrecht: In question 86 the issue of the necessity of good works is raised and sternly affirmed in the answer to question 87. The answer to question 86 describes the “syllogismus practicus” in the context of faith, as inward reassurance and in its social aspect:

*“86. Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works? Because Christ,*

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<sup>104</sup> loc. cit., p. 110

<sup>105</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 248

<sup>106</sup> Common statement by Pentecostal leaders, London 1952, as quoted by Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogues (1977. 1982): A Study in Developing Ecumenism, vol. 1.* Frankfurt a. M., 1987: Verlag Peter Lang, p. 41

<sup>107</sup> Following a suggestion by prof. Martin Hauser (Bucharest / Fribourg), Bucharest, 2003

*having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and that He be glorified through us; then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof; and by our godly walk win also others to Christ.[...]*

*87. Can they, then, not be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, unrepentant life? By no means, for, as Scripture says, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.”<sup>108</sup>*

In line with de Bèze’s thought<sup>109</sup> a balance is struck with reaffirmation by the experience of faith as joyous, altered state of self-awareness in relation to God:

*“88. In how many things does true repentance or conversion consist? In two things: the dying of the old man, and the making alive of the new. . . .*

*89. What is the dying of the old man? Heartfelt sorrow for sin, causing us to hate and turn from it always more and more. [...].*

*90. What is the making alive of the new man? Heartfelt joy in God through Christ, causing us to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works.”<sup>110</sup>*

The decisive shift here, from elder Protestantism is, that the realm of inner and outward effects of faith – in Christ and in divine predestination – is taken into view and is accorded systematic relevance. This is a hallmark of Pentecostalism too. It may be argued that Pentecostalism has even expanded this aspect, giving the creed its emphasis on the experiential or “empirical validity” of its tenets.

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<sup>108</sup> *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), (ed. by *The Reformed Churches in the USA*), URL: <http://www.rcus.org/heidelberg-catechism-2011/> (original: Ursinus, Zacharias and Olevianus, Caspar, et. al., *Der Heidelberger Katechismus*, Heidelberg, 1563)

<sup>109</sup> Mallison, Jeffrey, *Faith, Reason and Revelation in Theodore Beza (1519 – 1605)*, Oxford, 2003: Oxford Theological Monographs, pp. 232ff.

<sup>110</sup> *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), (ed. by *The Reformed Churches in the USA*), URL: <http://www.rcus.org/heidelberg-catechism-2011/>

## 4. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

### 4.1. On Pentecostal „Baptism in the Holy Spirit" and Orthodox baptismal rites of "filiation"

The third stage of Pentecostal experience of the work of the Holy Spirit, the „Baptism in the Holy Spirit" is also the most important and the defining element of Pentecostalism. The reorientation and renewal of the converted person is only the initial stage of sanctification. In their doctrinal statement the Assemblies of God", the largest Pentecostal denomination in the USA states expressly that it yet lacks the fulfilment, which comes by Baptism in the Holy Spirit:<sup>111</sup>

*“The baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate from salvation, and follows the new birth experience (acts 8:12-17, 17, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 4-16, 15:7-9). With this baptism come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4.-8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified commitment to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for those who have not yet become believers (Mark 76:20).”<sup>112</sup>*

In this sequence we may find the motif of „initiation" as a transformational experience reinstated for adult Christian life. We may recall that the Orthodox order of baptism involves the instruction of the catechumens about the faith into which they are to be baptised, the rituals of exorcism and the stripping of the garments of the candidate, and the submersion in the baptismal font, as symbolic of death, and of the endowment, through the blessed water with a new quality of purification and renewal, grace, power to resist all evil and immortality by participation in Christ, a rebirth to a new life. This is then followed by a ritual new clothing of the candidate and the rite of chrismation, with myrrh

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<sup>111</sup> *Statement of Beliefs, Chapt. 7: Baptism*, The First Assembly of God, Ponca, Okl., URL: <http://www.poncafirstag.com/Beliefs/7.htm>, cf.: *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 7: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Bethany Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-7.htm>

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

to instil and to confirm the transference of the Holy Spirit.<sup>113</sup> This sequence of ritual has essential elements of the universal pattern of initiation.<sup>114</sup> This is especially evident in the aspects of descent to death in submersion, and in the rebirth with Christ in a new state, participating in the new life of His resurrection following the symbolism of the reading from Romans 6:3b-12. In addition to the reference to Christ, which is central, the invocation of the Holy Spirit and Its transference<sup>115</sup> aligns the baptismal rites with the significance of Pentecost, even if not expressly.

What is the significance of such reference to a subject of cultural anthropology, as the study of initiation patterns and rituals for theology? One may regard it as a hermeneutical tool, which may serve to appreciate the anthropological logic in a complex ritual, such as the orthodox baptismal rite. This is possible on the ground that the divine and the human can act together harmoniously for the same purpose on different levels of significance. This synergetic approach allows for the integration of anthropological perspectives in the Interpretation of theological elements. M. Eliade has made the keen observation that the singularity of Christian baptism, which distinguishes it from the repeated rituals of washings for purification, as practised in Judaism, in the sect of the Essenians, is precisely owed to the initiatory quality which baptism has and which it confers to the baptised on account of his participation in the death and resurrection of Christ in baptism.<sup>116</sup> The singularity and the irrevocable transference of a new quality thus follow both anthropological and theological logic.

This finding may be significant to a comparison of the Orthodox rituals of baptism with the Pentecostals sequence of conversion, water baptism, sanctification and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Even though the theological frames of reference for both sequences differ considerably, in particular since water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit seem to be connected only loosely in their dogmatic significance in Pentecostalism, yet their

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<sup>113</sup> Heitz, Sergius, *Mysterium der Anbetung*, vol. III, *Die Mysterienhandlungen der Orthodoxen Kirche und das tägliche Gebet der Orthodoxen Gläubigen*, Köln, 1988: Luth Verlag, pp. 27ff.

<sup>114</sup> Eliade, Mircea, *Schamanismus und archaische Extasetechnik*, Frankfurt a.M., 1975: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, pp. 171ff. (original: *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'exstase*, Paris 1951: Editions Payot)

<sup>115</sup> Heitz, Sergius, *Mysterium der Anbetung*, vol. III, *Die Mysterienhandlungen der Orthodoxen Kirche und das tägliche Gebet der Orthodoxen Gläubigen*, Köln, 1988: Luth Verlag, p. 44f.

<sup>116</sup> Eliade, Mircea, *Das Mysterium der Wiedergeburt. Versuch über einige Initiationstypen*, Frankfurt a.M. 1988: Insel Verlag, p. 23



sequence may follow the same pattern of initiation which is contained in the Orthodox ritual. On this assumption one may interpret the Pentecostal sequence as an attempt to restore a spiritual experience of initiation including transformation, which governs Orthodox ritual – as the most elaborate and differentiated rites of baptism in Christianity – to the experience of adult Christians in a different context. This approach might provide a key to a sacramental interpretation of the Pentecostal sequence, thereby reintegrating it into the conceptual frame of traditional Christian dogma.

So far the Pentecostal line of thought chiefly relates certain biblical accounts with specific practises of the Pentecostal churches, which re-enact or revive them in specific spiritual experiences, without an Overall reference to a system of dogmatic concepts. In this line of thought the anthropological factor is important, on account of Pentecostalism's strong emphasis on spiritual experience. However it is not integrated with the dogma on a conceptual level.

When evaluating the Pentecostal experience and rituals with regard to Orthodox theology, it may be legitimate to understand baptism in the Holy Spirit in comparison to the rite of Chrismation, as well as to Pentecost. Another question is whether its ecstatic element has anything to compare with it in Orthodoxy.

#### ***4.2. On the distinctness of the work of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy***

A Statement of Pentecostal doctrine issued by the Assemblies of God declares clearly that Baptism in the Spirit is central to the doctrine and to the dynamics of Pentecostal faith:

*“The very essence of Pentecostalism is the recognition that the experience of conversion, while supremely precious, does not exhaust God's supply of what is available to the believer. Scripture makes it clear that all believers have the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 16). However, the constant hunger for "more of God" is the heartbeat of Pentecostalism. This is particularly true when, within Scripture, we recognize another life-changing experience available to every believer.*

*The baptism in the Spirit is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The scriptural ideal for the believer is to be continually filled with the Spirit*

*(Ephesians 5:18). Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the specific event that introduces the believer to the ongoing process of living a Spirit-empowered life. Although speaking in tongues has value as an outward sign of Spirit baptism, it is designed by God to be much more than evidence of a past experience.*

*Subsequent speaking in tongues brings enrichment to the individual believer when employed in private prayer (.1 Corinthians 14:4) and to the congregation when accompanied by the Interpretation (1. Corinthians 14:6, 25).*

*From its founding, The General Council of the Assemblies of God has recognized the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. It has also recognized that the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Spirit is speaking in tongues. The church's Statement of Fundamental Truths contains the following statements: Fundamental Truth 7:*

*All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fixe, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministrv (Luke 24:49; Acts 1: 4, 8: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15.-7-9). Witte the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), and intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).<sup>117</sup>*

The initial statement distances Pentecostalism from Classical Protestantism, where the working of the Holy Spirit is a function of the relation between Christ and the believer and

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<sup>117</sup> *Baptism of the Holy Spirit Pt. 1*, The General Council of the Assemblies of God, August 2000. URL: <http://www.glinx-com/-nella/pentecostal.1.html>, cf.: *Statement of Fundamental Truths, The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Assemblies of God, URL: , [http://www.ag.org/top/beliefs/statement\\_of\\_fundamental\\_truths/sft\\_full.cfm#7cf.](http://www.ag.org/top/beliefs/statement_of_fundamental_truths/sft_full.cfm#7cf.): *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 7: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Bethany Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-7.htm>

expresses itself chiefly in faith and sanctification. Thinking in terms of different states and degrees of participation in the Holy Spirit as a Christian, is strange to Protestantism and Neo-Protestantism and is a distinguishing feature of Pentecostalism. It is likely derived from Roman-Catholicism, wherefrom the model of successive levels of “states of grace” has come to Pentecostalism through J. Wesley's Methodism.<sup>118</sup>

By the doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit Pentecostalism has developed beyond the limits of what is Protestantism and has become a confession of its own, in spite of its roots in Protestant revivalism and of its close association with Evangelicals, as to hermeneutics, emphasis on personal piety and similar strict morals. The dogmatic tensions between these movements which have been acute in some countries have never ceased, in spite of close cooperation in some countries, which has often been motivated by common Opposition to established historical churches.

Pentecostalism deliberately aims at an understanding of the experience of the Holy Spirit in a different dimension than that of sanctification too: that of “power”, along a scale of varying intensity or “fullness”. This relates the Pentecostal perception of the Holy Spirit to Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit as possessing a distinct peculiar “work” and mode of expression, different from that of the Father and of Christ, the Son, who is the Logos. The Holy Spirit then has an “a-logical” quality, as a vivifying power, as described in the Nicene Creed, a power of fulfilment too, which is experientially and conceptually distinct from the Logos and yet related to it, thus to Christ's specific work, as K. Ch. Felmy explains with references to S. Bulgakov and V. Lossky.<sup>119</sup>

This distinct perception and identification of the work of the Holy Spirit relates Pentecostalism closely to the Orthodox conception of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father only,<sup>120</sup> and to its correlates in spiritual and liturgical practise of the church, as well as to the spiritual perception in Christian experience, which verifies and confirms the concepts of faith to each believer. This is the essential reason, why Hollenweger and some Pentecostal scholars regard Pentecostalism to be factually closer

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<sup>118</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, pp. 146ff

<sup>119</sup> Felmy, Karl Christian, *Die Orthodoxe Theologie der Gegenwart. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt, 1990: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, p.111

<sup>120</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 218

to the Orthodox doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone and not to the “filioque”<sup>121</sup> (the procession from the Son too), although Pentecostal doctrine accepts it.

In the theology of baptism in the Holy Spirit we come across a focal point of similarity between Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism. This is especially clear where the baptism in the Holy Spirit, also called “baptism by fire” in Orthodox literature, is not merely regarded as the last act of baptism, and as a mere confirmatory rite, by Chrismation, but where it is accorded a necessary specific function and a distinct experiential quality.<sup>122</sup> This emphasis relates back to the Hesychast tradition, that the sacraments’ effects toward salvation, in particular through baptism should necessarily be consciously appropriated and put to full effect through corresponding practise.

Thus St. Gregory of Sinai wrote:

*“because we are infants at the time of our renewal through baptism we do not understand the grace and the new Life conferred upon us. ...Hence because we are in fact non-spiritual we live and behave in a non-spiritual manner... the energy of the Holy Spirit, which we have already mystically received in baptism, is realized in two ways. First... through arduous and protracted practise of the commandments... Secondly, it is manifested to those under spiritual guidance through the continuous invocation of the Lord Jesus . . . that is through mindfulness of God.”*<sup>123</sup>

Here St. Gregory introduces the specific hesychast practise of prayer and of spiritual guidance. The rich tradition of extraordinary transformations of inner and outer reality and faculties experienced through such practice is witnessed by saints such as St. Seraphim of Sarov. This is well known in Orthodoxy and is referred to by the anonymous author of the “Russian Pilgrim”.<sup>124</sup> The statement that *„the constant hunger for more of God is the heartbeat of Pentecostalism”* refers to the idea of a gradation of participation

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<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, *Die Mystische Theologie der Morgenländischen Kirche*, Graz 1961, pp. 213ff

<sup>123</sup> St. Gregory of Sinai: „On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts” in: *The Philokalia*, Vol IV, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth (transl. and edited by G.E. Palmer, P. Sherrard and K. Ware) London 1998: Faber and Faber, pp. 257 – 262, p. 257f.

<sup>124</sup> *The Way of a Pilgrim* (transl. by Fedotov, Gregory P.) Christ of the Hills Monastery, Blanco Texas 1993; New Sarov Edition, p.61

and to the Pentecostal perception of the Holy Spirit as some kind of “energy” which one may receive and if so in varying degrees of “fullness” or intensity.

An interesting incidence of perceived closeness in spiritual experience by an early Pentecostal with regard to the Interpretation of Pentecost in Orthodox icons emphasises the tangibility of sanctification.<sup>125</sup> Bishop Kallistos Ware recounted that one of the “founding fathers” of British Pentecostalism had been deeply impressed by the Orthodox icon of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the first Christians, including the Mother of God,<sup>126</sup> which Rev. A. Boddy saw in Solovetsky monastery in 1890. He states that an influence of Orthodox spiritual tradition is also discernible in Pentecostalism, as John Wesley was an enthusiastic reader of the Homilies of St. Macarius, which speak of the second baptism by the Holy Spirit and which defend many of the visible signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit including elements of enthusiasm, supernatural experience and of trance.<sup>127</sup>

In view of this it may be safe to say that Pentecostal spiritual practise has first brought to their conclusion some of Wesley's ideas, which had not been unfolded in Methodism yet. Unfortunately, it appears that Pentecostalism is largely unaware of such hidden Orthodox roots, particularly in the monastic tradition. An awareness of such common ground in spirituality could facilitate an understanding between Pentecostals and Orthodox in spite of vast differences, which are perceived to exist.

### ***4.3. Of perceptible spiritual „light“ as tangible manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Hesychasm***

This approach is similar to that of Hesychast literature writings about spiritual quest and growth towards a life intensely charged with divine energy and the Holy Spirit, as in the Philocalia and also in writings of 18th century Russian Hesychasm, as the „Pilgrim“ and of St. Seraphim.

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<sup>125</sup> Ware, Kallistos, *Personal Experience of the Holy Spirit According to the Greek Fathers*, paper presented at the European Pentecostal/Charismatic Research Conference held in Prague on 10 — 14 September 1997, URL: <http://www.philthompson.net/pages/library/wareonhs.html> pp. 257 – 262, p. 259

<sup>126</sup> Ouspensky, Leonid and Lossky, Vladimir, *Der Sinn der Ikonen*, Olten: 1952: Urs Graf Verlag, p. 207

<sup>127</sup> Ware, Kallistos, *Personal Experience of the Holy Spirit According to the Greek Fathers*, paper presented at the European Pentecostal/Charismatic Research Conference held in Prague on 10 — 14 September 1997, URL: <http://www.philthompson.net/pages/library/wareonhs.html>

Pentecostalism describes the experience of the Holy Spirit, corresponding to this hunger, metaphorically as „baptism in the fire”, alluding to the original Pentecost: „Fire” as an experience of the Holy Spirit is echoed in Hesychast experience, from the Initial visions of „Light” identified with the Uncreated energies of God manifest on Mt. Tabor as well as in the monks` experiences. The well-known story of count Motovilov about his conversation with St. Seraphim of Sarov gives a striking example: Speaking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and about „*being in the fullness of the Spirit of God*”<sup>128</sup> as the Apostles too had been aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in them. Motovilov asked St. Seraphim about the experiential side of such knowledge, whereupon the saint said:

*“We are both in the Spirit of God now, my dear. Why don't you look at me?”*

Motovilov replied: *“I cannot look, Batiushka, because lightning is flashing from your eyes. Your face has become brighter than the sun... ”*, whereupon the saint reassured him: *„Don't be alarmed your Godliness! Now you yourself have become as bright as I am. You are now in the fullness of the Spirit of God yourself; otherwise you would not be able to see me as I am.”*<sup>129</sup>

This dialogue has some elements characteristic of this experience: The vision of “light”, so important to this story, is central to Hesychasm, of which St. Seraphim is a representative. It is expressly interpreted as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit fulfilling both the saint and his visitor.

Then too this light is accompanied by synesthetic perceptions of warmth and sweetness. Its radius of radiance extends far beyond the saint's figure into the environment. If read symbolically, this incidence confirms the Orthodox view that salvation is not restricted to man, but that all creation can participate in the salvation, or in the uncreated energies of God.

Furthermore it is interesting that St. Seraphim is not content being an instrument of the revelation of the Holy Spirit himself, when his visitor sees him resplendent in this light, but that he tells Motovilov that he too is in the light, fulfilled and radiant with it. And then he tells him that he is only able to see this light as he himself is filled with the

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<sup>128</sup> *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, (ed. and transl. Rose, Serafim), Platina, Ca. 1996: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood p. 99 (Series: *Little Russian Philokalia*, Vol. 1), p. 99

<sup>129</sup> loc. cit., p. 101ff.

Spirit of God. This makes it very clear that the phenomenon and its experience are dependent upon a spiritual involvement of the witness himself.

This report is confirmed in a story about St. Sergius of Radonezh, whose fellow monks once saw him officiating at the altar, surrounded by angels who had become visible to them. Struck with awe they point out the apparition to the saint, who calmed them by stating that he saw them frequently officiate with him. Only now had these monks been granted the grace of having their eyes opened to what is usually invisible.<sup>130</sup>

Here the same structure of a „mediated objectivity" of the phenomenon and of its perception is discernible: the phenomenon and its perception are dependent and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is a specific form of „empirical objectivity" which is not independent of the onlooker, to whom an experience discloses itself, yet it is definitely of a different, external quality, different from intrapersonal dreams or visions. More concretely spoken, it is dependent upon spiritual practise and purification as through a deliberate ascetic life and through prayer. The fact that these phenomena chiefly occur in a “setting” of spiritual practise is no argument against their objectivity, but indicates their prerequisites and the context of meaning to which they belong.

This also applies when comparing these phenomena in Christianity with „spiritual" and „supernatural" phenomena outside of Christianity: invariably they are bound up with spiritual experience and practise. There are elements of formal similarity to be discerned too. However the intrinsic quality of such extraordinary Christian spiritual experience is essentially influenced and permeated by Christ and relates to His revelation. Therefore such experiences may be attributed to the Holy Spirit in Christianity, even if comparable experiences occur in other spiritual contexts too.

#### **4.4. On the role of prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit**

The remark of St. Seraphim, that he had been praying silently all the time of their conversation,<sup>131</sup> is quite important, as it confirms Hesychast teaching that the transformative work of the Holy Spirit is essentially connected to prayer as the means of

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<sup>130</sup> Fedotov, Georgy P., *The Russian Religious Mind, vol. II: The Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Mass. 1966: Harvard University Press, p. 218f

<sup>131</sup> *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, (ed. and transl. S. Rose), Platina, Ca. 1996: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood p. 99

communication with God.<sup>132</sup> This attitude to prayer is not solely understood as a communication of information, but as a constant communion with the Holy Spirit through which the Holy Spirit communicates the divine “uncreated energies”<sup>133</sup> and thereby begins to take effect in the person in divinisation (theosis) as in continuation of the union of human and divine nature in Christ.

If this communion is achieved, the energy of the Holy Spirit begins to show specific effects, such as joy, awe, or even exuberant exultation,<sup>134</sup> as well as the phenomena of transformation of personality through diligent ascetic and liturgical practise witnessed in the long tradition of monasticism. The extraordinary phenomena which transcend ordinary reality, as of above, may accompany this transformation and serve to confirm it. However they do not have the status of necessary outward signs of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as glossolalia has in Pentecostalism.

One should point out that Pentecostalism does not deny that some who do not have “the gift of tongues” may yet have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, yet it is considered as “a sure sign” and is therefore held in high esteem.<sup>135</sup> However such outwardly manifestations of the baptism in the Holy Spirit are likewise associated with prayer in Pentecostalism, especially with common prayer during services. Glossolalia is not isolated from prayer either, even if Pentecostalism does not refer to the same conceptual framework linking prayer to the Holy Spirit, the Trinity and the Energies of God.

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<sup>132</sup> St. Gregory of Sinai: “On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts”, in: *The Philokalia*, Vol IV, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth (transl. and edited by G.E. Palmer, P. Sherrard and K. Ware) London 1998: Faber and Faber, pp. 257 – 262 p. 259

<sup>133</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, *Die Mystische Theologie der Morgenländischen Kirche*, Graz 1961, pp. 220

<sup>134</sup> St. Gregory of Sinai: „On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts” in: *The Philokalia*, Vol IV, compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth (transl. and edited by G.E. Palmer, P. Sherrard and K. Ware) London 1998: Faber and Faber, p. 260f.

<sup>135</sup> Synan, Vynson, “Speaking in Tongues”. Theological Paper delivered in the Roman-Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue 3.-7- Oct. 1977 in Rome, in: Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman-Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogue 1977 – 1982*, Vol. 2, Frankfurt a. M. 1987: Peter Lang Verlag, pp. 4 - 19. Vol. 2, p. 7



#### **4. 5. On the outward sign of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: speaking in tongues, trance and the experience of divine energy**

How is the phenomenon of glossolalia described in Pentecostalism, with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit and its experience? The Assemblies of God describe it thus:

*“The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit:*

*The baptism of Christians in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues (unlearned languages) as the Spirit of God gives them audible expression (Acts 2:4).*

*This form of speaking in tongues is basically the same as the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10. 28). The difference is the purpose and use. [The manifestation of tongues can be observed in the life of every Spirit-filled believer at the initial infilling. The audible expression of tongues should also continue to function in the Spirit-filled believer's personal prayer life. However, the gift of tongues (sometimes called “messages in tongues” operates publicly, usually in congregational worship settings. This gift is followed by the gift of interpreting the tongues. Both are given to individuals within the church. Their purpose is for the spiritual benefit of the individual and the congregation.]*

*Importance of this doctrine:*

*Some non-Pentecostal Christians teach that Christ-like Character and the fruit of the Spirit are better evidences of the Baptism than speaking in tongues. They believe the Baptism experience occurs at the time of salvation, without the manifestation of tongues. The Pentecostal position maintains that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and is separate from salvation. The belief is based on the five instances of such infillings recorded in, the Book of Acts (chapters 2, 8, 9, 10, 19). From, these passages and personal experience the Assemblies of God holds firm that the Biblical pattern of the Baptism is a separate work following salvation. It is always accompanied initially with the audible expression of tongues. While it is true the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian at the*

*time of salvation to convict of sin and point the person to Christ, this work of the Holy Spirit is different from Baptism.*"<sup>136</sup>

The experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been described in a personal testimony by the foremost Pentecostal Scholar on Pentecostalism and the African Initiated Churches, A. Anderson with reference to the ecstatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter churches:

*"My own experience of receiving the Spirit in 1968 was somewhat similar, I felt the overwhelming presence of God causing me to tremble; and it felt like surges of power repeatedly coming ng over my whole being. Later I began to speak in tongues for the first time in my life and I have done so many times since. These subjective experiences are very difficult to describe; but it means that I cannot criticise Sundkler's descriptions of Zionists [i.e. a large South African AIC] receiving the Spirit although perhaps my own experience was less physical and more in keeping with Western decorum."*<sup>137</sup>

Sundkler, a Lutheran bishop and pioneer of AIC- studies, described spirit trance in a service of the South African *Zion Christian Church (ZCC)* as follows:

*„... one of the women suddenly started convulsive movements of the body and gesticulated with her arms in an up-and-down movement. With half-closed eyes she spoke in tongues: Dji-dji-dji .... Hallelujah,hallelujah .... do, do, do, ...ZZZZZ ..."*<sup>138</sup>

I have witnessed similar manifestations of varying intensity, in Pentecostal Services.

This experience is not limited to African Pentecostal or African Initiated Churches, but has likewise been reported e.g. in a testimony by a Swedish Pentecostal:

*"I suddenly felt my shoulder shaking, and there was immediately a feeling like an electric shock from outside which went through my whole body and my whole being. I understood that the Holy God had drawn near to me ... I felt involuntary movements and extraordinary power streaming through me.*

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<sup>136</sup> *Statement of Beliefs, chap 8: The Initial Physical Evidence of the Holy Spirit.* First Assembly of God, Ponca City Okl., URL: <http://www.poncafirstag.com/beliefs/8.htm>, cf.: *Statement of Fundamental Truths. 8: The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Bethany: Assembly of God (San Diego, Ca.), URL: <http://www.bethanyassemblyofgod.com/beliefs/SFT-8.htm>

<sup>137</sup> Anderson, Allan, *Moya. The Holy Spirit in an African Context*, Pretoria , 1991: University of South Africa, p. 46

<sup>138</sup> Sundkler, Bengt, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, Oxford, 1961: Oxford University Press, p. 61

*Through this power the shaking of my body grew continually ... My words dissolved in my mouth and the quiet utterances of my prayer grew louder and changed into a foreign language... I was no longer myself although I was conscious the whole time of what was happening.*<sup>139</sup>

There are a number of elements common to these reports which I may augment with my own observations in a Ghanaian Classical Pentecostal congregation, of the Church of Pentecost<sup>140</sup> in Nuernberg.<sup>141</sup> The person who experiences the „Baptism in the Holy Spirit" undergoes:

- (1.) an experience of „seizure";
- (2.) this is outwardly visible as a trance-like state, in which the person's attention is evidently drawn to a strong inner experience;
- (3.) it is accompanied by uncontrollable motions or falling down and lying as if in a state of mental absence;
- (4.) it is experienced as an overwhelming power streaming into the person, which may sometimes be observed to happen as if some resistance in the person would still first have to be overcome;
- (5.) it may be accompanied by speaking in tongues, although this happens, according to my observation, also without the signs of deep trance as just described, but as a mild trance-like ecstatic state of intensive prayer, perhaps in the recurrent glossolalia mentioned by Anderson.

It is a manifestly intense state which may be induced by the blessing of the pastor or assistants, but also happens spontaneously without personal blessing before.

Pentecostal pastors and elders carefully observe those who fall into this state looking for signs of whether it is a true experience or just a voluntary attempt at trance. Those who fall into true trance, perhaps accompanied by a conflict in a resisting soul are attentively taken care of by assistants to help them through the experience. It is not expected of the person to talk about it, but rather the person is helped to regain normality after trance, and to „come back" into the present reality of the ongoing service.

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<sup>139</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *The Pentecostals*, London 1972: SCM, p.332f.

<sup>140</sup> *The Church of Pentecost*, URL:

[http://thecophq.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=8](http://thecophq.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=8)

<sup>141</sup> *The Church of Pentecost in Germany*, URL: [http://www.copgermany.com/index\\_e.htm](http://www.copgermany.com/index_e.htm)

In spite of a variety of observable manifestations of this state of trance with its experience of the power of the Holy Spirit, the Classical Pentecostal teaching that the manifestation of speaking in tongues is the discerning sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit of course creates problems, as only about a third of Pentecostals, pastors likewise, have experienced it. So the pastoral and doctrinal question arises whether those who have not had this experience have not received the Holy Spirit to the same degree. This has been resolved by pointing out that the Holy Spirit can manifest itself in a variety of ways. However the charism of speaking in tongues is held in high esteem as biblically witnessed, by St. Paul as well as by St. Luke in the report on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Seeing that speaking in tongues is a biblical phenomenon, witnessed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), does it have any place on Orthodox spiritual life? There are indications that it does, although marginally. In a paper published on the official homepage of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, Fr. G. Nicozisin states:

*“The Greek Orthodox Church does not preclude the use of Glossolalia, but regards it as one of the minor gifts of the Holy Spirit. If Glossolalia has fallen out of use it is because it served its purpose in New Testament times and is no longer necessary. However, even when used, it is a private and personal gift, a lower form of prayer. The Orthodox Church differs with those Pentecostal and Charismatic groups which regard Glossolalia as a pre requisite to being a Christian and to having received the Holy Spirit.”<sup>142</sup>*

That this „minor Gift" is practised in Orthodoxy may be evidenced by the following: It occurs in a stylised form in the Vesper service of some monasteries, during the chanting of Psalm 103. I was introduced to this by the Ukrainian researcher and leader of an ensemble for traditional orthodox monastic singing, Igor Sakhno, who showed me in a manuscript copy of a Slavonic service book where the final refrain „*Slava Ti Gospodi*" is augmented by the non-sensical syllables: „*i ne-ne-ne-na-ne-ne-ne-ne-na-ni-a-i-ne-ne-ne-na-na-na-i*" as a symbolic re-enactment of the Apostolic glossolalia, before the text of praise is concluded: "*sotvorivshemu vsya*",

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<sup>142</sup> Nicozisin, George, *Speaking in Tongues: An Orthodox Perspective*, 2003: The Orthodox Research Institute, URL: [http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/misc/nicozisin\\_tongues.htm](http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/misc/nicozisin_tongues.htm)

repeatedly.<sup>143</sup> Regardless of the origin of this variant of the Psalm 101 its existence and interpretation in contemporary Orthodoxy testifies to the presence of the idea and to ritual practise of glossolalia in a monastic context.

#### **4.6. On speaking in tongues and on Montanism**

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues and the appreciation of trance as a medium of receiving messages by the Holy Spirit, these two related but different phenomena, have regularly been labelled as “Montanism” and deposited in the folder of already condemned heresies.

Remus Rus pointed out at the relation of the pneumatic practise of Montanism with indigenous cultural practises of ecstacism and divination in Phrygia: “*Apariția acestei mișcări în Frigia esta o continuare a lungii tradiții profetice din acea zonă.*”<sup>144</sup> Rus attributes the rapid spread of Montanism in the eastern half of the Roman Empire partly to cultural factors, which may have conditioned the population to cherish them. This is likewise an important factor for the reception of modern Pentecostalism. Rus assumes that the esteem prophetic phenomena had within the church in principle provided a basis for their initial reception, as reminiscent of the origins of the church.

Interestingly Rus also suggests that Montanism may have had a function as an antidote to the rationalism of the Roman Empire: “*mai ales că s-a manifestat într-o comunitate prin excellentă ‘rațională’, Roma.*”<sup>145</sup> This corresponds well to the phenomenal rise of Pentecostalism within a century in a world whose dominant – though not exclusive – epistemic paradigm is one of rationalism. In this perspective Pentecostalism, as Montanism before, appears as one of the movements which oppose this exclusion of the non-rational.

Rus also points out to the leading role which two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, had as mediums and prophets of the movement<sup>146</sup> – a factor which did not go well with

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<sup>143</sup> A copy of the manuscript from monastic sources, used by the *Ensembl’ Drevnego Tserkovnogo Peniya: Sretenie* of Kharkiv, Ukraine, is in my possession for verification.

<sup>144</sup> Rus, Remus, art. „Montanus“, in: Rus, Remus, *Dicționar enciclopedic de literatură creștină din primul mileniu*, București, 2003: Editura Lidia, p. 581f.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

the establishment of an exclusively male priesthood in the early church. All of these factors are conserved in ecclesiastical memory and are revived in face of present Pentecostalism, especially in churches who preserve a living memory of their early centuries, conditioning theological and emotional attitudes.

The widespread scepticism and ambivalence towards ecstatic experience and to prophetic divination in the church is supported to some degree by St. Paul's distance to such phenomena. In 1. Cor. 14: 1-9 St. Paul mentions the gifts of speaking in tongues and the gifts of prophecy in one context but differentiates them too, in a way which shows that he knew the distinct phenomenological differences between them. Speaking in tongues was of course appreciated as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit as in the vent of Pentecost (Acts 2: 14 – 18), where St. Peter referred back to the prophecy of Joel 3: 1 – 5. In 1. Cor. 12: 4 – 11 St. Paul defines the criterion for the judgement and acceptance of inspiration and messages received in the state of trance: the unity of the Spirit in the diverse forms of manifestation which the Holy Spirit can assume.

The 2nd century Christian movement of Montanism combined moral rigorism and asceticism with the quest for trance visions and the practice of "prophecy" as well as with an apocalyptic slant to expect the imminent "second coming of Christ". Their reliance to the Holy Spirit for guidance conflict about the "magisterium" of the church and led to a suppression of the movement in the course of time.<sup>147</sup> The Montanist controversies set the model for the evaluation of subsequent movements of such character in the church, which combined an intense, ecstatic personal experience of the Holy Spirit with ideals of special personal sanctity and rigorous demands as to the mores of the church and of society. The movement has been one of several in which the dynamics connected with trance phenomena and inspiration in this state, as well as with glossolalia, have raised the question as to how this dynamism of experienced presence of the Holy Spirit can be controlled. The threat of a continued "revelation" which would lead beyond the doctrinal boundaries agreed upon by the church has been raised repeatedly, and labelled as "Montanism".

Of course phenomenological affinities to the Pentecostal movement have been noted. This has engendered some self-reflection in the Pentecostal movement about the

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<sup>147</sup> Frend, William H.C., art.: "Montanismus" in *Theologische Realencyklopädie (TRE)* (eds.: Müller, Gerhard et al.), Vol. 23, Berlin 1994: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 271 – 279, p. 275

theological status of their pneumatic experiences and inspiration. Agreement has been found in Pentecostalism that in spite of a high appreciation of these experiences of trance in worship they do not constitute a “gifts from above”<sup>148</sup> as such. Therefore the question is what function glossolalia or trance has for the experience of faith or for the life of the Christian church. Accordingly the “gift of tongues” has not been viewed in isolation either in Pentecostalism, but seen in context with other fruits of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly more critical view of glossolalia as an essentially universal phenomenon have been demanded of Pentecostalism an ecumenical encounters.<sup>149</sup>

#### **4.7. On glossolalia as an element of Pentecostal liturgy**

Speaking in tongues is not practised in a wildly in an individualistic fashion in Pentecostalism, but is embedded in regular Pentecostal liturgy. In many cases it follows on common prayer by the whole congregation, which „dissolves" into common individual prayer, which happens to transmute into glossolalia with some of those praying. It creates, in my experience, confirmed by the officiating Pentecostal pastor<sup>150</sup> the effect of “a rushing mighty wind” that fills the house (Acts 2:2) which is finally ended by the minister who leads the assembly to song. The phase of ecstatic experience is thus concluded suitably and the specific energies of this state are thus transformed into a different mode of liturgical experience.

The enactment of this stage unites the immediate spontaneity of the Holy Spirit acting upon worshippers with its significance as ritual commemoration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The latter aspect is well described by the “icon of the Descent of the Holy Spirit”<sup>151</sup> where not only the apostles, but also those with them who are in unanimous unity with the apostles are depicted with the flames of the Holy Spirit descending upon them, to signify that the Holy Spirit has come to the whole church.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> McDonnell, Kilian (OSB): “The Function of Tongues in Pentecostalism” — Theological Paper in the Roman Catholic Pentecostal Dialogue 3. — 7- Oct. 1977 in Rome, in: Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogue* (1977 - 1982), Vol. 2, Frankfurt a. M. 1987: Peter Lang Verlag, pp.20 – 56, pp.25ff.

<sup>149</sup> loc. cit., pp. 28ff.

<sup>150</sup> Oral communication by Rev. Ebenezer Quaye of *The Church of Pentecost*, 2001 in Nuernberg

<sup>151</sup> Ouspensky, Leonid and Lossky, Vladimir, *Der Sinn der Ikonen*, Olten: Urs Graf Verlag, 1952, p. 207

<sup>152</sup> loc. cit., p. 209

Of course Pentecostalism emphasises the eschatological understanding of the sign of glossolalia, as indicated by Joel 2: 28-29, but the difference may be accounted to the different understandings of the church, with Orthodoxy emphasising the church as presence of the kingdom of God, whereas Pentecostalism is far more bound to a millenarian, eschatological interpretation, according to its tradition. In this line of thought, receiving the supreme gifts of the Holy Spirit signifies that the recipient is among the saints destined to rule with Christ in the millennium.

The fact that glossolalia is practised during common worship in Pentecostalism and is a communal experience, in the sense that the congregation participates in it, by assisting those who lapse into trance, when speaking in tongues, or by the interpretation of the utterances, which is sometimes done: all this participation happens in a liturgical context. This is significant, because sometimes Pentecostalism is accused of following an utterly individualistic experience of the Holy Spirit, in particular by conservative Orthodox writers. They claim that the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Orthodoxy is communal, since it is mediated through the sacraments in the church, which is the communal body of Christ. These authors fail to see that Orthodoxy likewise has a highly individualistic tradition of spirituality in Hesychasm, whose exponents have received special gifts of the Holy Spirit in a very individual way, through years of seclusion and solitude. On the other hand they do not take note of the communal Character of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism, during worship, accompanied by common prayer. Such criticism therefore fails to take note of a fruitful polarity – and sometimes tension – between communal and individualistic aspects of the experience of the Holy Spirit in both confessions.

#### ***4.8. On the cosmology of two realms of reality in Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy***

There is a common understanding in Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism that reality has a material, visible and a spiritual, invisible component, following the statement of the Nicene Creed on the created world. This common conviction sets them apart from most other churches. It is essential to the understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, to the charisms, and to the liturgical practise and spiritual experience in both churches.



The Pentecostal position is expressed in an official statement by a representative of a Latin American Pentecostal church at the World Council of Churches. It is made in view of consequences for exorcism and social engagement alike – a holistic approach characteristic for a good deal of Pentecostalism:

*“El mundo espiritual: ‘...no tenemos lucha contra carne y sangre sino contra principados, potestades, contra los gobernadores de las tinieblas...’  
Sobre estos versículos de la carta a los Efesios, y sobre otros como 2 Cor. 10: 7-5, se fundamenta la doctrina pentecostal: la creencia en un “mundo espiritual”. La obra salvífica fue consumada en la “cruz” y en la resurrección de Jesucristo la victoria sobre la muerte y sobre quien tenía el poder de la muerte (Hebreos 2:14-15) pero hasta la consumación del Reino aún siguen vigentes las manifestaciones destructoras del mundo espiritual demoníaco.  
Para el pentecostalismo las fuerzas demoníacas son seres espirituales inteligentes y con una decidida voluntad de destruir al hombre y su bienestar. Por eso es necesario enfrentarlos no con la fuerza humana sino con el poder del Espíritu Santo. Estas manifestaciones del mal se producen tanto en lo individual como en las ‘estructuras sociales injustas’.”<sup>153</sup>*

Here the author focusses on evil spiritual powers in different spheres, also in society, but with an emphasis on the spiritual world. Positive spiritual beings, the angels are also acknowledged by Pentecostalism, however they do not receive much attention, since the idea of mediation of God's power and inspiration is not subscribed to them. As to the sacraments, this also applies to any means of nature through which God might convey His work in the Holy Spirit. This is in distinct contrast to Orthodoxy where spiritual beings and natural objects, angels, icons, oil for chrismation etc. are important. The elements of nature are practically excluded from being instruments of the work of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism.

As to its dealing with negative spiritual powers, many Pentecostals favour a holistic, integrated approach: a negative spiritual affliction is regarded as one „level" of a problem: „possession” is analysed in its relation to observable negative circumstances and factors of a person's life. Accordingly remedy is also administered on all levels: An

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<sup>153</sup> Vaccaro, Gabriel O., *Identidad Pentecostal*, 2003, URL: <http://www.pctii.org/wcc/vaccaro94s.html>

exorcism is applied together with the exhortation to the person to change is life and circumstances. And likewise any healing, physically, morally, socially or spiritually is perceived as a progress of the Kingdom of God:

*„Cada liberación espiritual, cada sanidad y milagro manifiestan los avances del Reino de Dios y su poder sobre el mundo espiritual demoníaco. ‘Mas si por el dedo de Dios echo fuera los demonios, ciertamente el Reino de Dios ha llegado a vosotros.’(Lucas 11:20)”<sup>154</sup>*

It is noteworthy that this author attributes the success of Pentecostalism to its double cosmology in combination with its dual practise: of discerning spiritual and worldly afflictions and addressing them both:

*“Este capítulo muestra el porque del avance arrollador del pentecostalismo. No se limita a comunicar el Evangelio de la gracia, sino que ejerce erce un ministerio de experiencias que auténticamente libera al ser humano.”<sup>155</sup>*

This testifies to a holistic cosmology in which the natural as well as the physical and the spiritual as well as the “supernatural” - understood as a category of experience -, are merely different elements of a unified perception of the world. Therefore the guidance and work of the Holy Spirit does not refer only to the soul and insight of man, but also to his bodily condition and healing. Any gifts of clairvoyance and of discernment of spirits as well as the power to fight evil spiritual (demoniac) influences, through which the Holy Spirit works in particular, serve the same purpose.

Since the spiritual realm is not by itself a realm of the Holy Spirit, but part of the created world, the discernment of Spirits is necessary to those who deal with this realm, and this is a gift provided by the Holy Spirit. According to a Pentecostal pastor, Rev. E. Quaye, this gift is of importance when dealing with people in trance during services, likewise in the ministry to parishioners with manifest problems in life. According to him this charism develops with prayer, but it remains a rare gift. A similar assessment is present in Hesychast literature. St. Serafim, who is reported to have seen demons, but who refused to make much of it, drew on the Philokalia on this subject:

*“... though the devil might transform itself even into an angel of light (II. Cor. 11: 14)... still the heart would feel a certain obscureness and agitation... thus,*

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<sup>154</sup> ibid.

<sup>155</sup> ibid.

*from these diverse workings of the heart a man may know what is Divine and what is diabolic, as St. Gregory the Sinaite writes.*<sup>156</sup>

The struggle against negative spiritual powers in Pentecostalism is founded in the practise of Jesus Christ as an exorcist himself. It is an aspect which has become lost in Traditional Protestantism almost altogether. Pentecostalism has rediscovered this aspect of a spiritual world view as an inheritance of Pietism and of 18th - 19th century Spiritualism. Considering that an awareness of spiritual beings was on the rise at the turn of the 20th century in the secular sphere, it might be interesting to research if this context has influenced the world-view of emergent Pentecostalism.

In the context of African Independent Churches the emphasis on warding of negative spiritual powers has a special cultural impact, since traditional African religion is characterised by incessant fear of an abuse of spiritual power for negative purposes. There is “enslavement in fear” of evil Spirits and bewitchment in African traditional religion. This heritage nourishes the continued awareness of evil spiritual powers and practise of exorcism. The deliverance in Christ of such bondage through the Holy Spirit (Hebr. 2: 15) is an important message and experience. In contrast to much of Traditional Protestantism and mainstream Roman Catholicism Pentecostalism does not attempt to solve negative spiritual afflictions by declaring them to be inexistent or to be psychic delusions, but takes their perception seriously and addresses them directly. Hereby Pentecostalism frequently finds itself at odds with prevailing world views of the West, but finds resonance in other cultures.

#### ***4.9. On “signs and wonders”: the charisms of healing, prophecy and exorcism in Pentecostalism***

Pentecostalism has become noted in the West for reintroducing these charisms, in particular spiritual healing into Western public awareness, from which they had been banned since Enlightenment.

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<sup>156</sup> *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, (ed. and transl. Rose, Serafim), Platina, Ca. 1996: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood p. 46f.

The idea that when the Holy Spirit comes upon a person and regenerates him, the power of the Holy Spirit begins to flow through this person, making him an instrument through which the Holy Spirit operates in the world,<sup>157</sup> is applied to various contexts.

As stated in Matth. 10:7f.: *“And as ye go, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, give freely!”* the power of the Holy Spirit extends into the realm of the “supernatural”. Following their hermeneutics of immediacy to the apostolic age, Pentecostals do not read these lines symbolically (in the first instance), but literally. Accordingly they have developed a strong *“praxis of prayer with the sick; their books and periodicals are full of healing testimonies.”*<sup>158</sup> They have recognised and appreciated gifts of healing and have cultured and nurtured them through prayer.

In the recent decades a veritable role of “healing evangelism” developed, following W.M. Branham, of whom Hollenweger reports: *“he possessed an extraordinary diagnostic gift and could identify the illnesses (sometimes even the names) of people he had never seen.”*<sup>159</sup> The gifts of clairvoyance and of healing are combined here.

Prophecy is also regarded as a charism by Classical Pentecostalism. W. J. Hollenweger gives a moving account of a prophecy given over the later pioneer of Pentecostal worldwide ecumenical engagement, D. J. du Plessis, long before that, at a time when du Plessis still held the Churches of the World Council of Churches as well as the Roman Catholic Church to be hopelessly lost and fallen from grace. Many years later Du Plessis brought Pentecostalism into dialogue with the WCC and with the Roman Catholic Church in spite of severe opposition from his own church, the Assemblies of God:

*“Probably the most important prophecy in the history of the Pentecostal movement is connected with David J. du Plessis (1905 — 1987). It was given in December 1936 by Smith Wigglesworth (1859 — 1947, an extraordinary English Pentecostal who could hardly read or write. While in South Africa Wigglesworth laid his hands on du Plessis’ shoulders, pushed him, against the*

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<sup>157</sup> Sandidge, Jerry L., *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogue* (1977 - 1982), Vol. 1, Frankfurt a. M. 1987, p. 90

<sup>158</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997: Hendrickson Publ. Inc., p. 229

<sup>159</sup> *ibid.*

*wall and began to prophecy: 'You have been in 'Jerusalem' long enough... I will send you to the uttermost parts of the earth... You will bring the message of Pentecost to all churches... You will travel more than most evangelists do... God is going to revive the churches in the last days and through them turn the world upside down.'... then Wigglesworth began to tell him details of visions he had seen that morning and which God had told him to share with du Plessis [...] Wigglesworth went on to specify that this would not happen until after his own death....*<sup>160</sup>

Extraordinary though it may be, this report gives an impression of the foundation, contents and spiritual basis of prophecy in Pentecostalism.

In African Initiated Churches the healing ministry has a very important role in the life of the church, like the role of the prophet too. These charisms do not exist independently of each other. In particular, "prophecy" is not understood to proclaim new doctrines, as was alleged of Montanism, but to proclaim the will of God according to accepted doctrine for particular situations.

Its function is to mediate revelations of the Holy Spirit to people about specific circumstances. In his research A. Anderson describes this link as follows:

*"Joseph Dlamini, a Swazi prophet, told ... that the Holy Spirit 'reveals to me things and diseases that will befall other people. The Spirit also tells me the remedy and how to overcome such things...' Prophecy usually means revealing God's will for a particular situation of pressing need."*<sup>161</sup>

In this passage the essential link that exists between healing, prophecy and divination or clairvoyance, discernment of spirits and, if necessary also exorcism is evident. The ability of perceptions and actions in these dimensions of reality are a gift of the Holy Spirit, nourished by prayer and ascetic practise and they serve its purposes. This is well expressed in a testimony by a Pastor of the *Zion Apostolic Church* of South Africa who was ordained to the ministry because of his perceived charisms of spiritual healing and preaching:

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<sup>160</sup> loc. cit., p. 350

<sup>161</sup> Anderson, Allan, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African context*, Cape Town, 1991: University of South Africa, p.51

*“Since I had been baptised I have been given the courage to pray for people. Baptism gave me this power that a person recovers, when I pray for him... Sometimes, at exorcisms, demons will reply: ‘Leave us alone, we want to stay forever in this person..., He belongs to us.’ Sometimes, when we see that an illness is very grave, we abstain from food so that we receive new power from the Holy Spirit, but usually we do not fast, before we pray.”<sup>162</sup>*

Healing is also mentioned in connection with exorcism. African traditional culture is full of concern about dangers and perils inflicted by evil spirits and bewitchment on people, it is little wonder that exorcism should play such a prominent role in the context of spiritual healing. Since however African world-view regards the processes in the visible world and those in the invisible, spirit world to be constantly interconnected, the assumption that physical illness involves as spiritistic component seems natural.

This traditional world view of spiritism is echoed by psychoanalysis in the point that processes which are beyond the reach of a person’s consciousness are taken into account. Of course most people who adhere to a psychodynamic anthropology would reject the notion of external agents, such as “spirits” as unscientific. C. J. Jung’s notion of a “collective unconscious” extends the concept however towards the “transpersonal”. It may be significant in this context that spiritistic phenomena were known in C. G. Jung’s family background.<sup>163</sup> Likewise the theory of psycho-dynamic anthropology about psychosomatic links, that the inner processes of a person's psyche form a layer of reality, which interacts with the corporeal sphere in bringing about sickness or healing, corresponds to Pentecostalism’s idea that the power of the Holy Spirit can bring about healing of physical ailments.

Since a spiritistic world view is also present in the New Testament, it has to be considered legitimate as a frame of reference for Christian theology. Given that cosmologies are culture-bound, and related to changing scientific epistemologies, the task of transferring the biblical accounts into differing cosmologies, as of Enlightenment, remains an interpretative pastoral task, according to circumstance.

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<sup>162</sup> Becken, Hans Jürgen, *Theologie der Heilung — Das Heilen in den Afrikanischen Unabhängigen Kirchen in Südafrika*, Hermannsburg, 1972, p. 257

<sup>163</sup> Ellenberger, Henri F., *The Discovery of the Unconscious – History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, London, 1970: HarperCollins Publ., p. 661

Giving the idea of exorcism any serious consideration is another piece of common ground between Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy, which distinguish them from the practise, and for most part also from the teachings of contemporary Roman-Catholic and Protestant churches. Both the Pentecostal and the Orthodox relate to the Biblical cosmology in their ritual practise of exorcism.

In Orthodoxy the renunciation of evil at baptism is still perceived as a general act of exorcism.<sup>164</sup> A special exorcism is practised through specific rites, as through the „*prayer service for sick people, who are tormented or possessed by foul spirits.*”<sup>165</sup>

In Pentecostalism exorcism is practised to a varying extent. There is a tendency with Pentecostal scholars to be cautious about attributing possession to believers. The discernment of states of possession is considered to be a gift of intuition. A recent Pentecostal study on the issue states:

*„This dimension has special reference to those immediate diagnoses on the part of Jesus and others where an infirmity is attributed without delay to the demonic. Such discernment is the result of a special or supernatural knowledge which appears to be attributable to the Holy Spirit's activity. This ability to discern, as with the ability to discern sin as an origin of illness, is primarily confided to those who are regarded as Leaders in a given community. Perhaps the Pauline 'gift of discernment' is the means by which the discernment of demoniac afflictions is possible (cf. 1 Cor. 12:10).”*<sup>166</sup>

A desire to integrate such practise with the regular ministry of the church is clearly discernible here. Monastic tradition has it that demoniac onslaught is an accompaniment of spiritual practise.

Pentecostals are likewise aware of the link between temptation and possession as steps of severity, which has spiritual implications. Thus the Pentecostal theologian Gabriel O. Vaccaro explains different aspects of these phenomena, their dangers and the

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<sup>164</sup> Heitz, Sergius, *Mysterium der Anbetung*, vol. III, *Die Mysterienhandlungen der Orthodoxen Kirche und das tägliche Gebet der Orthodoxen Gläubigen*, Köln, 1988: Luthé Verlag, pp. 29ff.

<sup>165</sup> Mal'tsev, Aleksej, *Bitt-, Dank- und Weihe-Gottesdienste der Orthodoxen Katholischen Kirche des Ostens. Ins Deutsche übertragen mit Kirchenslawischen Parallelen nach den Griechischen Originalen*, Berlin 1897: Karl Sigismund Verlag, p. 684 (original: Мальцев, Алексей Петрович, *Чины различных просительных, благодарственных и освячительных молитвословий (нем. и церковно-слав.)*, Berlin, 1897)

<sup>166</sup> Thomas, John Christopher, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance – Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought*, Sheffield 1998: Sheffield Academic Press, p. 315

requirements of handling them properly, as well as their differentiation from psychological phenomena as follows:

*“Los pentecostales, clásicamente han dividido la obra satánica en: Tentación - opresión - posesión. En cuanto a la tentación es conocido su significado por todos los cristianos. Nos dedicaremos brevemente al significado de la opresión, de la posesión demoniaca y su liberación. El exorcismo es la oración formal, casi siempre en forma de mandato para liberar a una persona poseida por fuerzas diabólicas. En San Marcos 1:21-28 se aclara como Jesús expulsó al espíritu inmundo: ‘cállate y sal de él’. Esto es un ministerio dado a la ‘comunidad sanadora’. La oración de la opresión es distinta. Es un proceso a través de plegarias y oraciones para que la persona que sufre el ataque demoníaco sea liberada. Notemos la diferencia entre ser oprimido y ser poseido.”<sup>167</sup>*

In line with Vaccaro distinguishes between “temptation”, “oppression” and “possession”. “Oppression” is defined as a practise of liberating a person from demonic forces by means of prayer. This, he states, requires good theological judgement and training. He then goes on to declare that for many reasonable, progressive Pentecostals exorcism is performed as an “exhibitionist show”.

*“El problema que se nos presenta a muchos predicadores pentecostales de la línea progresista y bíblica es que la mayoría de estos ministerios se hacen en medio de un show exhibicionista. Con mucho acierto, un excelente escritor carismático ha dicho: ‘Quién libera a los exorcistas del Espíritu de exhibicionismo?’”<sup>168</sup>*

Vaccaro then discusses serious psychological aspects and implications of possession and liberation. He describes scary forms of manifestation which can occur in the process. In particular he calls for a differential diagnosis to discern psychopathological conditions from those of spiritual affliction proper:

*“El pentecostalismo progresista insiste en la preparación bíblica, teológica y espiritual de los siervos de Dios. Esto es sumamente importante. Ante la posibilidad de estar frente a un paciente de este tipo debe utilizarse el ‘don de*

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<sup>167</sup> Vaccaro, Gabriel O., *Identidad Pentecostal*, 2003, URL: <http://www.pctii.org/wcc/vaccarro94s.html>

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*



*discernimiento' para saber que pasos seguir. Algunos recomiendan: Primero debe examinarse clínicamente luego psicológicamente y por último entrar al terreno espiritual.*

*Cuando oramos por liberación de la opresión, pero especialmente del poseído, suceden algunas cosas no muy agradables: 'vómitos', que no deben confundirse con descomposturas físicas; 'gritos', que tampoco deben confundirse con un ataque de histeria; caídas que asimismo no deben confundirse por presión mental o sugerencia psicológica. Por eso un verdadero pentecostal debe saber controlar estas escenas para no caer en mero exhibicionismo.”<sup>169</sup>*

This both self-critical and self-conscious description of exorcism in Latin American Pentecostalism is interesting, as it gives insight into culture-bound traditions of this practise and of the issues raised thereby in the horizon of modern human sciences. Vaccaro discusses abuses of exorcism in a media-oriented society in some places, while defending the essence of its importance in a holistic view of its association with other, often purely external aspects of reality. This provides the basis for an integrated approach to treatment of spirit, psyche and body of the individual and of the community alike. The healing, purifying and renewing power of the Holy Spirit is to be received and mediated at all of these levels.

#### ***4.10. On “signs and wonders”: the charisms of healing, prophecy and exorcism in Orthodoxy***

In Orthodoxy these charismatic gifts are likewise held in high esteem, as the lives of saints show, as of starets Amvrosij of Optina Pustyn, whose gift of clairvoyance aided him in his ministry to many who sought his help. Wonderful changes of life, healing of soul and body are associated with his guidance. Likewise St. Xenia of St. Petersburg, at the tum of the 20th century, in spite of her deranged condition of grief, is reported to have worked healings.<sup>170</sup> A rare gift of clairvoyance and powerful fulfilments of prayer are attributed to

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Speranskaya, Helena S., “Spirituality - The Human Awareness of God”, *Archives: MaryMartha*, Volume 2, number 4, May 1993, URL:

St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco,<sup>171</sup> whose charisms have sustained the Orthodox congregation of Shanghai right through the Cultural Revolution to this day.

Spiritual healing and clairvoyance are held in high esteem in Orthodoxy, being associated with spiritual and intellectual effort of guarding the inner person, as in monastic practise.<sup>172</sup> These charisms are indicative of a transformation and acquisition of transcendent faculties through the Holy Spirit. In Orthodoxy these charisms are seen as gifts of the Holy Spirit, which may be the fruit of prolonged and serious life of prayer and an ascetic, spiritual life, often in seclusion and in silence, described in the lives of St. Seraphim of Sarov and of St. Amvrosiy of Optina Pustyn. In particular constant prayer is a means that may bear fruits of the Holy Spirit, as such charisms. However such extraordinary gifts are not considered to be necessary as evidence that the Holy Spirit fulfils a person.

In Orthodoxy charismatic faculties are believed to be not only received through extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, but to be related to the ordinary ritual practise of the church, as the orders of the prayer service for the sick and for those otherwise afflicted show.<sup>173</sup> Both churches, the Orthodox and the Pentecostal, have manifold and well differentiated practises of spiritual healing and prayer as well as liturgical rituals for the sick, and likewise for the dying. An exchange in detail and in depth on the background of the respective experiences in both churches might well be fruitful.

In both confessions too, the assumption, that the healing power of Christ by the Holy Spirit — leaving the “filioque” issue of the source of the procession of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Trinity aside — refers to the whole person, who is recognised in his „natural” and „spiritual” aspects, following the common „double cosmology” of both confessions, is common ground theologically and in the spiritual practise of both churches. Accordingly healing is not only promoted in its „profane” understanding of overcoming illness by

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[http://members.iinet.net.au/~mmjournal/public\\_html/MaryMartha/THE%20ORTHODOX%20CHURCH/Spirituality%20awareness.html](http://members.iinet.net.au/~mmjournal/public_html/MaryMartha/THE%20ORTHODOX%20CHURCH/Spirituality%20awareness.html)

<sup>171</sup> Mileant, Alexander, *Archbishop John the Wonderworker*, La Canada, Ca., 2001: Holy Trinity Orthodox Mission, URL: <http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/johnmx1.htm>

<sup>172</sup> Joantă, Romul (Metropolitan Serafim), *Roumanie: Tradition et culture hésychastes*, (préface d'Olivier Clement), Bégrolles-en-Mauges 1987: Éditions monastiques, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, p. 284

<sup>173</sup> Mal'tsev, Alekseij, Bitt-, Dank- und Weihe-Gottesdienste der Orthodoxen Katholischen Kirche des Ostens, ins Deutsche übertragen mit Kirchenslawischen Parallelen nach den Griechischen Originalen, Berlin 1897, pp. 591ff.

medical means, but is also perceived as a state of spiritual peril, which is addressed by spiritual means.

In their theological assessment Pentecostals have recognised that the miraculous aspect, while important, is not a purpose by itself, but an extension of the healing ministry of the church which is also practised by less spectacular means. However, since the outpouring of the Spirit on a person is understood according to the model of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as a distinct act of the Holy Spirit which produced visible „charismatic" effects, these charisms are burdened with the function of serving as evidences of such baptism in the Holy Spirit, and indirectly, with the responsibility of showing that the Holy Spirit is with the Pentecostal church in particular.

In view of the fact that spiritual healing also happens outside of Christianity, and clairvoyance is not restricted to its limits. The example of Bileam (Numeri 22 – 24) shows, that the authors of the Pentateuch, on particular the Deuteronomists, were aware of such practise among the peoples in their environment – Bileam was a Moabite - and judged that they could be accepted and appreciated if they were used to the purposes of God. The theological implication, that the manifest spiritual charisms also occur outside of Christianity, has perhaps not been fully considered by Pentecostalism.<sup>174</sup>

The Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit effective through the image of God in man, from creation onward, provides a more consistent basis for this task. St. Seraphim, for instance stated, in accordance with Orthodox tradition:

*“... many mysteries in connection with the future salvation of the human race were revealed to Adam as well as to Eve after the fall... The grace of God acting externally was also reflected in all the Old Testament prophets and saints of Israel. The Hebrews afterwards established special prophetic schools where the son of the prophets were taught to discern the signs of the manifestations of God or the angels, and to distinguish the operations of the Holy Spirit from the ordinary natural phenomena of our graceless earthly life .  
.... Countless other servants of God continually had, quite openly, various divine apparitions, voices and revelations which were justified by evident miraculous events.*

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<sup>174</sup> McDonnell, Fr. Kilian, OSB: “The Function of Tongues in Pentecostalism”, in: Sandidge, Jerry L, *Roman Catholic / Pentecostal Dialogue* (1977 - 1982), Vol. 2, Frankfurt a. M. 1987: Peter Lang Verlag, p. 25

*Though not with the same power as the people of God, nevertheless the presence of the Spirit of God also acted in the pagans who did not know the true God, because even among them God found for himself Chosen people... So you See, your Godliness, both in the holy Hebrew people, a people beloved by God, and in the pagans who did not know God, there was preserved a knowledge of God — that is, my dear, a clean and rational comprehension of how our Lord God the Holy Spirit acts in man, and by means of what inner and outer feelings one can be sure that this is really the action of God and not a delusion of the enemy.”<sup>175</sup>*

This Statement by St. Seraphim of Sarov is interesting as it combines several fundamental positions. Firstly, it states clearly that the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit have been received by mankind since the primordial fall of man, before Judaism; that they were given to Adam and Eve, i.e. to mankind in general and have persisted in its fallen state.

The next argument is interesting as it assesses the theological significance of similar phenomena in paganism. St. Seraphim of Sarov accepts that they are fully valid in principle – but that they are “weakened” and “blurred” through lack of a clear perception of God through His revelation, to the Hebrews and their prophets. This implies that he accepts the ecstatic divinatory experiences as a general gift of God in the Holy Spirit to mankind in general. Of course this has deep implications for the assessment of such phenomena in non-Christian contexts. St. Seraphim differentiates these gifts from those occurring in Christianity as a matter of degree – not of the category of true and false or “demonic” per se. His judgement is soundly based on Orthodox anthropology and pneumatology. Pentecostals may likely beg to differ in this respect.

St. Seraphim of Sarov describes the pneumatic endowments as a clear stream of gifts of the Holy Spirit, throughout the history of mankind, through visionary and miraculous revelations. This dismisses the widespread Pentecostal attitude that such gifts are only given to Christians of the highest level of spiritual progress in the baptism of the Spirit.

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<sup>175</sup> *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, (ed. and transl. Rose, Serafim), Platina, Ca. 1996: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood p. 99 (Series: *Little Russian Philokalia*, Vol. 1), p. 91f

St. Seraphim however also refers to the “ability of discernment of Spirit”, as one of the universal gifts of God to mankind through the Holy Spirit. Following the doctrine on the Holy Spirit this gift can unfold itself fully in those who are members of the Body of Christ. It implies that miraculous or “charismatic” phenomena are not as such already gifts of the Holy Spirit, and thus actions of God, but that they have to be evaluated with this innate sense of distinction, which is a universal gift of God to mankind, and which is thus sharpened by relation to God, as through ascetic practise and a life of devotion as in Christian monasticism.

St. Seraphim makes another interesting point. According to the example of Hebrew “schools for prophets’ sons” the “gift of discernment” can be exercised and developed, to be better able to distinguish works of the Holy Spirit from natural phenomena. This expresses the conviction that such gifts can be learned and practised to some extent. Possibly this was a widespread belief in his monastic tradition. Ultimately St. Seraphim places his own life in the tradition of these prophets and their sons. This emphasis on practise follows the idea of synergy in divinisation. It is a conviction which may be shared by Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism. St. Seraphim's Orthodox “inclusive approach”, that the work of the Holy Spirit can perfect in Christ what it has given to man in his natural state before, may appear doubtful to some Pentecostal theologians, who insist that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are conveyed after conversion to Christ.

#### ***4.11. On the issue of “power” of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism, its philosophical and anthropological meaning in African traditional world view - on the roots of a central concept***

The experience of „power“ is central to “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, as described by A. Anderson in his personal testimony, quoted above. This concept of power is enormously important in Pentecostalism. Much of Pentecostal rhetoric is about „power“, as the expression “power evangelism” states. It applies to a style of forceful preaching and liturgical action to convey the “energy” of the Holy Spirit. This style is characteristic of Pentecostalism. A Pentecostal church may be named “Rhema Church” for this notion that “rhema” is the powerful spoken word. The concept of the “power of the Holy Spirit” is a Biblical concept (Acts 1:8). However the “vitalistic” application which it sometimes

receives in Pentecostal practise, and also in the Pentecostal value of a life, “empowered” by the Holy Spirit makes this interpretation a motif for criticism by Traditional Protestant Churches.

Two cultural influences may have contributed to this exegesis of relating the “power of the Holy Spirit” to the “force of life”: philosophies of “Vitalism” – as Henri Bergson’s “*élan vital*” or of Nietzsche’s philosophy of “life” have certainly shaped value attitudes at the turn of the 20th century. These ideas have spread from Europe to America too.<sup>176</sup>

Another strain may be African philosophy which is embedded in cultural values and in the web of world view. Thus Placide Tempels wrote in his widely received “*Philosophie bantue*” about the general philosophy of the Bantu people – living in the region from the southern border of Nigeria and Cameroon to central Kenya and southwards, thus in about half of black Africa:

*“3. Le comportement des bantous. — Il est centré sur une seule valeur: la force vitale.*

*Il est, dans la bouche des noirs, des mots qui reviennent sans cesse. Ce sont ceux qui expriment les suprêmes valeurs. Ils sont comme des variations sur un leitmotiv qui se retrouve dans leur langage, leur pensée et dans tous, leurs faits et gestes. Cette valeur suprême est la force, vivre fort, ou force vitale. De tous les usages étranges, dont nous ne saisissons ni rime ni raison, les bantous diront qu'ils servent à acquérir la vigueur ou la force vitale, pour être fortement, pour renforcer la vie, ou à assurer sa pérennité dans la descendance. . .*

*La force, la vie puissante, l'énergie vitale sont la cause des prières et des invocations à Dieu, aux esprits et aux défunts, . . . Dans chaque langage bantou on découvrira facilement des mots ou locutions désignant une force qui n'est pas exclusivement «corporelle».*

*En invoquant Dieu, les esprits ou les mânes, les païens demanderont par dessus tout: «donne-moi la force.» . . . Ce que nous taxons de magie, n'est' à*

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<sup>176</sup> Goodman, Russell, "Transcendentalism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/transcendentalism/>

*leurs yeux autre chose que la mise en oeuvre des forces naturelles placées à la disposition des hommes, par Dieu, pour le renforcement de l'énergie vitale.»<sup>177</sup>*

[Chapter 3 : *“The mode of action of the Bantu peoples : It is focussed on one single value: the force of life. In the speech of the blacks there are words which recur incessantly. They are those which express the highest values. They are like variations of a Leitmotiv, which is to be found in their language, their thought, and in all of their deeds and gestures. This supreme value is the force, to live strongly, or the force of life. Of all these strange usages of which we do not know the pattern nor the reason, the Bantu say that they serve to acquire vigour or vital energy, in order to live strongly, to reinforce life or to assure one’s post-existence in descent. The force, the powerful life, the vital energy are the cause of prayers and of invocations to God, to the spirits and to the deceased . . . In any Bantu language one easily finds words or sayings which designate a force which is not exclusively “bodily”. Invoking God, the spirits or the ancestors, the pagans ask above all: ‘Give me the power.’ . . . What we call magic is in their view nothing but putting to work natural forces placed by God at the disposition of mankind in order to reinforce the energy of life.” My translation]*

Essential is the spiritual perception of the force of life – its conception as a both vital and spiritual force coming from God. It is considered to sustain the cosmos, nature, the individual and the community.<sup>178</sup>

Now the idea of tracing back the understanding and practise of Pentecostalism’s concept of the “power of the Spirit” to Bantu African world view may be felt to be too far-fetched. However one may be reminded that African styles of music, as to harmonies, rhythm, styles of performance etc. have survived in essence in America, through centuries of slavery, to resurface in the same milieu of Afro-American congregations in which Pentecostalism was born. (This is not to deny its ancestry in the Wesleyan tradition, in the

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<sup>177</sup> Tempels, Placide, *La philosophie bantue*, Elisabethville, 1945, chapt. 3. (published online), URL: <http://www.aequatoria.be/tempels/FTLovania.htm>

<sup>178</sup> Mbiti, John S., *Introduction to African Religion*, 2nd rev. ed. Oxford 1991: Heineman Educational Publishers, p. 40

Holiness movement and in a special brand of southern Evangelism in the late 19th century. Yet the origin of Pentecostalism with its distinctive style of worship and of application of these concepts is certainly connected to the “Asuza Street Revival” even if was echoed in various parts of the United States at the time. The claim to African roots as to world view, spiritual practise and perceptions is definitely valid, even if discussing the nuances of this genealogy exceeds the scope of this study by far.

Afro-American music with its vitality, its sensuousness, its element of improvisation, of poly-rhythms, etc. have entered „white" American culture through Jazz, Gospel, Soul, Blues etc. at about the same time, as the Azusa Street Revival happened, the mythical “birth” of Pentecostalism. From then on this influence has spread through all levels of music from classical music through Rock and Jazz to contemporary pop music. Some elements have gone lost others were transformed by the milieus in which this influence was received. All of this has revolutionised Western music and has transported some values of its origins too.

In view of this phenomenon in music, it is definitely acceptable to assume, that Pentecostalism is a parallel phenomenon in the field of Religion. This interpretation is supported by the observation that Pentecostalism has made its greatest impact in areas where African culture has exerted its influence: in Africa, where it has produced variants even more “African” in character, but especially in both North and South America, where the negro cultural influence, notably in music, is strong and has spread among the white and mixed population too.

In countries outside of the “African” sphere, especially in Korea and the Philippines, Pentecostalism has made inroads where it could align itself with traditions of indigenous spirituality, which have not been integrated and addressed by other Christian churches hitherto. The process of amalgamation has produced results, which have been subject critical debate, as in the World Council of Churches, when confronted with syncretistic Korean ideas, not perceptibly integrated into the system of accepted common Christian doctrine. Given this pervasive and ongoing influence of African spiritual traditions and cultural values, it is well worth to take a closer look at them and to see, in which way they may have influenced Pentecostalism and its reading of the Bible.



The role “power” as a central value in traditional African society and its relation to African Independent Churches has been subject of debate. Referring to an early researcher on African philosophy, A. Anderson writes:

*“Placide Tempel's Bantu Philosophy gives profound insight into the African concept of power, which he calls ‘vital force’ or ‘life force’. ...all African behaviour is centred in this single value: ‘their purpose is to acquire life, strength or vital force, to live strongly’ ... This force or ‘power’ is tangibly perceived.”<sup>179</sup>*

A. Anderson, as a Pentecostal, criticises the interpretation of this concept of vital power given by P. Tempels and states:

*„The western approach to the African world view has categorised ‘life –force’ as an impersonal manipulable force. The African ... objects to such a dualistic categorisation that labels ‘impersonal’ something which is ... at the same time ‘personal’. Perhaps the ‘power’ made available to Christian believers through the Holy Spirit is closer to the African concept of ‘life force’ than we dare admit it.”<sup>180</sup>*

Anderson plays here on the distinction of “personal” as being Christian versus “impersonal” as non-Christian. What is important about this statement is, that this “power” has a spiritual quality. Anderson as a Pentecostal who has worked for many years among African Independent Churches certainly knows the contexts when he talks about to what is meant by the concept of spiritual and vital “power”. To him it is beyond doubt that the Holy Spirit gives such “power”. This certainly reflects a Pentecostal, and not a Protestant understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit and of its gifts. This statement testifies to the view that the Pentecostal perception of the work of the Holy Spirit is strongly influenced by African philosophy, culture and spirituality.

Now possibly some Pentecostals won't subscribe to this, but the accepted Pentecostal position that their experience of the work of the Holy Spirit is simply a restoration of the Apostolic age and its relation to the Holy Spirit, does not explain the “power”- oriented interpretation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism, which

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<sup>179</sup> Anderson, Allan, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African Context*, Cape Town, 1991, p. 58

<sup>180</sup> loc. cit., p. 60

link the power of the Holy Spirit to the power of life or the “live force”. Here the perspective of cultural history becomes essential to theology, in order to properly understand and to assess the hermeneutics, the liturgical practise and the implicit anthropology which guides pastoral practise.

Anderson leaves unexplained how or why the African concept of “power” has religious significance. This is explained by J. Mbiti, an Anglican priest from Kenya and professor of theology, who did major research on African religion and philosophy. Mbiti emphasises the connection of a universal and spiritual “power” deriving from God that sustains life and transcends individual life, with the divine order of the universe in the world view of African traditional religion.

This link between “power” and “order” is not a feature of Pentecostal thought, yet it is self-evident in Christian thought that the fruit of the Holy Spirit are in accordance with the Logos of God and thus with His “wisdom” and his order. Mbiti describes the nexus of “power” and “order” in pre-Christian African cosmology as follows:

*“Order in the universe is seen as operating on several levels ... First there is order in the laws of nature.... Secondly, there is Moral order at work among people. It is believed by African peoples that God gave Moral order to people, so that they might live happily and in harmony with one another. . . . Thirdly, there is religious order in the universe . . . . Because of their basic belief that the universe is created and sustained by God, they interpret their life's experiences from that starting point . . . . Fourthly, there is a mystical order governing the universe.... It is held in all African societies that there is a power in the universe, and that it comes from God. It is a mystical power, in the sense that it is hidden and mysterious. This power is available to Spirits and to certain human beings. People who have access to it are sometimes able to see the departed, to hear certain voices, see certain sights (such as fire and light), have visions, communicate at a distance without using physical means, receive premonitions of coming events, foretell certain things before they happen, communicate with the invisible world, and perform ‘wonders’ and ‘miracles’ which other people may not ordinarily be able to do. . . . It may take a long*

*time for someone to be trained in the knowledge and use of mystical power.*"<sup>181</sup>

On the background of Hesychast experiential literature some of this sounds familiar.<sup>182</sup> The cosmology, with its assumption of a visible, material world and an invisible, spiritual world, as stated in the first article of the Nicene Creed, is also the frame of reference here. The notion of a "power in the universe that comes from God" likewise relates to the Orthodox Christian idea that the Holy Trinity is ever present in the "uncreated energies" going continually forth from God into the created world. It likewise refers to the Orthodox notion that being intensely connected to these uncreated energies, as through prayer, may lead a person to acquire or receive such "spiritual gifts" as described here. Even the concept of the Holy Spirit as "giver of life" is echoed in this text. Furthermore the relation of the work of the Holy Spirit to God the Father and Creator, the issue of the procession of the Holy Spirit, is concerned by this concept of a vital power which is both spiritual and which sustains and fulfils life.

Pentecostalism does not generally think in these terms. However its concept of the work of the Holy Spirit appears to have been moulded through this African tradition, which influenced the reading of the Bible and the perceptions made by the early Pentecostals. The difference of Christianity, also in its Pentecostal and African Independent Churches' form from traditional, pagan African religion, with regard to the concept of "spiritual power" lies amongst others in the following aspect, which Mbiti describes:

*"It is the knowledge of this in mystical power which is used to help other people (especially in healing, rain-making, finding the cause of misfortunes . . . and so on), or to harm them. When it is used harmfully, it is regarded as evil magic, witchcraft or sorcery, and it may also be used in curses."*<sup>183</sup>

The ambivalence in the traditional African perception and usage of spiritual power, either to help or to harm, has been a major source of missionary success of Christianity, which

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<sup>181</sup> Mbiti, John S., *Introduction to African Religion*, 2nd rev. ed. Oxford, 1991: Heineman Educational Publishers, p. 41f.

<sup>182</sup> *The Way of a Pilgrim and The Pilgrim continues His Way*, (transl. from Russian by G. P. Fedotov), Blanco, Christ of the Hills Monastery Texas, 1993: New Sarov Press, p. 60

<sup>183</sup> Mbiti, John S., *Introduction to African Religion*, 2nd rev. ed. Oxford, 1991: Heineman Educational Publishers, p. 42

rejected the negative use of spiritual power, following the example and teaching of Christ.<sup>184</sup> The love of Christ creates a completely different spiritual reality, in spite of common ground and continuity of forms and perceptions. This distinguishes Pentecostalism and the African Independent Churches fundamentally from pagan African religion in spite of many traditions deriving from there.<sup>185</sup>

The negative use of spiritual power is not completely unknown in Christianity either. In his introduction to the benedictional rites and prayers for various occasions Archpriest Alexej Maltzew describes the solemn curses of Jewish and Christian tradition and the formal, liturgical anathemas which derive from them.<sup>186</sup>

#### ***4. 12. On a theological evaluation of the African heritage of “spiritual power” and the “force of life”***

What Pentecostalism has received in spiritual awareness from the African tradition is however firmly integrated into the perspective of salvation through its relation to the work of the Holy Spirit and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A guideline for the study of African traditional religion is given in a document of the Roman Catholic “Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue”:

*“The theological point about this reference to an extra-biblical cultural background, as of African tradition, is whether such cultural influence provides a suitable key to aspects of the biblical message not unfolded or developed so far.*

*As a general orientation in the research into ATR to be conducted in each country or cultural area by a commission of experts set up by the Episcopal Conference, we may make the following suggestions: The traditional religion could be studied as to its name, its major objects of belief, especially God the Creator, the place of the spirits and the ancestors, the fundamental rites in this*

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<sup>184</sup> Setiloane, Gabriel M., *The Image of God among the Sotho-Tswana*, Rotterdam, 1976: A. A. Balkema, pp. 123ff.

<sup>185</sup> Anderson, Allan, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African Context*, Cape Town, 1991, p. 65

<sup>186</sup> 186 Mal'tsev, Aleksej, *Bitt-, Dank- und Weihe-Gottesdienste der Orthodoxen Katholischen Kirche des Ostens*. (Ins Deutsche übertragen mit Kirchenslawischen Parallelen nach den Griechischen Originalen), Berlin 1897, p. XXX

*religion, sacrifice, priesthood, prayer, marriage, the human soul, life after death, religion and moral life.*

*Values such as sense of the sacred, respect for life, sense of community, family spirit, a spiritual vision of life authority as sacred, and symbolism in religious worship, could profitably be studied.”<sup>187</sup>*

This can be applied to the assessment of the African background of Pentecostal and African Independent Churches too. Following this approach one may ask: Can the African traditional value of a “powerful life” be adequately related to the Biblical concept of the power of the Holy Spirit? This addresses the relationship between the “spirit of life”, which God gave to man, and the Holy Spirit.

Considering the Orthodox emphasis on the harmonious sequence of the actions of the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity, the work of the Holy Spirit is to perfect and transform man as he has been created by the Father, imbued with life, and was reborn in Christ. The Holy Spirit is rightly called „the giver of life" in the Nicene creed, as the Trinity is called “life-giving”.

In conclusion one may state that the Pentecostal understanding of the gift of “power of life” as a power that is both vital and spiritual conforms to this. The Pentecostal interpretation of the gift of the Holy Spirit as such “power” which enhances vital life too, as a fruit of African traditional heritage, is therefore legitimate and in accordance with Orthodox Trinitarian theology. The influence of this spiritual and cultural heritage on the Pentecostal hermeneutics of the apostolic age is therefore fruitful and acceptable.

Pentecostals have acknowledged this „African" element of their faith as a sign, that in Christ all mankind is encompassed.<sup>188</sup> However the problematic aspects of this African “vitalism”, the uncritical praise of success and worldly power, which characterise some strains of Pentecostals, are part of this heritage too. Although Orthodoxy too does not shun away from glory and splendour, it seems that a deepened study of Orthodox kenoticism in the example of its saints and in its Christology could suitably counterbalance the somewhat uncritical Pentecostal orientation towards “power” as gift of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>187</sup> Arinze, Francis Cardinal: *Letter from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Vatican City, to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, Rome, 25th March, 1988*. URL: <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/vatican.html>

<sup>188</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997, p. 33

#### **4.13. On trance and the contribution of African spiritual traditions**

In Pentecostal theology speaking in tongues signifies that the Christians of present times can receive the same grace and experience the same presence of the Holy Spirit as those of the apostolic age. There is no diminishing of grace through the ages. Accordingly the charisms of the apostolic age are of high importance. Among them are gifts of prophecy or clairvoyance, healing and exorcism or discernment of spirits.

The state of consciousness accompanying glossolalia is frequently trance, of a lighter or deeper form. Such trance is recognised and also induced in Pentecostal services and those who lapse into trance are guided through it, to help them with their inner experiences, which may express themselves indirectly in the motions or utterances of the person in trance. The inner experiences that may happen in this state have been described above. Trance is not an end in itself but an important means of coming into contact with the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal liturgical practise.

Practises of trance have been found world-wide, as e.g. in Korea or in Latin America. It has been recognised to be a common human mode of spiritual experience, which may have become buried in most European cultures. As such it has become the object of research, as by Felicitas Goodman, who devoted much of her anthropological work to this issue.<sup>189</sup> In her view Pentecostalism has reintroduced a forgotten dimension of spiritual experience in many countries of predominantly Western Christianity, like e.g. Mexico. It is a matter of religious science to describe the patterns of induction and exercise of trance, as well as its significance in the respective cultural and religious contexts. This has been done by researchers such as M. Eliade.

The question for Christian theology is what significance states of trance may have in Christianity. In an historical perspective one may ask, what the preconditions were for states of trance to occur in early Christianity, as in Corinth. The eschatological traditions of Jewish prophecy have apparently interacted with other factors to induce this phenomenon, which persisted and recurred, as in Montanism. However the systematic

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<sup>189</sup> see: Goodman, Felicitas, *Ecstasy, Ritual and Alternate Reality: Religion in a Pluralistic World*, Bloomington, 1988: Indiana University Press, and: Goodman, Felicitas, *Speaking in Tongues: A Cross-Cultural Study of Glossolalia*, Chicago, 1971: Chicago University Press

question is, what the implications of trance phenomena in Christianity are for theological anthropology, e.g. to consider, whether experiences in this state may possibly express the reception of the Holy Spirit as inspiration and energy, which renews and changes a person more clearly, than in ordinary states of wakefulness.

On the basis of the awareness that such trance is a universal and natural phenomenon of mankind, one may then evaluate the Pentecostal claim that the “gift of the tongues” is the decisive “initial sign” of “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, which is a prerequisite for certitude of salvation in Christ.

Of course Pentecostals agree that person can attain salvation and full reception of the Holy Spirit can be attained even without receiving the gift of glossolalia, yet it is still considered to be the decisive sign. If Pentecostalism is defending this idea so strongly in spite of the theological difficulties associated with it, it may be judged to be a sure sign that something important is involved here which goes beyond the mere issue of the mode of verbal expression. The symbolism of Pentecost implies that the Holy Spirit enables a person to participate in a “higher” reality in which the ordinary constraints as of language are uplifted. This in itself is an “ecstatic” element of reality perception.

The practice of glossolalia is not the only element of induction of a trance-like state or of outright ecstasy in Pentecost worship, as I have been able to observe in various services in a congregation of the Pentecostal Church of Ghana.

Besides the general speaking in tongues, to which the congregation is led, individual experiences of the Holy Spirit also follow, in which persons experience a seizure by the Holy Spirit, in a state of more or less deep trance. This state may manifest itself in a sometimes dramatic inner conflict, as the Holy Spirit takes effect against other spiritual powers that may afflict and occupy the person. In all cases the minister and the attendants guide the person in this state through prayer and the laying on of hands for blessing.

A similar dramatic ritual of blessing is also practised in white Pentecostal healing services. Altered states of consciousness are familiar to Orthodox tradition too: Among these are the visions, experienced at various times, of light, as at the transfiguration of Christ, or of apparitions of the Mother of God or of saints. Likewise states of ecstasy are known.

#### **4.14. On misconceptions about trance and ecstatic spiritual experiences**

With regard to the Pentecostal experience of trance and glossolalia, G. Nicozisin writes, in a description of the Greek Orthodox position:

*“Many Christian writers, certainly the mystics, wrote about states of ecstasy during praise and worship, of seeing visions of God's heavenly kingdom, of what they perceived eternal life which Christ to be, of how the Holy Spirit spoke to them and through them, to others. But theirs was always understood, intelligible, comprehensible communication. Perhaps they could not describe in earthly and material frames of reference what they saw and experienced, but they were conscious and fully aware of what was happening. They were not in some state of senselessness.”*<sup>190</sup>

There is unfortunately a misconception in this judgement: Trance, also as experienced in Pentecostalism, is not a “state of senselessness”. Rather it is a distinct state of altered consciousness, which is identifiable, and can recur in different persons in different circumstances. Trance may be more or less deep. But usually an element of wakefulness remains in which the person who experiences the trance observes what is going on, even if the “locus of control” has shifted to a spiritual (“external”) agency. .

Trance has been the subject of neurological and anthropological research. During trance distinct changes in brain activity occur, which are comparable to, but those that occur during meditation.<sup>191</sup> Trance is characterised by a diminishing of the own personal subject and of the awareness of a strong other reality. However it is experienced consciously, even if detachment or an „absence“ from the outer reality is involved, as in meditation or during visions. The outer world may either be present only at the periphery or be obliterated. The focus is on the experience of what is encountered in trance.

To juxtapose the Orthodox states of spiritual rapture over against the Pentecostal states by a criterion of “senselessness”, as G. Nicozisin does, is artificial and somewhat uninformed. The outward drama of manifestations does not imply full oblivion of

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<sup>190</sup> Nicozisin, George, *Speaking in Tongues: An Orthodox Perspective*, 2003: The Orthodox Research Institute, URL: [http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/misc/nicozisin\\_tongues.htm](http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/misc/nicozisin_tongues.htm)

<sup>191</sup> Goodman, Felicitas, *Die andere Wirklichkeit — Über das Religiöse in den Kulturen der Welt*. 1994, pp.48ff. (original: *Ritual and Alternate Reality: Religion in a Pluralistic World*, 1992: Univ. of Indiana Pr.)



consciousness. It is obvious that he has no concept of “trance” and fails to identify the states he refers to as other forms of trance.

This misconception arises, because trance is not defined by its contents, but by its form of experience, which may include the induction of trance, certain patterns of experience, which differ between religions and faiths and cultures. As such trance is a distinct mode of consciousness, which is rather universal to mankind, even if it is not practised in some places and times. As such it has been the subject of extended research since the sixties of the 20th century. In the course of this research it has also been clearly distinguished from all states of mental disease.<sup>192</sup>

Trance therefore has to be viewed as a “vehicle” to accessing grace, or more properly stated: altered states of consciousness can enable a person to experience the work of the Holy Spirit more fully and directly, beyond what is possible in a “sober” state. The apostles at Pentecost were thought to be inebriated by the people who saw them in their apparently trance-like state. In trance people have gained access to realities of faith which are normally inaccessible to perception, as by visions and other forms of so-called supernatural phenomena.

As such trance seems to be an important phenomenon, which has been rediscovered by Pentecostalism in the West and has been restored to Christianity in Third World countries, in which practises of trance were culturally familiar, although bound to pre-Christian religion.

Since Orthodoxy has a rich tradition of practise and experience of trance and trance-like states in the lives of its saints, even if of a different type and character, there is a basis for mutual understanding about certain spiritual phenomena that is scarce or lacking or in other Christian confessions. The manifestly different styles of prayer and of experience of the Holy Spirit need not obscure the view to this fertile common ground.

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<sup>192</sup> Goodman, Felicitas, *Ekstase, Besessenheit, Dämonen – die geheimnisvolle Seite der Religion*, Gütersloh, 1991: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, p. 30 (original: Goodman, Felicitas *How About Demons: Possession and Exorcism in the Modern World*, Bloomington, 1988: Indiana University Press)

#### **4.15. On the ecstatic practise of Pentecostalism and the sacramental and mystical orientation of Orthodoxy: differences and convergence**

In the context of a view to the work of the Holy Spirit this significance of the hypostatic union in Christ is relevant, as the Holy Spirit continues and fulfils the work of Christ in a distinct manner<sup>193</sup> - in theory in Orthodoxy and in practise, at least, in Pentecostalism.<sup>194</sup> In the consequence that the work of the Holy Spirit is distinct from that of Christ – although they are complimentary and mutually enjoined in the Holy Trinity - and that the Holy Spirit continues to work in a distinct way – here is the common ground of Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism. This is the reason for the observation that Pentecostal practise is close to the Orthodox position of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone. Pentecostalism ascribes a distinct work to the Holy Spirit, which is manifest in baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The whole range of charisms and of “supernatural” gifts which are accepted and cherished in both churches is derived from this common emphasis on the Holy Spirit's specific work. However in the delimitation of what the aim of the work of the Holy Spirit is the different conceptions of the Trinitarian dogma lead to different perceptions about salvation. In Pentecostalism, it appears, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit as witnessed for the Apostles at Pentecost, are “reclaimed” while the theological framework remains that of the doctrine of justification by faith and of the “filioque”, which defines the Holy Spirit solely as function of Christ's salvific work in time.<sup>195</sup> It seems that this inherent tension has not yet been borne out by Pentecostal theology. As a result the idea of “participation in God”, the element of mystical experience – in the precise meaning of participation in the Uncreated Energies of God – is not characteristic of Pentecostalism.

The concept of „mysticism“ has to be safeguarded against misconceptions. It is a distinct category of spiritual experience founded in Christian dogma. Evidently Orthodoxy is strong on the dimension of mystical experience and has raised it theologically to an

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<sup>193</sup> Felmy, Karl Christian, *Die Orthodoxe Theologie der Gegenwart - eine Einführung*, Darmstadt, 1990: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, p. 110

<sup>194</sup> Hollenweger, Walter, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Mass. 1997: Hendrickson Publ. Inc., p. 218f.

<sup>195</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, “Redemption and Deification”, in: Lossky, Vladimir, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, Crestwood, 1974: St. Vladimir's Press, p. 12 (original: *A l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu*, Paris, 1967: Aubier Montaigne)

essential part of its doctrine in the dogma of the “uncreated energies”. Thus Lossky pointedly declared:

*„Die ostkirchliche Tradition hat niemals scharf zwischen Mystik und Theologie, zwischen persönlicher Erfahrung der göttlichen Mysterien und dem von der Kirche verkündeten Dogma unterschieden.... Theologie und Mystik schliessen einander nicht aus: im Gegenteil sie stützen und ergänzen einander.“<sup>196</sup>*  
[“The tradition of the Eastern Church has never distinguished sharply between the personal experience of the divine mysteries and the doctrine taught by the Church. . . . Theology and mysticism are not mutually exclusive: on the contrary, they are mutually complementary.”]

Lossky's definition is not without ambiguity, as to whether the term “divine mysteries” is to be understood in the sense of sacraments or of pneumatic and mystical experience of the “Uncreated Energies of God” according to the doctrine of the Orthodox Church. The thesis, that theology and mystical experience are not distinguished sharply in Orthodoxy and that they support each other, underlines the significance of mystical experience in Orthodoxy. It also indicates that the sacraments and mystical experience are complementary modes of God's trinitarian action of mediating salvation to man. Lossky declares that mystical experience, while guided by theology, is also a source of theology and the church's doctrine would not hold any power on the souls, if it were not based on experience.<sup>197</sup> He thus describes a dynamic relation between mystical experience and the doctrine of the church.

Pentecostal doctrine, while lacking the element of “mysticism” or “mystical experience”, has rediscovered the dimension of ecstaticism in Christianity. Functionally it is the equivalent to what mystical experience is to Orthodoxy. Ecstatic experience can be regarded as a practical evidence of God.<sup>198</sup> The concepts of “mystical experience” and of “experience of the Holy Spirit” have defining function for the self-concept and identities of Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism respectively. This however does not imply that they are mutually exclusive – in spite of all the differences in style associated with them. In Biblical

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<sup>196</sup> Lossky, Vladimir, *Die Mystische Theologie der Morgenländischen Kirche*, Graz 1961, p. 12 (original: *Essai sur la théologie Mystique de l'Église d'Orient*, Paris, 1944: éd. du Cerf)

<sup>197</sup> loc. cit., p. 13

<sup>198</sup> Wissmann, Hans, Art.: “Ekstase” in: *Theologische Realencyklopädie (TRE)* (ed. by Müller, Gerhard et al.), Vol. 9, Berlin 1982: Walter de Gruyter, p. 480

testimony there are numerous examples which can be defined either as “mystical” or as “pneumatic”.

“Ecstasy” may be defined as a state wherein a person is raised above the constraints of his internal and external nature through the working of the Holy Spirit. Its characteristic is the passage to another “plane of reality” and the experience of being fulfilled or even possessed by a higher reality which changes the ordinary and limited self-perception.<sup>199</sup> This also characterises pneumatic experience. The Bible is full of experiences of ecstasy in the visions and prophetic callings, e.g. 1.Sam./1.Kings 10:9-13, Ez. 3:1 – 14, as well as about the reception of the Holy Spirit. Polemics opposing Pentecostal pneumatic experience versus Orthodox mystical experience may find insufficient support in the testimony in the Holy Scripture. The issue at hand here may be more one of differences of preferred styles of experience of the divine presence, when it comes to evaluating the phenomena. The considerable differences in the respective Trinitarian theologies are not negated hereby. Rather, it may be shown that the respective experiences of the divine are not fully symmetrical to each other in the respective concepts of the order of salvation. This however is a different perspective which may be explored separately.

Considering that the ecstatic experience of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism involve a participatory experience of divinity, it definitely has qualities of mystical experience. One should not be too bound by the common association of meditative quietness with mystical experience and of dynamic exuberance with ecstasy. In the history of Christian spirituality the state of meditative enlightenment has been experienced to have an ecstatic quality and vice versa. In spite of the phenomenological difference of styles and general practise between Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism there is a common quality of immediate experience of Divinity, in particular of the Holy Spirit, which is evident, in particular to an observer from the perspective of Traditional Protestant Church, which does not foster either experience or approach.

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<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*

## 5. Conclusion

Entering into a comparison between Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy looks like an unlikely undertaking. The differences are enormous: In Orthodoxy there is an established church with a long sense of history and of continuity that reaches back into antiquity, with a sense of communion with the early ages of the Church, kept alive in liturgy and the living memory of the church, with a sense of hierarchy and a sophisticated sense of style that testifies to its origins in the imperial culture of Byzantium. It is a sense of comprehensiveness, uniting a whole people in its fold, befitting a church which has been the universal church of its empire and its successive nations, knowing understanding of the fallacies and temptations of man, remembered in every liturgy, balanced by the prayer for the mercy of God and confronted with the example of its saints, outstanding in spiritual discipline, reposed in its awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in its sacraments and prayer radiant in its environment, with a sense that the Kingdom of God is already amongst us.

In Pentecostalism there is a movement of newcomers, the fruit of the third, or even fourth generation of successive revival movements which have shaken their churches and brought forth new churches, a movement in a state of revolutionary disregard for tradition, imbued with a sense of passion for its eschatological goal, reassured by its sense of immediacy to a rediscovered state of the Apostolic age, strengthened by the enormous success of its movement of barely 100 years ago, testifying to its claim that “if this movement be of the Spirit...” (cf. Acts 5:38), yet ravaged by inner divisions, preoccupied with itself in the development of its keenly felt sense of identity, proud of its achievements, and glowing in its sense of newness, yet unsure of itself in dialogue with elder churches, impatient with historical compromise, wary of its own transformation as it matures by developing a doctrinal system of its own, which goes beyond the mere legitimation through scriptural evidence, a movement gradually coming into its own and tentatively asserting itself in the society of elder churches as the youngest confession of all – in short a movement still in the formative stage of its development with all the shortcomings and the vigour of its age.

The two churches are an unlikely pair for comparison, with little reason for amicable dialogue at local levels, where they are fierce competitors, yet close at heart to

each other on vital issues of the Holy Spirit and His work and presence, which sets them apart from other churches on the international level. Seeing however that the experiential approach common to both is essential in the crisis of secularisation, which is critically threatening Christianity in its established home lands, as it provides the experiential validity that is primarily convincing in an age of doubt, there is a challenge in response to the task of common witness of the Christian faith in our age, to enter into a critical comparison of doctrine and practise.

This essay tentatively explores some themes and shows perspectives for an understanding of the background of experience and culture that shaped the respective doctrines of the Holy Spirit and their associated liturgical practise. Other important elements are beyond the scope of this article, such as a closer look at the relation of Pneumatology and Christology on the background of different theological traditions.

Mindful however, that any talk of “spiritual experience” cannot relate to man without taking in mind the aspects of the dimension of culture - in which man is “incarnated” by necessity - the emphasis on the respective cosmologies and on the cultural formations of the pneumatic practises of both churches are in the focus center of this essay.

Seeing that Orthodoxy is still inspired by its ongoing Hesychast revival, whereas Pentecostalism gradually discovers the tradition of the church in its process of maturation, a certain inverse symmetry exists which might render the incipient dialogue between these confessions a fruitful endeavour. This may be implied in a hymn of the Orthodox Church on the feast of Pentecost:

*“Once when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; and when He divided the Tongues of Fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-Holy Spirit.”<sup>200</sup>*

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<sup>200</sup> *Kontakion of Pentecost. In: Pentecostarion of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery*, URL: <http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org>

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