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A PARADIGMATIC ANALYSIS OF AUTHORITY  
WITHIN PENTECOSTALISM

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présentée  
à la Faculté des études supérieures  
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## Résumé

En ressuscitant l'expérience charismatique des premières communautés chrétiennes, le Pentecôtisme a connu une croissance phénoménale depuis une génération, en dépit de la suspicion dont il a été l'objet. Forme populaire de christianisme, le Pentecôtisme défie les modes traditionnels de régulation de la foi chrétienne en proposant un nouvel équilibre entre l'autorité de l'Écriture (Verbe écrit), l'autorité du partage communautaire de la Parole de Dieu (Verbe parlé) et l'autorité du discours officiel (Verbe institutionnel).

Le but de cette étude est d'analyser le fonctionnement de l'autorité dans le mouvement pentecôtiste contemporain, en particulier dans les Assemblées de la Pentecôte du Canada (ADPC). Le regard est à la fois théologique, historique et sociologique. Le corpus étudié sera essentiellement constitué d'écrits pentecôtistes caractéristiques de chacune des périodes considérées et des résultats d'une enquête que nous avons menée auprès de 200 pasteurs pentecôtistes du Canada.

Notre hypothèse sera que la régulation de la foi a été conçue successivement selon trois différents paradigmes (modèle intuitif mu par un souci d'orthopathie, modèle opportuniste guidé par des préoccupations d'orthodoxie, et modèle technocratique fondé sur une volonté d'orthopraxie) et que le pragmatisme a joué un rôle déterminant dans cette évolution.

Notre étude se déroulera en deux parties. La première partie s'intéressera aux fondements théoriques de la régulation de la foi. Nous chercherons d'abord à identifier la compréhension que le Pentecôtisme a progressivement développée de son rapport à la Bible (Parole écrite), au partage communautaire de l'Évangile (Parole proclamée) et au discours officiel (Parole institutionnelle). La seconde partie proposera un regard sur la pratique. Il s'agira de vérifier comment l'autorité de cette triple Parole s'est exercée pratiquement dans trois questions typiques respectivement du vécu doctrinal (baptême dans l'Esprit), éthique (divorce et remariage) et juridique (ordination des femmes) du mouvement pentecôtiste contemporain.

Notre conclusion est que le Pentecôtisme s'en remet d'abord à la primauté de l'Écriture, cependant considérée comme Parole toujours vivante. Il croit à la permanente nécessité de la proclamation, dans l'Esprit, de cette Parole. Quant au discours officiel, toujours suspecté, il ne réussit à s'imposer que par la voie du pragmatisme.

## Résumé

In resuscitating the charismatic experience of the primitive Christian community the Pentecostal church has experienced a remarkable growth over the last one hundred years, despite being the object of much suspicion. As a popular expression of Christianity, Pentecostalism defies the traditional modes of regulating the Christian faith by proposing a new equilibrium between the authority of Scripture (Written Word), the authority of the Christian community (Spoken Word) and the authority of the official discourse (Institutional Word).

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse, the operation of authority within the contemporary Pentecostal movement, in particular the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). The study is in part theological, historical and sociological. The corpus studied will essentially be comprised of Pentecostal writings characteristic of each of the time periods considered and the results of a survey distributed to 200 Pentecostal pastors across Canada.

Our hypothesis will be that the regulation of faith has evolved successively through three different paradigms (an apocalyptic/intuitive model nourished by orthopathy, an accommodational model guided by a preoccupation with orthodoxy, and a techno-efficacious model expressed through a voluntary orthopraxy) and that pragmatism has played a determining role which becomes more explicit with the evolving of each paradigm.

Our study consists of two parts. The first part is interested in the theoretical foundation for the regulation of the faith. First and foremost we will seek to identify the understanding and weight Pentecostals accord the Bible (Written Word), the testimony of local church community (Spoken Word) and the official discourse (Institutional Word). The second part will examine the same question from a factual standpoint. It consists of verifying how authority within the contemporary Pentecostal movement synthesizes this triple "Word" within a doctrinal (Baptism in the Holy Spirit) ethical (divorce and remarriage) and juridical (ordination of women) issue.

We conclude that Pentecostalism is committed to the primacy of a dynamic Scripture. Directed by the Spirit, Pentecostals believe that the Word must be proclaimed. As for any official discourse, always suspect, it is unable to impose itself except through the voice of pragmatism.



## Résumé

Le but de cette étude est d'analyser comment s'opère la régulation de la foi dans le mouvement pentecôtiste contemporain, en particulier dans les Assemblées de la Pentecôte du Canada (APDC). Le regard est à la fois théologique, historique et sociologique. Notre hypothèse sera que la régulation de la foi a été conçue successivement selon trois différents paradigmes (modèle intuitif mu par un souci d'orthopathie, modèle opportuniste guidé par des préoccupations d'orthodoxie, et modèle technocratique fondé sur une volonté d'orthopraxie) et que le pragmatisme a joué un rôle déterminant et toujours plus explicite dans cette évolution. Notre conclusion est que le Pentecôtisme s'en remet d'abord à la primauté de l'Écriture (Verbe écrit), cependant considérée comme Parole toujours vivante. Il croit à la permanente nécessité de la proclamation, dans l'Esprit, de cette Parole (Verbe proclamé). Quant au discours officiel (Verbe institutionnel), il ne réussit à s'imposer que par la voie du pragmatisme.

## Preface

To  
Dr. John Hammond  
whose influence will never be fully appreciated

This work has grown out of my heritage as a third-generation Pentecostal and my unquenchable curiosity for always asking why? It endeavors to move beyond the shadows and ask on what authority do we believe what we believe and do what we do?

Many people contributed to the completion of this study. In particular I thank both my thesis director Dr. René-Michel Roberge and Dr. Jean Richard for both their encouragement, and their challenging me to think critically about my own faith and spiritual roots.

In addition, I thank Doreen Holm for the many hours she spent in proofreading this text.

Above all, I am indebted to both my wife, Olive, my joy and my daughter, Laura, for their constant, patient, and loving support throughout this whole project.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, identifies Pentecostals and charismatics “with exuberant worship; an emphasis on subjective religious experience and spiritual gifts; claims of supernatural miracles, signs and wonders—including a language of experiential spirituality, rather than of theology; and a mystical ‘life in the Spirit’ by which they daily live out the will of God.”<sup>1</sup>

With its roots in nineteenth-century holiness revivalism, Pentecostalism emerged as a distinct force between the years 1906-1908. During these crucial years, revivalist meetings were held in a converted stable and storage house on 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California.<sup>2</sup> Acting as a catalyst for subsequent global developments, Azusa

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley M. BURGESS, Gary MCGEE, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Some historians cite Topeka, Kansas as the true birthplace of Twentieth Century Pentecostalism. It was here at Bethel Bible School on December 31, 1901, that Charles Parham, a Holiness evangelist, laid hands on Agnes Ozman and she began to speak in other Tongues. For several years Parham continued to proclaim this “third blessing” of Spirit Baptism (after the second blessing of Wesleyan sanctification) to a continuous stream of students—one of whom would be a black preacher named William J. Seymour. In 1906, William Seymour assumed leadership of a spartan building on Azusa Street. For the next three years, from this unpretentious setting, the Pentecostal message would fan throughout the world. For a bibliography detailing the Azusa Street Revival see, BURGESS, MCGEE eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, *op. cit.*, s.v. “The Azusa Street Revival.” by



Street served notice that what occurred on the day of Pentecost, complete with the speaking in tongues, as recorded in Acts chapter 2, was not an isolated or ephemeral incident, but constitutes a normative pattern that is available to all believers.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. The Pentecostal Fact

In recent times, several studies have struggled to identify the roots of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>2</sup> Unlike either fundamentalism or liberalism, Pentecostalism appeared as an attempt to trailblaze an alternative *weltanschauung* outside the rationalistic frontiers of the prevailing Christian traditions. At stake was the role experience should enjoy in the theological enterprise.

While worldviews, by definition, defy description, a Pentecostal worldview would be sure to include an eschatological primitivism and an experiential intuition.

### 1.1. Eschatological Primitivism

Early Pentecostals adopted a linear vision of history. Between the genesis of the

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C. M. ROBECK, pp. 31-36.

In Canada, the birth of the Hebden Mission coincided with that of Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Without knowing any Pentecostals, Mrs. Ellen Hebden was baptized in the Spirit in November 1906. She and her husband subsequently promulgated the Pentecostal message until 1914 when their refusal to affiliate themselves with any proposed Pentecostal denomination led to their dissolution. Thomas William MILLER, "The Canadian Azusa: The Hebden Mission in Toronto," *Pneuma* 8:1 (1986), pp.5-29.

<sup>1</sup> William MENZIES, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, Mo., Gospel Pub. House, 1971), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Mapes ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); N. BLOCH-HOELL, *The Pentecostal Movement: Its Origin, Development & Distinctive Character* (London, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964); Donald DAYTON, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1987); Howard ERVIN, *These are not Drunken as ye Suppose* (Plainfield N.J., Logos International, 1968); D.W. FAUPEL, "The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought" (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Birmingham-England, 1989); James GOFF JR., *Fields White Unto Harvest, Charles F. Parham & The Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988); Michael HARPER, *As at the Beginning: the 20th Century Pentecostal Revival* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1965); Walter HOLLENWEGER, *The Pentecostals*, translated by R.A. Wilson (Peabody: Hendrickson Pub., 1972); Steven LAND, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Douglas NELSON, "For Such a Time as This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1981). Vinson, SYNAN, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1975).

early church, defined as “the early rain,” and the recrudescence of this “latter rain,” it was generally assumed nothing really happened.<sup>1</sup> It was not that Pentecostals were against history, so much as they honestly believed that in light of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they were not bound by the contingencies of historical existence. Free from the relativistic forces of culture and history, Pentecostals posited themselves as a recreation of primitive Christianity.<sup>2</sup> So B.F. Lawrence, an elder in the Assemblies of God (AG), could declare:

The Pentecostal Movement has no such history; it leaps the intervening years crying, “*Back to Pentecost.*” In the minds of these honest-hearted, thinking men and women, this work of God is immediately connected with the work of God in New Testament days. Built by the same hand, upon the same foundation of apostles and prophets, after the same pattern, according to the same covenant, they too are a habitation of God through the Spirit. They do not recognise a doctrine or custom as authoritative unless it can be traced to that primal source of church instruction, the Lord and his apostles.<sup>3</sup>

Feeling emancipated from the restraints of history, tradition and custom, there was no longer any reason not to expect that believers “should enjoy the same blessings, believe the same doctrines, and receive the same power as did the early church.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, *This is that*,<sup>5</sup> which the early church had experienced.

Not surprisingly, apostolic imagery flourished in early Pentecostal literature.

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<sup>1</sup> The classic Pentecostal explanation of this concept was given in a series of lectures by D. Wesley Myland. “If it is remembered that the climate of Palestine consisted of two seasons, the wet and the dry, and that the wet season was made up of the early and the latter rain, it will help you to understand this Covenant and the present workings of God's Spirit. For just as the literal early and latter rain was poured out upon Palestine, so upon the church of the First Century was poured out the spiritual early rain, and upon us today is being poured out the spiritual latter rain. D. Wesley MYLAND, “The Latter Rain Covenant and Pentecostal Power,” reprinted in *Three early Pentecostal Tracts*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> In an insightful essay, Grant Wacker defines the ‘Primitivist’ impulse in Pentecostalism under three banners: philosophical, historical and ethical. He then demonstrates how Pentecostals have adapted the antithetical dispensational premillennialism of Fundamentalism to serve their own ends. Grant WACKER, “Playing for Keeps: The Primitivist Impulse in Early Pentecostalism,” in *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*, ed. Richard T. Hughes (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 197-213.

<sup>3</sup> B.F. LAWRENCE, “The Apostolic Faith Restored,” reprinted in *Three early Pentecostal Tracts*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon ATTER, *The Third Force* (Peterborough: The College Press, 1962), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Aimee Semple McPherson an early influential evangelist who later founded the Pentecostal denomination, the Four Square Gospel, appropriately titled her autobiography, *This is That*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Pub., 1985).

Pentecostal pioneer, Charles Parham<sup>1</sup> tore a page out of the second chapter of Acts, when he described what happened on the night of January 3rd, 1900.

On returning to the school with one of the students, we ascended to the second flood (sic), and passing down along the corridor in the upper room, heard most wonderful sounds. The door was slightly ajar, the room was lit with only coal oil lamps. As I pushed open the door I found the room was filled with a sheen of white light above the brightness of the lamps.

Twelve ministers, who were in the school of different denominations, were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues...There was no violent physical manifestation, though some trembled under the power of the glory that filled them.

Sister Stanley, an elderly lady, came across the room as I entered, telling me that just before I entered tongues of fire were sitting above their heads.<sup>2</sup>

By standing in an "upper room," hearing "wonderful sounds," and seeing "tongues of fire," Parham attempted to link this new experience to Scriptures and *ipso facto* to God. Early Pentecostals felt no rushing need to defend their practices because they began with the *a priori* conviction that God Himself was their vindication. Through this release of spiritual activity, Pentecostals believed God had broken into the time continuum and was announcing the consummation of all events, past present and future in the imminent arrival of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2. Experiential Intuition

Having rejected the demarcations of history, early Pentecostals intuitively allowed their experience considerable latitude. Nowhere is this more evident than with their hermeneutics.<sup>4</sup> Pentecostals did not begin with the biblical text and formulate a theology;

<sup>1</sup> Parham is conceded as having made the initial vital identification of speaking in tongues as the evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This connection established the identity and agenda of Pentecostalism for years to come. For an excellent biography on the life of Charles Parham see: GOFF, JR., *Field White Unto Harvest*, *op. cit.*, p. 263. For an auto-biographical account see: Sarah PARHAM, *The Life of Charles F. Parham: founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York & London: Garland Pub. Inc., 1985).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Parham as quoted by Sarah PARHAM *The life of Charles F. Parham*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Jackie David JOHNS, "The Covenant Community as Paradigmatic Context," Paper submitted for the 23rd annual conference of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (1993), p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Pentecostals are often accused of eisegesis by allowing their experience to precede their hermeneutics.

instead they were so overwhelmed by their experience that they naturally assumed they could verify it biblically.<sup>1</sup> If for example, in the heat of debate, detractors questioned the hermeneutics of Spirit Baptism, they were dismissed as being woefully unenlightened. Should they experience Spirit Baptism with the speaking in other tongues, they would be convinced that Pentecostals were right. Consider the defence given by Daniel W. Kerr, a pioneer and influential spokesperson of the AG.

A person that has eaten an apple or even just tasted it, is better qualified to speak on the question of the kind and quality of the apple, than one who only speaks from hearsay. Just so, those who have received the fullness of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, are better qualified to testify (TO) that which they have experienced.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, early Pentecostals habitually overstepped many theological boundaries of their day. In addition to revitalising the role of spiritual gifts within the church, Pentecostals threatened domestic order by suspending traditional racial and gender barriers.<sup>3</sup>

Fittingly, the first organizational committee of Azusa Street reflected this new openness towards racial and gender equality. As the mission grew, twelve people were selected to handle the finances, oversee the publication of a monthly periodical and provide credentials for ministers. They were W.J. Seymour, Jennie Moore, "Sister Prince," Hiram W. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. G.W. Evans, Clara Lunn, Glenn A. Cook, Florence Crawford, and probably Phoebe Sargent, Thomas Junk, and J. A. Warren. In all, three were black and seven were women.<sup>4</sup>

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See Gordon FEE, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 1991), p. 86.

<sup>1</sup> William MENZIES, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology: An Essay on Hermeneutics," in *Essays on Apostolic Themes: Studies in Honor of Howard M. Ervin*, ed. P. Elbert (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 1985), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> D. W. KERR, "Not Ashamed," *Pentecostal Evangel* (2 April 1921), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Citing the Apostle Peter's recapitulation of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:17-21), early Pentecostals believed that God was pouring out his Spirit on all flesh. Frank Bartleman captured this idyllic belief when he described Azusa Street as having "no respect of persons. The rich and educated were the same as the poor and ignorant....The Lord was liable to burst through any one. It might be a child, a woman, or a man. It might be from the back seat, or from the front. It made no difference." Frank BARTLEMAN, "How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: As it was in the beginning," reprinted in *Witness to Pentecost: The life Of Frank Bartleman*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Press, 1985), pp. 58,59.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Nelson, asserts that this breakdown of racial barriers was the single most important

Ironically, this egalitarian spirit did not extend to the rest of Christendom, whom Pentecostals tended to see through a prism of mistrust.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning, Pentecostals had a certain panache in describing their religious rivals. Established Protestant churches were called the “church of the holy refrigerator,”<sup>2</sup> a “Social Rendezvous” or a “Conservatory of Aesthetics” et al.<sup>3</sup> However, Pentecostals reserved their greatest vituperations for the Catholic Church. Melding their ecclesiology with their eschatology, Pentecostals typecasted the Catholic Church as Revelation’s whore of Babylon, with the pope playing the role of the false prophet.<sup>4</sup> One thing was clear, whether it was an established Protestant or Catholic church, Pentecostals promulgated a gospel of “come-outism.” To Pentecostals, it seemed incongruous that someone filled with the Spirit would choose to remain within the confines of cold denominationalism. This, however, presented another problem of the first order. If people were to withdraw from their present churches, where were they to go?

Pentecostals did not simply have an aversion to particular churches, they readily pilloried church organization in general. A denomination was a euphemism for the “party spirit” which was considered unchristian and essentially damning.<sup>5</sup> Organization was seen as the first step to apostasy. When the Azusa Street mission put a sign outside their building reading “Apostolic Faith Mission,” Frank Bartleman, an early Pentecostal historian, began to speak of their downfall. “The Lord said: ‘That is what I told you.’ They had done it. Surely a ‘party spirit’ cannot be ‘Pentecostal.’ There can be no divisions in a

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contribution of early Pentecostalism. While Nelson is probably overstating his case, given the short duration of this experimentation in racial equality, nonetheless, it remains an anomaly for its time. Douglas NELSON, “For Such a Time as This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival,” *loc. cit.* see also, Richard RISS, *A Survey of 20th Century Revival Movements in North America* (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 1988), p. 59; and ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited. op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>1</sup> Grant Wacker observes that for outsiders, the movements most repugnant feature was neither its unconventional theology nor its ecstatic excesses but its elitism, its uncompromising, jut-jawed disdain for customs of denominational Christianity.” WACKER, “Playing for Keeps,” *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted by Martin MARTY, *Modern American Religion: The Irony of it all, 1893-1919*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1986) p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted by HOLLENWEGER, *The Pentecostals, op. cit.*, p.4 29.

<sup>4</sup> Charles PARHAM, “A Voice Crying in the Wilderness,” reprinted in *The Sermons of Charles F. Parham*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> BARTLEMAN, “How Pentecost came to Los Angeles,” *op. cit.*, p. 160 .

true Pentecost.”<sup>1</sup> In Bartleman’s eyes, the true church was an organism and could never be a human organization.<sup>2</sup>

To the suspicion of denominationalism, Pentecostals from the beginning showed contempt for theology, creeds, and doctrines. Combining their instinctive approach to Christianity with an anti-intellectual bias, Pentecostals vilified anything that even smelled man made. Percy T. King in a sermon entitled *Who and What is the True Church*, was certainly aiming his criticism at the established churches when he said:

The true church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not made up of a mass of ecclesiastical matter such as christening, confirmation, creeds and dogmas, etc. It is possible to be ever so devout to your church and yet be wrong....It (the true church) is not made up of fine buildings, choirs and prima donna singers, nor is it made up of carpeted aisles and cushioned pews.<sup>3</sup>

Pentecostals also made a mockery of liturgical decorum. Sermons or preachers were never announced ahead of time. Azusa Street was marked by the absence of any raised platform separating the congregation from the leadership. Hymn books and musical instruments were shelved, and people either sang hymns from memory or celebrated the arrival of the “new song” — a song exercised as the Spirit moved the possessors, either in solo fashion or by the congregation. It was sometimes without words, other times in “tongues.” Pentecostals believed that the church had worked itself into a *cul de sac*, and it would take nothing less than the dynamite of the Holy Ghost to set them free.<sup>4</sup>

Men have been speaking adown (sic) the age, but the voice of God the Spirit is calling us today. Since the early church lost her power and place with God we have been struggling back. Up through ‘its’ and ‘isms’

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Reflecting this attitude, Mrs. James (Ellen) Hebden wrote in her own periodical, *The Promise*, “We desire to state most emphatically that in the Lords work at 651 Queen St. and at 191 George St., Toronto, we have no connection whatever with any general organization of the Pentecostal people in Canada. As a ‘missionary church’ we stand alone in Gods divine order, and extend the right hand of fellowship to every member of the body of Christ...and we decline absolutely all responsibility for any so-called representatives of the Pentecostal work in Canada.” see MILLER, “The Canadian Azusa: The Hebden Mission in Toronto,” loc.cit.

<sup>3</sup> Percy T. KING, “Who and What is the True Church,” *PT* (April 15, 1940), p. 11. Ironically, contemporary Pentecostal churches are among the most elaborate and cushioned in North America.

<sup>4</sup> BARTLEMAN, “How Pentecost came to Los Angeles,” *op. cit.*, pp. 56-59.

theories, creeds, and doctrines, issues and movements, blessings and experiences and professions we have come. The stream could rise no higher than its source. We need no more theology or theory. Let the devil have them. Let us get God.<sup>1</sup>

Built on a platform of strong charismatic preaching, inspired testimonies, stirring worship and bold prophecy, Pentecostals owe a great debt to their spiritual black roots. Influenced by such black leaders as William Seymour and C.H. Mason, Pentecostals were quick to suspend the rationalistic thought process, when deemed necessary, and rely on a sense of spiritual "intuition," "imagination" and "consciousness." Walter Hollenweger draws this parallel between the black spirituality of the early twentieth century and the essence of Pentecostalism by highlighting the characteristics of the former as:

1. orality of liturgy;
2. narrativity of theology and witness;
3. maximum participation at the levels of reflection, prayer and decision-making and therefore a form of community that is reconciliatory;
4. inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship; they function as a kind of icon for the individual and the community;
5. an understanding of the body/mind relationship that is informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind; the striking application of this insight is in the ministry of healing by prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Hollenweger concludes by accrediting the rapid rise of Pentecostalism, especially in the third world, to a melding of Negro and Wesleyan/Holiness spirituality. As for North America, Hollenweger laments the contemporary waning of this vital blend of spirituality as it lies atrophied by western technology and propositional theology. At stake is the survival of an "oral theology" embodied by stories, testimonies, prayers, songs and "the celebration of banquets," against a "systematic theology," dominated by its doctrines,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Walter.J. HOLLENWEGER, "After Twenty Years Research," *International Review of Mission*, 75 (1986), pp. 3-12.

treatises, definitions and articulation of concepts.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3. Social Dimensions

Today, nearly a century later, it is difficult to assess the influence of Pentecostalism on global Christianity. Researcher David Barrett cites impressive statistics when he estimates that at the current rate of growth, by the year 2000, Pentecostal/charismatic groups will represent 29% of global Christianity, or more than 619 million people. A breakdown of his statistics, however, would reveal that the stunning figure is due, in no small part, to a lack of consensus on what constitutes a Pentecostal or its kin designation charismatic. For example, included among his list of groups are an almost comical assortment of individuals such as: non-white indigenous radio believers, catholic postcharismatics, crypto-charismatics, Chinese house-church Pentecostals, and individual quasi Pentecostals.<sup>2</sup>

Although the terms "Pentecostal" and "charismatic" are often used interchangeably, they do imply both historical and theological differences. Historically, the term Pentecostal refers to those Pentecostal churches which emerged during the turn of the Twentieth Century.<sup>3</sup> Charismatics, on the other hand, date their beginnings either from the 1950s with the mainline Protestant denominations or from 1967 for the Catholics. The difference is important because as Peter Hocken has suggested:

To say of a person that he is a Pentecostal is not necessarily to make spiritual claims on his behalf, e.g., that he has been baptised in the Spirit,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> BURGESS, MCGEE eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, *op. cit.*, s.v. "Statistics Global," by David BARRETT, pp.811-830. In Canada, sociologist Reginald W. Bibby presents much more modest data. From his last available figures, (1985) Bibby asserts that Pentecostal denominations represent a mere .7% of the Canadian population or 179 thousand people. A caveat, however, needs to be entered here. One major reason for the difference between Bibby's and Barrett's results is that Bibby limits himself to those believers who identify with a local Pentecostal church. He is not measuring the more amorphous classification, charismatic. see Reginald W. BIBBY, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart Pub., 1987), pp. 14,15.

<sup>3</sup> Church historians have since dubbed these churches as "classical Pentecostal churches." This was done to distinguish them from neo-Pentecostal or charismatic groups which have arisen since the 1950s.



but may not be saying more than that he belongs to a Church that believes in baptism of the Spirit subsequent to regeneration. To say of a person that he is (a) charismatic is, however, normally to make claims as to his spiritual endowments.<sup>1</sup>

Doctrinally, a second level of distinction emerges. For most classical Pentecostals, glossolalia is the hall mark of having received the Baptism in the Spirit. Charismatics, meanwhile, tend not to be so exclusive in their definition. While charismatics maintain the importance of tongues, few accept the position of “no tongues, no baptism.”<sup>2</sup> Other ancillary trends include an emphasis on inner healing from the charismatics and an emphasis on physical healing among Pentecostals.

Some observers of Pentecostalism are now identifying a *Third Wave* of the Holy Spirit. Begun in the 1980s this *Third Wave* is breaking upon evangelicals who, for various reasons, have only enjoyed cordial relationships with either the Pentecostals or the charismatics.<sup>3</sup> In North America, this trend is embodied by the Vineyard Movement initiated by John Wimber. Their rallying call is “power.” Followers are said to conduct “power evangelism”; experience “power encounters” and “power healing.”<sup>4</sup>

For the purposes of this dissertation we will be concentrating our attention on North American “Classical Pentecostals.” Specifically, we will highlight the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). Established in 1919, the PAOC represents the largest collection of Pentecostal groups in Canada with over 1,000 churches.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it enjoys a mutual association with the largest Pentecostal grouping in the United States — the Assemblies of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter HOCKEN, “Pentecostals on Paper,” *Clergy Review*, Vol.59:11 (1974), p. 760.

<sup>2</sup> BURGESS & MCGEE, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, *op. cit.*, s.v. “Charismatic Movement,” by Peter Hocken, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> C. Peter WAGNER, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* (Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> John WIMBER & Kevin SPRINGER, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986). and *Power Healing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the General Secretary to the General Conference*, by Charles Yates (Mississauga, Ontario, 1992), pp. 9-10.

## 1.4. Critics

Ironically, the early vocal and openly hostile opponents of Pentecostalism came from the holiness-fundamentalist camps.<sup>1</sup> With every opportunity, fundamentalists rose to vilify the Pentecostal experience as a bastardized form of religious faith. They accused Pentecostals of a litany of sins. Morally, Pentecostals were suspect by promoting a "hell-hatched free-loveism."<sup>2</sup> Ethically, they were accused of spiritual pride, by insisting that they had an inside track to God.<sup>3</sup> And Scripturally, they were accused of practicing a form of neo-gnosticism by filtering scriptural truth through the sieve of carnal emotion and/or experience. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that their distinctive doctrine concerning glossolalia was disparaged as being either psychological babble, gibberish or perhaps even demonic.<sup>4</sup> Coalescing all of this together was the central presupposition that the charismata had ceased with the apostolic age. John MacArthur speaks for many fundamentalists when he concludes that after seven years of reading all sides of the issue, "tongues ceased in the apostolic age and ... when they stopped, they stopped for good."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fundamentalism refers to a grouping of conservative Protestants during the first half of the twentieth century who reacted to the liberal teachings of Modernism. Positing themselves as the defenders of the faith, fundamentalists rallied around five central points: (1) the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures, (2) the deity and virgin birth of Christ, (3) the substitutionary atonement, (4) the physical resurrection of Christ, and (5) Christ's bodily return to earth. It is ironic because Pentecostals were equally fond of describing themselves as Fundamentalists—only more so. See Stanley H. FRODSHAM, quoted by ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited*, op cit., p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> W.B. GODBEY, *Six Tracts by W.B. Godbey* reprinted by ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> Alma White, whose husband left her to join a Pentecostal sect described Pentecostals as the most self-righteous, self-sufficient people on earth. Alma WHITE, *Demons and Tongues* (Zarpath, NJ: Pillar of Fire, 1919), p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> On anti-Pentecostal writings by Fundamentalists see, William C. IRVINE, *Heresies Exposed* (New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1917); T.J. MCCROSSAN, *Speaking with Other Tongues* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, n.d.); B.P. NEELY, *The Bible Versus the Tongues Theory* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1930); Louis S. BAUMAN, *The Modern Tongues Movement Examined and Judged in the Light of the Scriptures and in the Light of its Fruits* (Long Beach, Calif., 1941); H.L. STOLEE, *Speaking in Tongues* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963); H.A. IRONSIDE, *Holiness: The False and the True* (New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1955); John F. WALVOORD, *The Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, Ill., Van Kampen Press, 1954); For a more recent sample of such rhetoric, see John MACARTHUR, *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective*. (Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan Pub., 1978). and his subsequent sequel, *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> MACARTHUR, *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective*, op. cit., p.166. For a review of the literature justifying such an explanation see D.A. CARSON, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1987), pp. 108-117.

By the end of the 1930s the rhetorical polemics which so distinguished early criticism began to wane and make way for a more reflective approach outside of purely fundamentalist circles. From a variety of social disciplines, Pentecostals became the subject of many scholarly investigations.<sup>1</sup> Understandably, yet regretfully, most of these non-Pentecostal investigations limited themselves to studying the Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in other tongues.

Contributions from psychology appear to be the most diverse in understanding this phenomena. An early pioneer of this approach, George Cutten describes glossolalists as being intellectually underdeveloped and suffering from some form of schizophrenia or hysteria.<sup>2</sup> Psychotherapist, John Kildahl, in contrast, concluded that glossolalists are neither more nor less emotionally disturbed than equally religious non-tongue speakers. He did, however, observe that the reception of this phenomena depended on a pronounced attachment to a benevolent authority figure. Overall he concludes that glossolalia is a learned behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Arriving at a more Promethean conclusion, psychologist Wayne Oates describes glossolalia as a socialized speech among affluent people whose deepest religious strivings have been repressed through sophistication, intellectualization and institutionalization. Tongues represent an emotional breaking through in a socially acceptable form.<sup>4</sup>

From a linguistic perspective, the work of William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, remains the most extensive of its kind.<sup>5</sup> Samarin denies that there is a divine connection behind speaking in tongues, but he does begin to acknowledge its

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive review of recent literature examining glossolalia from either a psychological, socio-anthropological, or sociolinguistic perspective see Cyril Glyndur WILLIAMS, *Tongues of the Spirit: a study of Pentecostal Glossolalia and related Phenomena* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1981). pp. 125-192.

<sup>2</sup> George Barton CUTTEN, *Speaking with Tongues: Historically and Psychologically Considered*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927).

<sup>3</sup> John KILDAHL, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne OATES, *Glossolalia: Tongue Speaking in Psychological Perspective* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), pp. 76-106.

<sup>5</sup> William J. SAMARIN, *Tongues of Men and Angels; the Religious Language of Pentecostalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

function as a religious symbol for those who practice it.

Sociologists for their part, have provided some of the most helpful material in understanding this movement. While Pentecostals viewed themselves as a repristination of primitive Christianity, sociologist Robert Mapes Anderson believes that the root source of Pentecostalism was social discontent combined with a millenarian vision for a new and better world.<sup>1</sup>

Other sociologists have focused their attention on the factors which have led to the growth of Pentecostalism. Most notable in this list would be the contribution of Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine. In their study they propose five such factors:

1. reticulate *organization*
2. a fervent and convincing *recruitment* along pre-existing lines of significant social relationships
3. a *commitment* act or experience
4. a change-oriented and action-motivating *ideology* which offers (a) a simple master plan presented in symbolic and easily communicated terms, (b) a sense of sharing in the control and rewards of destiny, (c) a feeling of personal worth and power
5. the perception of real or imagined *opposition*.<sup>2</sup>

Finally non-Pentecostal theologians are reassessing the role of the Holy Spirit in light of Scripture. Two early benchmark works were James Dunn's, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* and Fred Bruner's, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. For his part, Dunn concluded that the "baptism in" or "gift of" the Spirit was part of the event (or process) of becoming a Christian, together with the effective proclamation of the Gospel, belief in Jesus as Lord, and water-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus."<sup>3</sup> In other words, being a Christian meant that one was Spirit filled.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ANDERSON, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Luther P GERLACH, Virginia H. HINE, "Five Factors Crucial to the Growth and Spread of a Modern Religious Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 7 (Spring 1968), pp. 23-40

<sup>3</sup> James DUNN, *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit : a Reexamination of the New Testament Teaching of the Gift of the the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Naperville: Allenson, 1970), p.4.

<sup>4</sup> This is similar to the position taken by Pentecostal theologian Gordon Fee. "To early believers, getting

Bruner, on the other hand, lauds the Pentecostal message for its ecclesiology which models the priesthood of believers within the congregation on an unparalleled scale. "As in the New Testament," writes Bruner, "the congregational fellowship of believers is experienced as nothing less significant than the center of the Christian life."<sup>1</sup> Having acknowledged this contribution, Bruner then takes exception with their preoccupation with spiritual power which he believes is antithetical to the message of Paul. It is Bruner's thesis that Paul wrote to the Corinthians in an effort to Christianize their theology.<sup>2</sup>

What is significant in both of these books is the absence of the polemic approaches of the past which began with the *a priori* that the Pentecostal model was illegitimate. Instead, Bruner and Dunn represent two outsiders who recognized the contemporary relevance of the spiritual gifts as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12-14.<sup>3</sup>

Reflective of this new openness is the work of D.A. Carson. While Carson is a conservative evangelical, he has taken his share of criticism by siding exegetically with the Pentecostal experience. While he speaks out against the perceived excesses of Pentecostalism and advocates the privatization of its more outward manifestations (i.e. Glossolalia) he nonetheless, acknowledges its inherent legitimacy. He furthermore recognizes some of its contributions.

Above all, the charismatic movement has challenged the church to expect more from God, to expect God to pour out his Spirit upon us in ways that break our traditional molds, to call into question a theology that without sufficient exegetical warrant rejects all possibility of the miraculous except for regeneration.<sup>4</sup>

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saved, which included repentance and forgiveness obviously meant especially to be filled with the Spirit. That all believers in Christ are Spirit-filled is the presupposition of the New Testament writers." FEE, *Gospel and Spirit*, op.cit., p. 115.

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Dale BRUNER, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970. p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 318,319.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to suggest that, Pentecostals or charismatics welcomed their comments. Charismatic theologian Howard M. Ervin responded to Dunns critique with a chapter by chapter rebuttal of his claims. see Howard M. ERVIN, *Conversion Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Engaging Critique of James D.G. Dunn's Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody, Mass.:Hendrickson, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> CARSON, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

This climate of renewed willingness to dialogue has resulted in the emergence of a new generation of respected theological and biblical scholars from within Pentecostal traditions. Coming of Age, many Pentecostals are finding themselves suddenly in capacious company. In the forward to Roger Stronstad's<sup>1</sup> book, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, professor Clark H. Pinnock states:

I am quite frankly excited at the appearance of Roger Stronstad's book....Until now people had to recognize Pentecostalism as a powerful force in the areas of spirituality, church growth, and world mission, but they have not felt it had much to offer for biblical, theological, and intellectual foundations. But this is fast changing, and with the appearance of this book we may be seeing the first motions of a wave of intellectually convincing Pentecostal theology which will sweep in upon us in the next decades.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.5. Conclusion

From a sociological perspective, it could be suggested, however crude the analogy, that Pentecostalism is the "Rock n'Roll of Christendom." Complete with its exaltation of the primitive, its celebration of youth, its flirtation with anarchism and its spurning of tradition and liturgy, Pentecostalism appeals to the common people. It contends that it understands the betrayal that people must feel with the lifeless established churches. Back to the Bible, back to the early church, back to Pentecost is the spiritual anthem of Pentecostalism.

But despite the flamboyance and the noise that early Pentecostals generated, it would take 50 years<sup>3</sup> before Pentecostalism would be taken seriously by the intelligentsia of Christendom. As an experiential theology, Pentecostalism was dismissed as a lower-class phenomena that belonged to the margins of society. At best they

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Stronstad is a Pentecostal theologian teaching at Western Pentecostal Bible College in Vancouver, BC.

<sup>2</sup> Clark H. PINNOCK quoted by Roger STRONSTAD, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson Pub., 1984), p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> Though there have been many reported sporadic accounts of glossolalia throughout church history, Pentecostalism as it is known today, generally dates its beginnings with the Azusa Street Revival in 1906.

provided an active voice for the socio-economically deprived.<sup>1</sup> At worse, their movement was either satanic<sup>2</sup> or confluent with the “criminaloid type of mind.”<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Object of Research: The Question of Authority

If the question of authority is one of the dominant struggles of popular culture, it has become the central issue for the church. Like falling dominoes, the traditional channels of authority—from the Scriptures to the institution of the church—are succumbing to the modern effects of pluralism, secularism, and relativism. Prophetically, Peter Berger wrote in 1969 of the “plausibility crisis” facing the contemporary church.<sup>4</sup> Denuded of its former prestige and status, the church is scrambling to reaffirm its legitimacy. Questions of “who we are” as Christians are now secondary to “why we are?”

Conservative churches have responded to the challenge by seeking anchorage behind the “inerrancy of the Scriptures,” or the “infallibility of the Pope.”<sup>5</sup> While the focus of these two shibboleths differ, the rationale for their insistence is remarkably similar. In both cases, theologians have posited an “other-worldly solution” to the immediate “plausibility crisis.”<sup>6</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, progressives have not been afraid to embed revelation in a historical “this-worldly” environment. Progressives have sought to demythologize their theology. Revelation is imputed through experience and subject to

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<sup>1</sup> In one of the most comprehensive studies of Pentecostalism in recent times, Robert Mapes Anderson asserts that the impetus behind the Pentecostal movement was the melding of a millenarian vision for a more just society and the rejection of the present social order. ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> The most common explanation for the Tongue Movement given by Holiness and fundamentalist churches was that the Movement was demonic. Reflective of much of the anti-Pentecostal argument is that of Methodist preacher William Godbey. Although Godbey shared many affinities with the new revival, he concludes, that “it is a sad fact that the Tongue people not only have no tongue, but simply the peep and mutter of the demons (Isa. 8:19), and no language about it.” William GODBEY, “Tongue Movement Satanic,” reprinted in *Six Tracts by W.B. Godbey*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander MACKIE, in his polemic, *The Gift of tongues: a Study in Pathological Aspects of Christianity*, concludes that the same sort of people psychologically and physiologically are to be met among the tongues people in penal institutions. (New York, G.H. Doran, 1921), p. 258.

<sup>4</sup> Peter BERGER, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969).

<sup>5</sup> Charles Davis, *Temptations of Religion*, (New York: Harper & Row Pub., 1973).

<sup>6</sup> See Clark PINNOCK, *Tracking the Maze* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Pub., 1990).

the changing of time.

While it is not the intent nor the scope of this thesis to examine the legitimacy and consequences of either of these woefully reductionist caricatures (conservatives & progressives), it is sufficient to say at this point that Pentecostals, however inadvertently, present Christendom with a middle option. On the one hand, Pentecostals sound very much like card-carrying fundamentalists/evangelicals, as they flail their Bibles with an other-worldly authority. On the other hand, as Harvey Cox has suggested, their popularity is in part due to their “down-to-earth ‘this-worldliness’—Christian secularity.”<sup>1</sup> It is this characteristic, “with one foot in creation and the other in the age to come,”<sup>2</sup> that singles out the necessity to evaluate the Pentecostal contribution to the overall question of authority. Presenting a “middle road” through an “other/this worldly” praxis of revelation, Pentecostals associate authority within the following continuum: the Written Word, the Spoken Word and the Institutional Word.

## 2.1. Written Word

Ironically, many rank and file Pentecostals would consider the question of authority within Pentecostalism as superfluous—a study in the obvious. The Bible, Pentecostals say, is the only legitimate source of authority for belief and practice. To suggest otherwise would invite cries of heresy.

In a phrase which pushes hyperbole to the limit, and which is consistent with “other-worldly” evangelical rhetoric, the PAOC readily declares that the “whole Bible in the original is, therefore, without error and, as such, is infallible, absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice.” Furthermore, “the Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality the complete revelation and very Word

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey COX, JR., “Some Personal Reflections on Pentecostalism,” *Pneuma*, vol.15:1 (1993), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Steven J. LAND, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.



of God inspired by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup> It is the “complete” in that God does not grant new revelations, and it is the “very” in that the words are divinely inspired.<sup>2</sup> As such, Pentecostals have consistently rejected any theologizing which would undermine the absolute authority of Scripture.

## 2.2. Spoken Word

In addition to the central authority of canonical Scripture, Pentecostals would hasten to add the Spoken Word as a penultimate source of authority. Careful to disassociate themselves from the “new thought” of Karl Barth, rank and file Pentecostals would likely enjoin that the Spoken Word is directly subordinate to the Written Word.<sup>3</sup> However, despite such careful posturing, Pentecostals will generally choose “inspired” preaching over careful exegesis. The greatest insult you can bestow on Pentecostals is to accuse them of being insensitive to the murmuring of the Holy Spirit. To this end we will examine the question of the Spoken Word through a kaleidoscope which includes preaching, prophecy, testimonies and acts of worship.

## 2.3. Institutional Word

Thirdly, in keeping with the this-worldly flavour of Pentecostalism, is the “Institutional Word.” Despite their suspicion of institutions, creeds, and liturgy, early Pentecostals recognized that their survival and perpetuation hinged on their ability to conceive a working mode of operation. This was no small task considering that Pentecostals have frequently boasted that, apart from Jesus Christ, there is no human

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *Statement of Essential and Fundamental Truths* (6745 Century Avenue, Mississauga, Ontario, 1986), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> In a recent communiqué sent to all pastors within the district of Eastern Ontario and Québec of the PAOC, the district superintendent reminded the constituents that we must, “balance all that occurs with what the Scriptures declare. LET US NEVER FORGET THAT GOD’S WORD, NOT OUR EXPERIENCE IS THE ONLY CERTAIN AND RELIABLE GUIDE WE HAVE” (capitalization his). Stuart HUNTER, *From the District Pastor* (Kanata, Ontario, 1994).

leadership behind their movement. In the place of a formal hierarchy, Pentecostals adopted a radical form of the “priesthood of all believers” in which each person was said to form an equal part of the whole. Consequently, members addressed each other with the preferred generic appellation “brother” or “sister,” rather than the traditional title of Reverend. Explaining their policy of organization, the PAOC wrote to their constituency,

No officer, whether he represents the whole Fellowship or any district in the Fellowship has dictatorial powers...Here at Head Office we look upon ourselves as servants of the Fellowship....The organization is not our master. It is our servant, and those of us who are called upon to serve as elected officers are at all times cognizant of the fact that head office is the creation of conference and its only reason for existence is that the work of the whole group can be carried on with greater efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

An organization without an organization, it will be demonstrated that Pentecostalism has generally been willing to temper its spiritual-mindedness with an earthly efficient mindedness.

## 2.4. Conclusion

The appeal of Pentecostals lies in their refusal to divorce the theoretical from the factual. This is clearly reflected in their stance on authority. The question “why” is never far removed from the question of “how.” This middle road, however, has been a constant sore spot with their detractors. Conservatives are troubled by a Pentecostal willingness to abandon or temporarily shelve high-minded principles when they seem incompatible with reality. And liberals are eternally suspicious of Pentecostals who are willing to embrace the absoluteness of divine revelation as it appears in Scripture. But it is precisely this experiment at maintaining a dialectical relationship between other-worldly and this-worldly solutions that makes the Pentecostal contribution to the debate over authority so engaging.

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<sup>1</sup> “The organization of Churches,” *The Pentecostal Testimony* (April 15, 1950), p. 2.



### 3. Hypothesis

To assist in understanding the interdependent relationship between the Written, Spoken and Institutional Word as they pertain to the subject of authority within Pentecostalism, we will embrace a paradigmatic approach. In this usage, a paradigm is defined as an “entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community.”<sup>1</sup> Paradigms function by providing a filter through which we define our world and ourselves. They equip us with a common language and the necessary categories enabling us to ask the right questions and seek their solution.<sup>2</sup>

It was the ground breaking work of Thomas Kuhn, who initially demonstrated how even the rationalistic disciplines of natural science owe much of their discoveries to the nature of paradigms. Kuhn rattled the scientific world by suggesting that even pure science cannot choose to ignore the subjectivity of the human researcher locked within any given paradigm of his time. Not rules, but peer pressure concerning the accepted assumptions are what dictate any course of action.<sup>3</sup> It is more or less what Nietzsche said when he inferred, “There is no such thing as an immaculate perception.” Or as the physicist N.R. Hanson claimed that “all properties are observer-dependent.”<sup>4</sup>

What can be said about the natural sciences is just as true for the human sciences. In an essay based on the research of Thomas Kuhn, Hans Küng suggested that paradigms or interpretative models are helpful in understanding changes within theology. Küng outlines five similarities between natural sciences and theology:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hans KÜNG, *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the future*, trans., Margaret Kohl (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> William Lloyd NEWELL, *Truth is our Mask: an essay on Theological Method* (Lanham, MD., University Press of America, 1990), p. 12,13.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Samuel KUHN, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> As quoted by NEWELL, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> KÜNG, *op. cit.*, pp.24-27. Küng, however, does not insist on the word paradigm which tends to be somewhat ambiguous. He is equally at ease to speak of interpretative models, explanatory models or models for understanding. p. 7.

a) Like natural sciences, theology enjoys a consensus of opinion concerning what constitutes a normal operating language, the rules of the game, and the acknowledged experts in the field. These forces work in collusion with one another as either unknown, repressed or forgotten rules.

b) Again like natural sciences, new interpretations emerge when the existing order breaks down; when the questions being raised no longer find a ready haven in the answers being given; when the “old thinkers,” the “problem solvers” of normal theology sound the call to “circle the wagons” in the face of uncertainty; when “new thinkers” begin toying with different assumptions and methods and finally, when there is a general awareness that the discipline in question is reaching a crisis point.

c) Küng further explains that theology like natural sciences is ready to make a change to a new model the moment a credible option becomes available.

d) Fourth, opposition becomes a necessary composite in the emerging of any new paradigm. In the face of such opposition, a recipient enters the new paradigm through the door of conversion. An act, moment or event is necessary to inaugurate the change and make it viable.

e) Finally, Küng suggests that the emerging paradigm has three options. The old paradigm may prevail and absorb the new one. The new paradigm succeeds in replacing the old. Or finally, the old is shelved temporarily in cold storage.

Broken down into fragments, a paradigm can be most easily identified as a set of frames. These frames act as the public witness to the operating paradigm. They present to the outsider a picture of what is going on inside it. It is the collective accumulation of these frames that identify the paradigm.<sup>1</sup> For example, in explaining the origins of the Pentecostal movement, it would be inappropriate to describe it as purely an pre-

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<sup>1</sup> NEWELL, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

millenarian phenomena. Likewise it would be imprecise to conclude that it was a movement born out of social discontent. Both its premillennialist disposition and its social dynamics are frames, or composites of the whole, but should not be confused with it.<sup>1</sup>

Paradigms provide a playing field, freeing the subject to compete with other options. The game is made particularly interesting because the boundaries are generally invisible. That there are boundaries is painfully evident—one only has to overstep the acceptable boundaries to be reminded of them. But the rules are largely a methodological *via negativa*. Succinctly stated, the questions that are considered taboo reveal the parameters of the playing field.

As a method of interpretation, paradigm analysis is particularly helpful in identifying the structure of authority within any group setting. Arising out of a socio-cultural matrix, authority functions both positively and negatively within the paradigm.

Positively, it establishes the structure of the paradigm. It accomplishes this by simplifying the day to day decision process of individuals, thereby minimizing anxiety and reinforcing self-esteem. And secondly, it creates a safety zone where one is free to develop within a relatively irenic setting. Negatively, such authority pressures dissenters to conform for the common good of the paradigm. It employs *mindguards*<sup>2</sup> to scrutinize information and eliminate anything that could upset the balance. Not only are painful questions not asked, they are not even conceived. Such authority creates the *unanimity illusion*<sup>3</sup> whereby members are assured that the decisions of the group are the right ones. When the restraints are properly working, dissenters abscond by imposing censorship on themselves, thus eliminating the need for any official sanction.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the more comprehensive overviews of the development of Pentecostal thought is the work of Donald DAYTON entitled *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1987). Recapitulating the "Foursquare Gospel" of Aimee Semple McPherson, Dayton suggests a composite of four "frames" which help explain the advent of Pentecostalism. They are: 1) salvation, 2) baptism in the Holy Spirit, 3) healing, 4) second coming of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel GOLEMAN, *Vital Lies, Simple Truths, the Psychology of Self-Deception* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958), p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

However, despite such control, paradigms break down. A paradigm collapses when it ceases to work and there is a new option ready to take its place.

In review, paradigms are formation devices and processes which, among other things, demonstrate where lines of authority can be drawn and what can be expected of them. Ultimately, the question of authority is a question always in flux. It is a question that can only be discerned in movement, in action, in events. With this in mind, we will embed the question of authority into the historical fabric of the Pentecostal Movement in Canada. By observing traditions and their related transitions, we will attempt to gain access into the Pentecostal mindset and from there deduce how authority functions. To this end, while Pentecostalism in and of itself represents a paradigm shift from the established churches of their time, this thesis will suggest three internal paradigm shifts that have occurred since their beginning.

### 3.1. Pentecostals and Paradigm Shifts

The birth of Pentecostalism at the turn of the twentieth century signaled a significant paradigm shift from a religious dependency on rationalism to a spirituality rooted in the affections of a people for God.<sup>1</sup> For Pentecostals, religious experience was not something one simply debated or pondered, rather it became the gateway to a whole new way of relating to God. Be that as it may, as Pentecostals began institutionalizing and formalizing their structures they have underwent a series of internal shifts that some would argue parallels the general historical life cycle of churches.

Sociologist David Moberg has outlined five such stages in the normal life-expectancy of a church.<sup>2</sup> 1) The first is a stage of *incipient organization* where a state of unrest and dissatisfaction with existing churches leads to a grass-roots reaction against

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<sup>1</sup>LAND, *Pentecostal Spirituality, op. cit.*, pp. 42-44.

<sup>2</sup> David MOBERG, *The Church as a Social Institution* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), pp. 118-126.

the “corruption” of spiritual truth. Spontaneity, devotion are praised over ritualism. Characteristic of this stage, charismatic, authoritarian, prophetic individuals surface to provide leadership. 2) A second stage of *formal organization* occurs as interested parties attempt to rally around a sense of common interests. Creeds, symbolic expressions and behavior codes are established both to identify the group and separate them from non-members. Any subsequent persecution or ridicule only serves to resolve in-group feeling and strength. 3) The third stage is dominated by a surge towards *maximum efficiency*. Leadership is far less polemical and is interested in harnessing its energy for maximum growth. Issues that previously were intended to divide are now relaxed as the group becomes more respectable within the larger arena. 4) The fourth and fifth cycles begin the downward trend of church organization. Beginning with the *institutional stage*, creeds become little more than relics from the past. Spontaneous worship is replaced by empty formalism. Administration is ultimately interested in its own survival. Says Moberg, “the institution becomes the master of its members instead of their servant, making many demands upon them, suppressing personalities, and directing energies into the “organization church.”<sup>1</sup> Sermons that once bristled with passion intended to convict are replaced by talks intended to persuade. 5) The final stage then becomes a period of *disintegration* in which many withdraw and seek new sects which offer a new vitality that is not weighed down by partisan politics.

Moberg is careful, however, to insist that such a process is not inevitable and may be reversed but that it, nonetheless, reflects the natural patterns of cause and effect relationships within the church.

While it is not our intention to discuss the validity of Moberg’s thesis, it will be noted that the history to the PAOC parallels in many respects Moberg’s initial three stages. For our purposes we will label these stages or successive paradigms as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

A) Apocalyptic/Intuitive (1906-1925), B) Accommodational (1925-1950) and C) Techno-efficacious. (1950-).

### 3.1.1 An Apocalyptic/ Intuitive Paradigm (1906-1925)

Close to the heart of Pentecostalism lies an apocalyptic/ intuitive fervency.<sup>1</sup> Illuminated with a taste of apostolic power—as they spoke with other tongues, and experienced diverse signs and wonders—Pentecostals readily identified themselves as the consummation of the book of Acts. Early Pentecostals lived on the edge of their affections. Individual transformation was achieved through experience and validated by feelings. Theological reflection was short-circuited by the Pentecostal conviction that the Second Coming of Jesus was imminent. Time was of the essence.<sup>2</sup> Steven Land describes this eschatological key of early Pentecostals as the “driving force and galvanizing vision of the entire movement.”<sup>3</sup>

### 3.1.2 An Accommodational Paradigm (1925-1950)

If Apocalyptic was the mother of Pentecostalism,<sup>4</sup> then its sibling was Accommodational. Pressured by internal disputes, outward persecution and the passage of time, the intuitive/apocalyptic vision of Pentecostals shifted to a conscious accommodational foundation. This thesis will demonstrate that between 1925-1950 Pentecostals attempted to buttress the fragility of subsisting on spiritual affections with

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard I am in agreement with a growing number of Pentecostal scholars who claim that pre-institutionalized Pentecostalism represents the heart, not infancy of the movement. see Walter HOLLENWEGER, “Pentecostals and the Charismatic Movement,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds.C. Jones, G. Wainwright, E. Yarnold ( New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 549-554. and LAND, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, op cit., pp. 13,47.

<sup>2</sup> In a conversation (1993) with Stanley Horton, an elder statesman and theologian with the AG, he related how his grandfather removed his children from grade school since it would be redundant with Jesus coming so soon.

<sup>3</sup> LAND, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> An expression employed by Ernest Kasemann referring to the origins of all Christian Theology. Ernest KASEMANN, *New Testament Questions of Today*, translated by W.J. Montague (London: SCM Press, 1969), p. 102.



the weightier content of church doctrine. To that end, Pentecostals accommodated many of the doctrines of their theological rivals as their own.

### 3.1.3. A Techno-efficacious Paradigm (1950-)

The third shift began in the mid 1950s and continues to this day. It is marked by two events: the birth of the Charismatic Movement and the inclusion of Pentecostals within the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) whereby in 1962 the chief executive officer of the AG became the president of the aforementioned Association.

As Pentecostals reached their adolescence in terms of development, their accommodational interests evolved into a techno-efficacious orthopraxy that tends to equate success quantitatively rather than qualitatively. Employing the latest techniques and technology, Pentecostals in this later stage have been dangerously close to treating church growth not as an essential by-product but rather as an end in itself.

## 3.2. An Evolving *A Priori*: Pragmatism

Paradigms, however, require an “ontological capacity for thought,” or an *a priori* which William Newell describes as the “transcendental power allowing one to universalize one’s experience and put a name on it.”<sup>1</sup> The *a priori* is the prejudice that governs the range of one’s options within any given paradigm. It contains the presumptions and precepts which provides one the ability to choose one truth over another competing truth.

In this regard, a second overarching hypothesis can be formulated as follows: that pragmatism plays a determining role as an evolving *a priori* or prejudice which operates and provides continuity within and between each of these three paradigms.

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<sup>1</sup> NEWELL, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

Beginning with a bias towards religious affections or orthopathy (1906-1925), pragmatism continued to assert and define itself through its pursuit of orthodoxy (1925-1950) culminating in a pragmatic orthopraxy (1950-). With each successive stage the character of pragmatism became more explicit.

As a philosophy, pragmatism owes much of its popularity to the work of William James. Influenced by his friend and contemporary Charles Sanders Peirce, James began to promote pragmatism as a viable philosophy in a lecture given at the University of California in 1898.<sup>1</sup> From there, the word “pragmatism” quickly spread into the academic community. James’ work on the subject would eventually culminate in June 1907 when he published the transcript of his lectures on pragmatism delivered in Boston in November and December 1906. Finally in defense of his position, James published another collection of essays under the title, *The Meaning of Truth*, a scant year before his death in 1910.<sup>2</sup>

Specifically, James attempted to develop the notion of pragmatism as the method par excellence for weighing the truthfulness of any given idea. James spurned the idea of metaphysical foundationalism, opting to analyze the worth of any idea or theory by its practical consequences. If, for example, in the course of debate between two opposing positions, it is conceded that no such practical consequences exist, then the dispute is rendered nugatory.<sup>3</sup> As such, James claimed,

pragmatism has no particular dogma or doctrine, save its method...it lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel....It is the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories,’ supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences,

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<sup>1</sup> William JAMES, *Pragmatism: A New Name for some Old Ways of Thinking* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Although it would be arduous to establish a direct link between the Harvard Professor James and the Pentecostal movement, nonetheless a couple of factors should at the very least, establish a casual relationship. In the spirit of Pentecostalism, James wrote in 1902, his most popular work *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier MacMillan Pub., 1961) as a defense of experience against philosophy as being the real backbone of the world’s religious life. This interest in religious experience coupled with the coincidence of his Harvard lectures on pragmatism in 1906—the same year the Azusa street mission assumed its role as catalyst for the Pentecostal movement—makes a comparison difficult to avoid.

<sup>3</sup> JAMES, *Pragmatism*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

facts.<sup>1</sup>

James had little time for principles if they could not be rooted in facts. As a radical empiricist, James, sided with facts, action and power over the more cerebral choice of abstracts, fixed principles and dogmatic absolutes.<sup>2</sup>

The upshot of his method was the rejection of any claim that truth “absolutely obtains,” for pragmatism weighs the truthfulness of an idea on the basis of its cash-value in experiential terms. Pragmatism would say, “True ideas are those we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot.”<sup>3</sup> For James this meant that:

The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification. Its validity is the process of its valid-ation.<sup>4</sup>

For James the pragmatic method stood in sharp contrast to the stark rationalism of both the religious left and right. Pragmatists according to James were “tough-minded” individuals who were driven by facts and experience. Beginning with the parts, pragmatists try to make of the whole a collection.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, James depicted rationalists as “tender-minded” individuals. Anchored on principles and propositions, the “tender-minded” begin with wholes and universal affirmations while seeking to bring the parts or individual components into subjection.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> As a caveat it should be noted that James understood that the truth of an idea must be verifiable not necessarily verified. “Truth lives,” says James, “on a credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs pass, so long as nothing challenges them, just as bank notes pass so long as nobody refuses them. But this all points to direct face-to-face verifications somewhere, without which the fabric of truth collapses like a financial system with no cash basis whatever.” *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

### 3.3. Pragmatism and Pentecostalism

Although varied in nature, recent literature on Pentecostalism has also acknowledged a casual relationship between pragmatism and Pentecostal thought and practice. In his essay, "Trends in Hermeneutics," Roger Stronstad states that from the beginning Pentecostals adopted a pragmatic hermeneutic in their interpretation and application of Scripture. Says Stronstad, "This Pragmatic hermeneutic passed into the infant Pentecostal movement as 'oral tradition.' This tradition was subsequently 'received' by church councils and codified in doctrinal statements....and became the bulwark of Pentecostal apologetics and the pillar of classical Pentecostalism."<sup>1</sup>

In a similar vein, Charles Gaede, alleges that this hermeneutical principle of pragmatism existed as an unacknowledged presupposition which allowed experience to impose restraints on formal structure or traditional propositional theology when deemed necessary.<sup>2</sup>

Not surprisingly, sociologist Margaret Poloma concludes in her study on the Assemblies of God that pragmatism has permeated the life and breath of the Pentecostal church. While Pentecostals pay lip service to the authority of Scripture, Poloma observes their tendency to resolve issues pragmatically.<sup>3</sup>

It is unlikely, however, that rank and file Pentecostals would consider such an analysis as being positive. At a popular level pragmatism is often associated with the prototype chairman of the board whose authority is dependent upon a demonstrated effectiveness.<sup>4</sup> Or it is sometimes linked with the actions of the expedient high priest, who felt it was in the best interests of the people to crucify Jesus. Or it may be used to

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<sup>1</sup> Roger STRONSTAD, "Trends in Hermeneutics," *Paraclete*, vol.22 (Summer 1988), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Charles GAEDE, "Glossolalia at Azusa St: a Hidden Presupposition?" *Westminster Theological Journal*, 51 (1989), pp. 77-92.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret POLOMA, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma & Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Richard QUEBEDEAUX, *By What Authority* (San Francisco: Harper & RowPub., 1982), p. 116.

personify dull, dry predictability. In either case, one can speculate on the compatibility of the spirit of pragmatism with the workings of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

At an academic level, modern Pentecostals would further be reluctant to express any philosophical solidarity with an epistemological theory that relativizes any objective quest for truth by equating truth with justifications which are relative to socio-historical conditions.<sup>2</sup> Invariably, many Pentecostals would claim that James trivialises the value of truth by subjecting it to the plumb line of experience. They would in all likelihood oppose James' argument "that an idea is useful because it is true and it is true because it is useful,"<sup>3</sup> on the grounds that "what is useful" is generally subjective to the individual. Furthermore, it is contrary to the popular sentiment surrounding the shibboleth "inerrancy" of the Scriptures where the Scriptures are equated with Gods complete "deposit of truth."<sup>4</sup> Yet while we can speculate that Pentecostals would probably distance themselves from such a philosophy in principle, even a casual reading of the history of Pentecostalism reveals many interesting parallels. Indeed it has been said with justification on many occasions, Pentecostalism is better "felt then told" or it is "better caught than taught." There has always been a tendency either consciously or unconsciously to put experience in the driver's seat while reason sits in the back giving directions.

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<sup>1</sup> In his volume, *Power with Purpose*, John Sims acknowledges that Pentecostals are, in particular, vulnerable to a pragmatic philosophy. Yet Sims believes that such a philosophy invariably undermines the Pentecostal message by deviating it from the standard of truth as set forth in the Bible. John SIMS, *Power with Purpose: the Holy Spirit in Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (Cleveland, Tenn.: Pathway Press, 1984), pp. 124-127.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Cladis demonstrates the dilemma that arises when the truth of a statement is equated with its justification. "Imagine two people with the same problem: whether or not to continue belief in God. One decides theism proves itself to be good in the way of belief, the other takes the opposite stand...We may want to say the two individuals are justified in their stances, and we will surely want to say that, insofar as they are sincere and rational, they are pursuing truth. But we should resist the conclusion that both positions are true." Cladis prefers to understand James' theories of truth as referring to statements about justification. Mark CLADIS, "Mild-Mannered Pragmatism and Religious Truth," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 60 (1992), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> JAMES, *Pragmatism*, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> As a caveat, it should be noted that although James rejected the quest for epistemological truth he did not deny "truthfulness in the sense of trustworthiness." see Henry LEVINSON, *The Religious Investigations of William James* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), p. 209.

When Pentecostals were confronted by church-going skeptics who could not rationalize biblically or logically glossolalia, the oft repeated response was:

We need not expect anyone who has not reached this depth of abandonment in their human spirit, this death to their own reason, to either accept or understand it....There is a gulf to cross between reason and revelation....This is why simple people get in first.<sup>1</sup>

To enter the door of Pentecostalism, believers assumed that it was necessary to initially suspend reason if one hoped to gain access to the deeper truths of the Spirit. Critics were downplayed as suffering from catechized minds which could not entertain the freedom of the Spirit. Early Pentecostals identified themselves by the weight they bestowed on affections over rationalism as a means of regulating their faith. "Right affections" or a pragmatic orthopathy served as an *a priori* which characterized the spirituality of these early pioneers (1906-1925).

However, it became readily apparent that a pragmatic orthopathy (right affections) was too fragile on its own to support the weight of a spiritual movement. Pentecostal spokespersons attempted to moderate the vicissitudes of orthopathy with the more regal demands of orthodoxy (right confessions). Interestingly, Pentecostals did not abandon pragmatism as a *modus operandi*, rather they integrated both orthopathy and orthodoxy within an evolving pragmatism. Illustrative of this tendency were the comments by Pentecostal spokesman Donald Gee. He reflected the position of most Pentecostals between the years 1925-1950 when he argued that:

It was the linking together of speaking with tongues and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that sparked off the Pentecostal Revival. There emerged, *born out of the experience* of thousands, the distinctive doctrine of the Pentecostal churches that speaking with tongues is the "Initial evidence" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit....*The doctrine is born of experience*, but it is an experience anchored in scriptural precedent.<sup>2</sup>

An idea, said James, becomes true or is made true by events. The quintessential doctrine of classical Pentecostalism concerning the initial evidence, said Gee, is "born

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<sup>1</sup> BARTLEMAN, "How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles," *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Donald GEE quoted by Gordon Atter, *The Third force* (Peterborough, Ontario: College Press), p. 127.

out of experience (orthopathy).” However, Donald Gee may have affirmed that the doctrine of Spirit Baptism was born out of experience, but he made it quite clear that it was also “anchored in scriptural precedent (orthodoxy).” In this regard Pentecostals partially distanced themselves from the pragmatism of William James which enjoyed no such foundational framework. The pragmatic impulse of these Pentecostals resembled more the “mild-mannered” theological pragmatism advocated by theologian Mark Cladis who maintains that “its justifications will employ concepts and authorities embedded in its distinctive interpretative context—its interpretative community and traditions.”<sup>1</sup>

However, while Pentecostals leaned on the Bible as its primary source of truth, they understood full well the developmental role experience plays in the hermeneutical task. Early Pentecostals would likely have enjoined James in agreeing that experience has a way of boiling over and making us correct our present formulas.<sup>2</sup> In this sense even biblical interpretative truths remain constantly on probation.

Finally, pragmatism would find its most irenic home as orthopraxy (right actions). James notion that an idea is true because it is useful or it works and it works because it is true was tailor-made for the technocratic Pentecostal church which emerged in the 1950s and continues to the present.

With this in mind, this thesis will attempt to demonstrate that as one paradigm overlaps the other, pragmatism has evolved in the guise of orthopathy, orthodoxy and orthopraxy reciprocally.

### 3.4. Conclusion

In review, this hypothesis can be stated as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> CLADIS, “Mild-Mannered,” *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> JAMES, *Pragmatism*, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

1. That the internal dynamics of the PAOC can be best understood as a series of gradual paradigm shifts. While these changes have overlapped each other, they can be identified as, (A) Apocalyptic/intuitive (1906-1925), (b) Accommodational (1925-1950), (c) techno-efficacious (1950-).
2. That each successive paradigm is identified by unique a priori. Respectively they are orthopathy, orthodoxy and orthopraxy.
3. That pragmatism plays a determining role as it becomes progressively more explicit with the emergence of each new paradigm.

#### **4. Methodology**

In discerning the operation of authority within the successive paradigms that constitute the PAOC, our study will consist of two parts or perspectives. In the first part we will analyse the function of authority within Pentecostalism from a theoretical point of view under the auspices of three great symbols of authority, namely: the Written Word, the Spoken Word and the Institutional Word. In the second part, our analysis will be more "factual" as we trace the evolution of three typical doctrines of Pentecostalism from a dogmatic ethical and juridical point of view respectively.

Finally, punctuating both the theoretical and historical components of this thesis, we will also apply a sociological investigation when it is appropriate. Such an investigation is invaluable as a cross reference in evaluating some of the more subjective nuances of authority which resist more cognitive approaches. To assist with such a task, a survey designed to reflect present clergy attitudes on a range of subjects relating to church authority was randomly sent to 200 ordained ministers<sup>1</sup> The responses enable us to probe some of the apparent tensions and contradictions that are underscored by a

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<sup>1</sup> In all, 134 responses or 67% were returned.



theoretical and factual analysis of authority.

#### 4.1. A Theoretical Perspective

Beginning with a logico-critical pénétration of the PAOC, we will subject the Written, Spoken and Institutional Word to a rhetorical analysis of official literature. In each case the interest is in isolating an authorized theory of authority. At this point the question is not what works or even what is practiced, rather it is a matter of objectifying the intent of the PAOC as it relates to the question of Written, Spoken and Institutional authority.

To accomplish such an analysis, we made extensive use of Pentecostal documentation. While Pentecostals have never been prolific in writing scholarly books of theology, they are no strangers to the written page. Since their inception, Pentecostals have been at the forefront of popular media. Their use of periodicals, radio and television has been without rival in the religious scene over the last one hundred years.

As such, these popular forms of documentation provide the bulk of source material. In particular, since the analysand of our research is the PAOC, we will pay special attention to its official publications, the bulk of which comes in one of three forms: (a) periodical—*The Pentecostal Testimony*,<sup>1</sup> (b) textbooks written for and distributed by their official Bible Colleges (c) Archival—General Conference Minutes, position papers, and other official publications.

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<sup>1</sup> During the General Conference of 1992, a resolution changed the preamble of *The Pentecostal Testimony* from being the official organ of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada to the official publication. Queried about the reason for the change, the editor, Rev. Robert Skinner, had this to say in a letter addressed to me. "A couple of years ago I felt that this word organ was not suitable to describe The Pentecostal Testimony as this word has taken on another connotation in our present society....However, the General Executive felt that a better description of the magazine would be the official publication....Either of these words...are supposed to indicate that what is contained in the magazine is what is generally believed amongst us and should be in line with our fundamental statement of faith and practice. Of course it is not possible to have 100 per cent consensus on every subject but the magazine should reflect what most of our people, and particularly our leaders, believe on any given subject...."

I believe the word official is used because the General Superintendent is the Editor-in Chief of the magazine. He previews and reviews the contents of the magazine."

## 4.2. A Factual Perspective

This second section will concentrate on the “factual.” To accomplish this latter task, we will trace the development of three specific dogmas within the PAOC. Each of these dogmas will be weighed against the frames of the Written, Spoken and Institutional Word with a relentless eye on the question of authority. The dogmas are selective but represent the range of issues found within any ecclesiastical body. First, we will track the progression of the *sine qua non* doctrine of the PAOC, namely that the speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being filled in the Spirit. Second, we will study the problematic ethical question of divorce and remarriage. Finally, the ordination of women will serve as a backdrop for analyzing the operation of authority as a judicial matter.

## Part One

From a theoretical perspective

## Chapter 2

### The Written Word

From a rhetorical Pentecostal viewpoint, the uncontested legitimate source of authority has been, and is, the Bible. Thomas Holdcroft, an influential Bible College teacher within the PAOC, described the authority of Scripture as “the watershed of theological conviction.”<sup>1</sup> Historically, Pentecostals pledge solidarity with the Protestant tradition of *Sola Scriptura*. As such, even the pursuit of a topic such as the nature of authority within Pentecostalism seems to many Pentecostals as being superfluous—a study in the obvious. The Bible, Pentecostals say, is inspired, in that God uniquely supervised the recording of His revelation, leaving it without error.<sup>2</sup> Its authority is a derivative of its source which is “the voice of God to mankind.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, the definitive opening item of the PAOC *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* states:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God by which we understand the whole Bible to be inspired in the sense that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of Scripture. Divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original writings. The whole Bible in the original is, therefore, without error and, as such,

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<sup>1</sup> L. Thomas HOLDCROFT, “Bibliology: Authority in Religion, 1969” TMs (Photocopy). EasternPentecostal Bible College.

<sup>2</sup> C.A. RATZ, *The Bible and its Supreme Authority* (Peterborough: The College Press, 1961), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> HOLDCROFT, “Bibliology,” *op. cit.*, p. 52.

is infallible, absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice.

The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian believers today receive spiritual illumination to enable them to understand the Scriptures, but God does not give new revelations which are contrary or additional to inspired biblical truth.<sup>1</sup>

The burden of this chapter is two fold. First, it will assess the rhetorical posture of Pentecostals regarding the authority of the Bible. Second, it will trace the vicissitudes of biblical authority over the course of Pentecostal history. It will attempt to pinpoint what changes have occurred and hypothesize their origins.

## 1. A Rhetorical Affirmation

Rhetorically, a Pentecostal understanding on the authority of Scripture would be founded on four central pillars. “The Bible is authoritative,” say Pentecostals “because of its inspiration, reliability, scope and relevance.” Using this matrix, we will briefly highlight each of these individual components.

### 1.1. Inspiration

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” begins the creedal statement of the PAOC. From Genesis to Revelation, Pentecostals are told that God breathed upon holy men in such a way that they would faithfully record in human words His thoughts. Through the breath of the Holy Spirit, God was able to maintain the integrity of both His eternal message and the uniqueness of the human authors who were chosen to record it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*. *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> RATZ, *loc. cit.*, see also M.P. HORBAN, “Forever Settled, What does the Bible say about Itself,” *Pentecostal Testimony* (February 1968), pp. 6-7.

Integral to the life-blood of Pentecostalism has been a profound respect for the ultimate sacredness of the Bible. Their doctrinal statement makes their position clear.

So Michael Horban can emphatically state:

There is no question in our minds about an authoritative Word of God — authoritative because infallible, infallible because inerrant, inerrant because inspired, and inspired because holy men moved upon by the Holy Spirit conveyed the very words of God for the hearts and minds of men.<sup>1</sup>

To downplay or deny the inspiration of Scriptures, in the eyes of Pentecostals, is tantamount to committing spiritual suicide. Again Horban reiterates:

The alternative to an inspired Bible is a mutilated Bible. What kind of foundation is that on which to build our lives? We prefer the Voice of the one living and eternal God, rather than the changing sands of human opinion for our foundation. For make no mistake, the consequences of rejecting the inspiration are far-reaching.<sup>2</sup>

When polled, PAOC clergy were only too anxious to demonstrate their solidarity with the supremacy of Scripture (see Table 2.1). They equated it with the foundation of their faith. One may wonder where Jesus Christ would then fit in—but systematic theology is not the issue. Rather it would appear that a situation has occurred where any hedging on the ultimate authority of Scripture could be perceived as betraying the philosophical underpinnings of the Pentecostal Movement.

**Table 2.1 The Primacy of Scripture**

24. The Bible is the primary witness to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.	77%	(SA) Strongly Agree	-mode
	20%	( A) Agree	
	0%	( U) Undecided	
mean=4.703	2%	( D) Disagree	
sd=.668	1%	(SD) Strongly Disagree	
missing=6			

<sup>1</sup> Michael P. HORBAN, "Forever Settled: The Need to Maintain a High View of Inspiration," *Pentecostal Testimony* (March 1968), pp. 3,28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

26. The central foundation of our faith is the Holy Scriptures	90%	SA	-mode
	9%	A	
	0%	U	
mean=4.885	1%	D	
sd=.386	0%	SD	
missing=4			

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Source: Project Exousia<sup>1</sup>

In times past, a modicum of this inspiration even extended to the translation involved. Pentecostals in North America have generally enjoyed a special fondness for the *King James Version* of the Bible. When other versions were published, invariably they were discounted as being tainted by modernism. For example when the *Revised Standard Version* was published, Walter McAlister spoke on behalf of the PAOC when he spoke out against it because among other things, it changed the word “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 to the compound “young woman.” McAlister concludes by saying:

I am free to confess that I love the text of our King James Version. Many of us have committed to memory considerably large portions of the Holy Scripture, as given to us in this text. We will cherish these Scriptures as long as we live. I doubt very much if any translation of the Scriptures in the English language will ever replace the KJV in the affection of our people, at least, in my judgement, not in this generation.<sup>2</sup>

More than a generation has passed since McAlister penned those words and with it has come a change of sentiment. King James may still dominate as the poetic choice of Pentecostals but modern translations such as the *New International Version* have become the working translation of choice. Nonetheless, absent in the debate is the question: What does the proliferation of translations and the less than exact human science of translation do to the divinity of biblical inspiration?

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<sup>1</sup> A complete copy of Project Exousia can be found in Annexe A. By definition, the mode is the most frequently occurring value in a distribution. “Sd” is the standard deviation which measures the dispersion or the extent to which there are individual differences in the distribution of values. The greater the number, the greater the dispersion. The mean is an additional measure of central tendency. It is the single best descriptive measure of the central tendency of a distribution. It is defined as follows: The mean of  $n$  numbers is their sum divided by  $n$ .

<sup>2</sup> Walter E. MCALISTER, “Spotlight on RSV,” *Pentecostal Testimony* (March, 1953).

## 1.2. Reliability

It stands to reason, that the reliability of Scripture is a direct extension of its inspiration. Affirming the language of other conservative Protestants, Pentecostals readily declare the Bible in its original form is "inerrant, infallible and absolutely supreme."<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the theoretical value of anchoring the veracity and trustworthiness of the Bible in its "original" form, which is beyond scrutiny, rank and file Pentecostals have adopted the shibboleth of inerrancy as their own. Pentecostals maintain that anything short of this affirmation would leave the believer floundering in a sea of uncertainty. Whether it be for evangelicals or Pentecostals the tenet of inerrancy is intended, says Clark Pinnock, to provide an "authoritative and binding definition of God's Truth in propositional form to people in quest of certainty."<sup>2</sup>

And nothing embodies this quest for conservative evangelicals more than the affirmation that the Genesis account of creation represents literal history. Again in solidarity with such a position, Pentecostals readily affirmed the literal authenticity of the early chapters of Genesis (see Table 2.2, #45). Inerrancy and creationism as defined by Pentecostals are as inseparable as fish from water.

However, be that as it may, when those surveyed were asked the less divisive question whether all Scripture can be harmonized with secular history and natural science (Table 2.2, #47), they were less than unequivocal. Given the strong support against item #45, such a response appears to be somewhat contradictory. Again it would appear that the discrepancy is not theological. On the question of creationism, given its high profile, Pentecostals responded from their heart. On the other hand, when quizzed on the overall relationship between science and Scripture, PAOC clergy

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *Statement of Essential and Fundamental Truths*, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> PINNOCK, *Tracking the Maze*, op. cit., p. 33.



demonstrate a crack in their fundamentalist armour. The extent of that fissure will be explored later in this chapter.

**Table 2.2 Biblical Inerrancy**

45. The Genesis account of creation is largely symbolic and is not a firsthand description or recording of actual events.	0%	SA	
	4%	A	
	2%	U	
<i>mean</i> =1.328	16%	D	
<i>sd</i> =.723	78%	SD	-mode
missing-0			
47. Every text of Scripture can be harmonized with secular history and natural science.	18%	SA	
	34%	A	-mode
	11%	U	
<i>mean</i> =3.213	25%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.325	12%	SD	
missing-7			

Source: Project Exousia

### 1.3. Scope

If the Scriptures are inspired and reliable, then they are also “absolutely sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice.” Pentecostals are adamant in rejecting any form of revelation that appears contrary or additional to the biblical standard. *Via negativa*, the amplitude of their conviction concerning the unrivalled authority of the Bible is strongly supported through their strong denunciations of man-made traditions (Table 2.3). Pentecostals are fond of separating themselves from the enslaving traditions of the historical churches.

Table 2.3 Tradition

13. Tradition is a legitimate source of religious authority.	1%	SA	
	14%	A	
mean=1.84	6%	U	
sd=1.1	26%	D	
missing=1	53%	SD	-mode

Source: Project Exousia

Under the influence of the Spirit, Pentecostals are accountable only to the revealed Word of God incarnated in Holy Scripture. Consider the fervency of their convictions with these citations:

Men have been speaking adown (sic) through the age, but the voice of God the Spirit is calling us today. Since the early church lost her power and place with God we have been struggling back. Up through "its" and "isms," theories, creeds, and doctrines, issues and movements, blessings and experiences and professions we have come. The stream could rise no higher than its source. We need no more theology or theory. Let the devil have them. Let us get God.<sup>1</sup>

If I should say no more than this—"lay aside all man-made teaching, or traditions, and take the whole truth of God," I would have said enough. We reject the authority of tradition in sacred things and rely only on the written Word of God.<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, however, despite a negative reaction to ecclesiastical catch-words such as word tradition and creeds, a significant percentage of pastors polled were ready to equate the authority of their doctrinal *Statement of Essential and Fundamental Beliefs* with Scriptures themselves (Table 2.4).

<sup>1</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> T.S. PAYNE, "Traditions and How to get rid of them," quoted in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, op. cit., p. 381.

Table 2.4 Doctrinal Statement

50. The Statement of Essential and Fundamental Beliefs, as it is described by the PAOC, is synonymous with Scripture.	25%	SA	-mode
	28%	A	
	5%	U	
	22%	D	
	19%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.19			
<i>sd</i> =1.5			
missing=7			

Source: Project Exousia

The only possible explanation for such an about face lies in their defining the nature of their doctrinal statement. In the minds of those Pentecostal ministers who strongly endorsed item #50, it is likely that they did not conceive that their doctrinal statement bore any resemblance to either church tradition or other historical creeds. Their doctrinal statement was scriptural, therefore, it is Scripture. Any nuance between the two was evidently lost on these respondents.

#### 1.4. Interpretation/Relevance

Hermeneutically, Pentecostals rely on the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit to “rightly divide the Word of truth.” Pentecostals ardently believe that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit has a continual percolating effect on the life of the recipient. The Spirit’s presence so permeates the being of the believer that one’s every faculty is heightened. To be sure, other conservatives would also claim that they too looked to the Holy Spirit to illuminate Gods Word, but Pentecostals questioned the effectiveness of their efforts without being baptized in the Spirit. John Welch, an early leader and executive member of the AG, preached a sermon in 1939 entitled “What the Baptism Really is?” in which he claimed:

Without the baptism in the Holy Spirit our ministry is limited. We are limited to preaching things we have learned from books of men or testifying of past experiences. But with the Spirit’s indwelling, our minds are illuminated, giving us a fresh revelation of Jesus and His Word and enabling us to bring forth the thoughts of God with expedience and

power. Besides illuminating the mind for service, the Spirit's indwelling helps one surrender his will and emotions to God.<sup>1</sup>

For Welch, and many other Pentecostals, a Holy Ghost-baptized believer is said to be able to preach better, pray more effectively, study with greater clarity and resist evil more successfully than any other religious counterpart. Charles Ratz, a long-standing Bible teacher within the PAOC, again reiterates the same theme:

It can be said that illumination is subject to degree in one Christian more than another and is the great need of the present hour to enable us by the aid of God, the Holy Spirit, to fully understand the divine Revelation given to us within the covers of the entire Bible.<sup>2</sup>

If other believers spoke of the illuminating effect of the Holy Spirit, then Pentecostals were slightly more illuminated than non-Pentecostals.

However, a Pentecostal belief in the illuminating role of the Holy Spirit does not free the believer from responsibility in interpretation. Contemporary Pentecostals would add that the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with believers as they endeavor to understand the text. Pentecostals are generally suspicious of individuals who would open their Bibles with their eyes closed and seize the first verse that their eyes fell on.<sup>3</sup> Pentecostals are equally wary of preachers who would come to the pulpit with no advance preparation under the guise of relying on the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

To this end, Pentecostals are committed to discovering the plain meaning of Scripture. By this, Pentecostals understand that a reader should accept the literal meaning of the text unless the context dictates otherwise.<sup>4</sup> To assist in rendering the "plain meaning," Pentecostals side with fundamentalist/evangelicals in preferring a

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<sup>1</sup> John W. WELCH, "What the Baptism really is," *Advance* (August 26, 1939), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> RATZ, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Using this approach, Aimee Semple McPherson explains the inspiration behind her dispensational theology. MCPHERSON, *This is That*, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon ATTER, *Interpreting the Scriptures* (Peterborough: College Press, 1964), p. 47.

grammatico-historical method of exegesis. Writing in the *Pentecostal Testimony*,

Edward Goodwin declares:

In the view of the unbelief and confusion that exists in the world, the fundamentalist should be aware that a sage and disciplined approach to Bible interpretation can easily be learned. This is the grammatico-historical method, which contains nothing new, but is an approach to the interpretation of the Scriptures in which the various factors involved are identified.<sup>1</sup>

Among these factors are the diverse literary forms that are included within the canon of Scripture. To discover the meaning of a given passage of Scripture, the grammatico-historical method lays emphasis on the context and its grammatical usage. In other words, the poetry of the Psalms should not be interpreted in the same manner as the prophecy in the Old Testament, and so forth. Integral to this method is the interpreter's ability to respect and take into consideration the literary style of the original author.<sup>2</sup>

Most recently, much has been made of this method of interpretation by Pentecostals. In defending the doctrine of Spirit Baptism as being normative for the Church, Pentecostal scholars such as Roger Stronstad accuse some of their conservative contemporaries of undermining the literary integrity of Luke-Acts by addressing them in same manner as they would read the Pauline Epistles. Says Stronstad:

While Luke narrates the role of the Holy Spirit in the history of the early church, Paul teaches his readers concerning the person and ministry of the Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

More will be said about this specific differentiation in the chapter dealing with the doctrine of Spirit Baptism, but for now it is important to underscore the cardinal motif of the grammatico-historical method, namely that Scripture is its own best interpreter.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward GOODWIN, "The Authority of the Bible," *Pentecostal Testimony* (October 1984).

<sup>2</sup> ATTER, *Interpreting the Scriptures*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-48.

<sup>3</sup> STRONSTAD, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, *op. cit.*, p. .2.

While using this method, it is the responsibility of the researcher to give greater weight to internal helps (literary genre, parallel passages, meanings of individual words) rather than external helps (Bible dictionaries, archaeological discoveries, commentaries, historical references) when trying to arrive at an accurate interpretation.

## 1.5. Conclusion

Up to this point, the most surprising feature of a Pentecostal definition of Scriptural Authority is in its striking resemblance to a conservative evangelical/fundamentalist position. Rhetorically, Pentecostals appear indistinguishable from even their most outspoken fundamentalist opponents. Officially, there is little difference between what Pentecostals believe and, for example, the conservative affirmations of the Chicago Statement on biblical hermeneutics<sup>1</sup>.

Ironically, the Pentecostal creedal statement on biblical authority, has very little to say about the active role of the Holy Spirit in revelation and interpretation and it is silent on the quintessential role experience has and continues to play within the Pentecostal rubric.

As a partial explanation for this visible lacuna, George Lindbeck in his landmark study on the *Nature of Doctrine*, has stated that in the normal course of events, controversy serves as the catalyst in the formulation of doctrine. Lindbeck concludes that the emerging "Statement of Faith" can only be adequately understood in terms of what it opposes. Ironically, the official doctrines may poorly reflect the most sacred convictions simply because they have never been seriously challenged.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the wake of a growing debate on the nature of Scriptural authority, various conservative factions gathered together in Chicago on October 26-28, 1978, with the intent of reaffirming their basic belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and clarifying those hermeneutical issues and principles which arise out of it. see "The Chicago, Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25:4 (December 1982), pp. 397-401.

<sup>2</sup> George LINDBECK, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post Liberal Age* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), pp. 74-76.

In this light, conservative detractors have not been fooled by Pentecostal rhetoric. Despite many noble attempts by Pentecostals to defend their orthodoxy on the grounds of *Sola Scriptura*, critics from the holiness-fundamentalist camp continue to assess the Pentecostal affirmation with a great deal of suspicion.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly there emerges in Pentecostalism a *diastasis* between official decree and actual practice concerning the authority of Scripture. On the one hand while they sound very conservative (in an evangelical sense) in practice, they continue to give their conservative critics reason to voice their apprehensions.

To understand and appreciate adequately this dilemma, we will now trace the hermeneutical development of Pentecostals since 1906.

## 2. An Historical Assessment

In keeping with the paradigmatic approach of this thesis, this chapter and each subsequent chapter will follow an historical continuum through three distinct time frames. Since the PAOC remains the central analysis throughout the thesis, the first paradigm begins with its initial stirrings at the turn of the twentieth century and ends shortly after 1925, the year the newly formed PAOC severed all formal ties with their sister organization, the Assemblies of God in the United States. The second time frame, traces the developmental years between 1925 and 1950. Finally the third stage begins as the

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<sup>1</sup> Typical of the conservative response is that of John MacArthur who continues to accuse Pentecostals of practicing a form of "neo-Montanism." Citing several examples, MacArthur attempts to expose the danger imposed by Pentecostal/charismatics as they add to the closed canon of Scripture. MacArthur concludes, "The Price of Charismatic mysticism and subjectivism is much too high. Everybody is free to do and say what he thinks God is telling him. The uniqueness and central authority of the Word is being lost, and we are headed for a mystical Christianity that will eventually have no real content or substance...." "The Reformers saved Christianity from extrabiblical errors with the cry, *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture only). Now from the Charismatic ranks comes the cry, 'Scripture plus something more—prophetic utterance, new revelation from God!' But the church in the twentieth century must not surrender to a theology which gives tradition and experience equal weight with Scripture. MACARTHUR, *The Charismatics*, op. cit., pp.37,38.

PAOC comes of age in and around 1950 and continues until the present. Whereas this chapter will demarcate each of these shifts with the appropriate title, future appellations will be abbreviated and refer only to the time period in question (i.e., 1906-1925, 1925-1959, 1950-).

## 2.1. Apocalyptic/Intuitive: 1906-1925

Emulating out of a predominantly Holiness, Wesleyan background, Pentecostals, from the beginning, affectionately maintained a high view of Scripture. However, the measure of their commitment did not lie in any careful articulation of their belief, rather it was expressed through their vehement denunciation of anything that appeared to usurp the sufficiency of Scripture. Among those variables held suspect, Pentecostals frequently included church traditions, institutionalism, creeds and doctrines.

### 2.1.1. Religionless Christianity

In many respects, Pentecostals purported a qualified religionless Christianity. By this, it was understood that religion was simply a human effort to procure salvation. As such, it was devoid of any real sense of Spirit and generally resulted in enslaving its adherents rather than liberating them.

Of all the religious snares that early Pentecostals vilified the most was the formation of creeds. In particular, Pentecostal believed that creeds had the ill effect of strangling the spiritual dynamism of Scripture. Quoting Philip Schaff, Frank Bartleman, a participant of Azusa street, would conclude:

The divisions of Christendom will be overruled at last for a deeper and richer harmony, of which Christ is the key-note. In Him and by Him all problems of theology and history will be solved. In the best case a human creed is only an approximate and relatively correct expression of revealed truth, and may be improved by progressive knowledge of the



church, while the Bible remains perfect and infallible. Any higher view of the authority of creeds is unprotestant and essentially Romanizing.<sup>1</sup>

Bartleman lamented the rigidity of “fixed systems” which do not take into account the eclectic nature of the Holy Spirit. Inevitably, believers raised only in their respective ecclesiastical traditions are “bound and frightened to move out with God in His great, green pasture....The stream is moving beneath them, but they fear to let go the bank, separate from past attachments, and trust themselves to the current of God’s onward move in restoration of truth once lost.”<sup>2</sup>

Pentecostal theologian Steven Land adds:

Creeds, according to the early Pentecostals, were designed to keep people out, to divide the body and to say what God could and could not do. They seemed to shut down the sovereignty of the Spirit and to frustrate the desire of Pentecostals to have a church unified in the Spirit for last-day’s mission. It was necessary judiciously to apply scriptural insights to daily decisions and situations. But creeds tended to be exalted to the place of Scripture and that just would not do. The Spirit was over the church. The Spirit was prior to Scripture. So, the order of authority was Spirit, Scripture, church. Without the Spirit there would have been no Word, incarnate or written; without the Word, no church. In practice this meant that preaching and prophesying (or its equivalent, tongues plus interpretation) were all to be tested by the Scriptures in the community of Spirit-filled and gifted believers. In this way the church could continue to grow in understanding and be corrected if it got off the track.<sup>3</sup>

Ultimately, Bartleman believed that a faith built on creeds would only lead to doctrinal contention.<sup>4</sup> Yet in the end, he failed to realize that the Pentecostal renunciation of creeds had become a creed in itself resulting in the kind of ecclesiastical contention and intolerance that Bartleman so adamantly wanted to avoid.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> LAND, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> LAND, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

## 2.1.2. Discord and Division

Despite all the good intentions of burgeoning Pentecostals, it became apparent that their pristine reliance on the Spirit's ability to guide them intuitively into a true understanding of Scripture, without the help of any denominational loyalties or structured systematic theology, was more problematic than anticipated. By not mooring their experience, epitomized by tongue speaking, in any specific theological construct, Pentecostals toppled into a forest of contradictory revelations all Spirit led, and all founded on the written pages of Scripture.

It became readily apparent that these sawdust trail Pentecostals were missing a uniform mechanism to “rightly divide the Word of Truth.” Even their most fundamental belief in glossolalia as being the latter outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a source of contention. Pentecostals disagreed over how it happened: was entire sanctification a prerequisite? or was the believer expected to “tarry” for the Baptism?<sup>1</sup> They disputed over its form: was the biblical model an example of glossolalia or xenoglossolia?<sup>2</sup> And finally they couldn't agree over its significance: was speaking in tongues the initial biblical evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit? or was it one of several signs?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> True to his Wesleyan Holiness background, William Seymour, maintained that sanctification was distinct in time and content from conversion and was a necessary prerequisite to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. William Durham, on the other hand, true to his Calvinist background, preached the “Finished Work of Calvary.” By this he believed that sanctification is a process that begins with regeneration and continues throughout the life of the believer. *Ipsa facto*, there is not a state of sanctification that a believer needs to obtain before he/she can be filled with the Spirit. see ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited*, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-175. see also HOLLENWEGER, *The Pentecostals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> When Parham was invited to Azusa Street by William Seymour, he was shocked at the amount of counterfeit chattering, jabbering and sputtering that was going on in the name of tongues. He even accused workers of coercing individuals into this babbling through the suggestion of certain words and sounds, the working of the chin or the massage of the throat. Parham believed that authentic Spirit led tongue speaking verified itself in another known human language (xenoglossolia). Seymour tended not to be so exclusive in his definition. see SARAH PARHAM, *The Life of Charles F. Parham*, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Parham was the first to wed the issue of tongues and the proof that one has been filled with the Spirit together. His teaching would become the prevalent accepted norm among early white Pentecostals. William Seymour, on the other hand, rejected the exclusiveness of such a position claiming that it limits the freedom of the Holy Spirit. “Many people have made shipwreck of their faith

Their one universally accepted presupposition—that ultimately all authority is derived from the Bible—was marred because they did not have an adequate means to adjudicate between conflicting interpretations of Scripture. Was experience to be the judge? Then whose experience? Parham's? Seymour's? Durham's?

Subsequently, by 1925, any hope that this new wave of Pentecostal fervor would bring unity and single purpose to the church was crushed as internal disputes fragmented Pentecostals into a myriad of independent groups centered around the leader or oligarchy who best reflected their beliefs. Doctrinally, Pentecostals split into three segments: the Finished Work Trinitarians, The Second Work Trinitarians and the Unitarians. Secondary divisions arose over personalities, race, gender, worship and a host of sanctification related issues.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1.3. Conclusion

Early Pentecostals had no reason to doubt the veracity and inspiration of Scriptures. They accepted it as God speaking to them. They refused, however, to divorce the Bible from the Spirit which gave it life. Believers were required to rely on the Holy Spirit in seeking to unfold the mysteries of the Written Word. Without this continual influence of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals believed that the Bible invariably degenerates into a source of "ecclesiastical conceptions, forms and ceremonies."<sup>2</sup>

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by setting up a standard for God to respect or come to. When we set up tongues to be the Bible evidence of Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire only (sic). We have left the divine word of God and have instituted our own teaching. quoted by Cecil M. ROBECK, JR., "William J. Seymour and The Bible Evidence in Initial evidence," in *Initial Evidence*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), p. 87.

<sup>1</sup> Remaining true to their holiness roots, early Pentecostals did not extend their new found freedom in the Spirit to matters of propriety. Pentecostals became known for what they didn't do, rather than what they did practice. Their list of 'venial' sins was extensive and varied from place to place. Among the many things that were judged anathema were, makeup, bobbed hair, dancing, motion pictures, coffee, tea, organized sports and the funnies. see "Let us show our goods," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Feb. 1, 1939); "Separation," *Pentecostal Testimony*, 3:9 (1924), "As it was in the days of Sodom," *Pentecostal Testimony*, 3:2 (1924).

<sup>2</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

It was, therefore, not surprising to discover early Pentecostals hermeneutically practicing a brand of spiritual pragmatism. If the Scriptures were of any concrete value, then they must result in concrete action. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, marked by the presence of glossolalia, Pentecostals claimed a heightened “yieldedness, that made it possible for God to possess and work in new ways and channels, with far more powerful results.”<sup>1</sup> Toughminded Pentecostals became people of action. Time was too short to waste in fruitless speculation and debate over differences in belief. They were driven by a pervading sense that the presence of glossolalia was a harbinger announcing the imminent return of the Lord.

In addition to their urgency, the eclectic disposition of Pentecostals allowed a margin of freedom to flirt with new interpretations.<sup>2</sup> They were not weighed down by centuries of ecclesiastical tradition. While the credit always went to the Holy Spirit, biblical interpretation became a matter of the heart. Doctrine was a derivative of orthopathy. In time, however, this renewed emphasis on the Spirit of the Word proved to be too fragile a commodity to survive the mounting internal difficulties and external pressure to conform to ecclesiastical standards—let alone societal norms.

The accumulated tension resulted in a significant paradigm shift that would begin with institutionalism and last until the early 1950s. Ironically, the same pragmatic impulse that helped define early Pentecostalism would also provide the necessary impetus for the forthcoming change.

Pentecostals were left with essentially three options. They could continue in the spirit of their naissance by developing an experiential theology. Second, they could rescind their distinct belief in the operation of the Holy Spirit and with heads bowed, affiliate themselves with fundamentalism/evangelicalism. Or thirdly, they could attempt

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Among many of the challenges stimulated by Pentecostals were the equality of gender and races, the fullness of God in Christ, the active manifestation of Spiritual Gifts, and experiential hermeneutics.

to sow their pneumatic-experiential theology into the soil of a pre-existing theological construct. History affirms that they took this latter road and in so doing announced a new paradigm shift.

## 2.2. An Accommodational Paradigm: 1925-1950

Curiously, pragmatism seems to court a “manic-depressive” tendency. On the one hand, it is more than willing to escort idealism to noble even blissful, levels. On the other hand, at a moment’s notice it can arrest its adherents with numb-jarring reality. It became readily apparent to Pentecostals that their idyllic experiment with the Holy Spirit as their only guide was failing. Even Bartleman, ever the idealist, reluctantly admitted that history was repeating itself.

We fear nothing more in those days than to seek our own glory, or that the Pentecostal experience should become a matter of past history. In fact, we hoped and believed that the revival would last without cessation until Jesus should come, which it doubtless would, and should, if men would not fail God. But we drift back continually in the old, backslidden, ecclesiastical conceptions, forms and ceremonies. Thus history sadly repeats itself.<sup>1</sup>

Again pragmatism provided the direction and impetus for the next change. Pentecostals were soon converted to the idea that their survival and perpetuity hinged on their ability to organize themselves and develop some sort of uniform standard of belief. Essentially such a decision would critically involve two steps. First, Pentecostals would need to establish their orthodoxy and *ipso facto* their legitimacy. Second, they would need to solidify their *raison d’être*, distinguishing them from other conservative faith movements.

History records that Pentecostals accomplished this double objective, in part, by taking up the gauntlet of fundamentalism and second by reaffirming their distinctive

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<sup>1</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, op. cit., p. 148.

doctrine concerning the reception of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> In the end, the “oppressed imitated their oppressors.”<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals created an oxymoron by officially building a theology using the bricks and mortar of Fundamentalism, while unofficially they continued to practice a pneumatic, experiential form of revelation.<sup>3</sup> How and when Pentecostals would decide to adjudicate between these two systems, became the pragmatic choice of the individual(s) involved. Pragmatism in pursuit of orthodoxy was metamorphosing itself from the role of initiator and leader to that of mediator. The result of this wedding between Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism was nowhere more felt than in the area of biblical authority and its ancillary question of application.

### 2.2.1. “Deposit of Truth”

Before 1925 the evidence would suggest that Pentecostals were less concerned about the historical, scientific accuracy of the biblical texts than they were worried that men and women would be sensitive enough to the Spirit to allow God to speak to them through the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup> Typical of the early Pentecostal response to hermeneutics is this comment by Stanley Frodsham:

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- <sup>1</sup> The speaking of tongues as the initial evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit became the sacred icon of classical Pentecostalism. Any concession or wavering on this point was linked with the survivability of the Movement as a whole. J. Roswell Flower, the late General Superintendent of the AG, succinctly affirmed what was generally believed: “The question of the speaking in tongues as the sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is quite vital. If we, as a movement, are wrong in our position, we have no right to an existence as a body of people, as the denominational bodies would possibly take us in if we would drop this one point of contention....The very life of the Pentecostal Movement hinges on this point.” J Roswell FLOWER, *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 17, 1920 quoted by Robert ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited*, op. cit., p. 165.  
Presumably they would be “taken in” because it was believed that the removal of this “doctrinal Barrier” would leave Pentecostalism indistinguishable from main-stream Fundamentalism.
  - <sup>2</sup> Gerald SHEPPARD, “Pentecostal Tradition: Part Two,” *Agora*, 2:1 (1978), p. 19.
  - <sup>3</sup> This dichotomy was clearly reflected in Project Exousia. On the one hand, respondents strongly affirmed the suggestion that the “Bible is essentially an encyclopaedia of revealed, timeless, propositional truths which transcend culture and time” (SA-40%, A-36%, U-4%, D-12%, SD-8%). On the other hand, the majority also affirmed that the Bible alone, however, managed, explained, confirmed and applied is nothing but a dead letter without the Spirit” (SA-26%, A-25%, U-5%, D-19%, SD-23%). See annexe A, #26,29.
  - <sup>4</sup> It would be inappropriate to polarize early Pentecostals as “errantists,” or “inerrantists” as fundamentalists have tried to accomplish. See Harold LINDSELL, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), pp.100-106. Pentecostals, from the beginning, intuitively trusted in the authority of Scriptures, but they had not as yet entered into the fundamentalist rhetorical language game of inerrancy. Scripture was authoritative by virtue of its relationship to the living Word, Jesus Christ. For a Pentecostal response to Lindsell see, Gerald SHEPPARD, “Sheppard Responds,” *Agora*, 3:1&2 (1979), p. 3,4.

Don't examine the writer, the medium, the channel, but seek yourselves to be examined by the Spirit who gave the message. The writers had to be tuned to the Spirit to receive the Spirit's message and readers of the Word today also have to be tuned, not by scholars, but by the Spirit. Many unlearned men left the Scriptures to their own destruction—does that mean ignorant men? No. They were unlearned as far as the things of the Spirit were concerned. Learned as far as the letter, ignorant as far as the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

All of which undermined Fundamentalism's insistence on the Scriptures being God's final and only deposit of truth. Now with the dawning of Pentecostal denominations, leaders within the Movement began to openly embrace many of the objectives of Fundamentalism as their own. The authority of Scripture took on a new nuance as Pentecostals began to talk about inerrancy and dispensations. Again, in a critical assessment of this trend, former Pentecostal Gerald Sheppard postulates:

It is my position that the AG, like most other Pentecostal denominations, did not aggressively shape their doctrine of Scripture to reflect their own understanding, but passively incorporated in their statements fundamentalist formulations in order to prove their orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of this passive acquiescence to the fundamentalist agenda of Scriptural authority, Sheppard identifies Pentecostals as fundamentalist-evangelicals who became consumed with demonstrating that their spirituality will no longer get in the way of a rigidly rationalistic doctrine of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> No where was this tendency more noticeable than when Pentecostals began adopting the fundamentalist language game of biblical inerrancy.

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley FRODSHAM, "The Smokescreen of Modern Criticism," *Pentecostal Evangel* (February 23, 1924), p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Gerald SHEPPARD, "Pentecostal Tradition: Part One," *Agora* ,1:4 (1978), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21. Sheppard, however, may have slightly overstated his case. It is questionable to what extent organizations, such as the AG and the PAOC, during their formative years, were spent trying to appease their fundamentalist brethren. Pentecostals behaved with too much maverick indifference to anyone outside their particular group to be found wanting in this regard. Second, it should come as no great surprise that Pentecostals adopted the language of inerrancy as their own. While Pentecostals were late bloomers in the field of apologetics, their Promethean approach to the gifts of the Holy Spirit made them quick students. For the same reason that fundamentalists pursued the certainty of their convictions through the doctrine of inerrancy, Pentecostals would defend the demonstration of glossolalia on the ground of inerrancy. Sheppard's claim, however, does gain momentum with later developments.

### 2.2.2. Inerrancy

Perhaps no other word best captures the doctrinal flavour of fundamentalism, than does the word “inerrancy.” In the wake of modernism, epitomized by the theory of evolution, inerrancy was wielded as an attempt to reaffirm the “absoluteness” quality of Scriptures. Of course, from the days of the Reformation, Protestants had always maintained a qualified belief that the “deposit” of truth lies in the Bible. It was generally taught and accepted that the canonical Bible is an infallible revelation from God. By this, it was understood that the Scriptures were and are entirely trustworthy for the purposes for which it is given—namely to bring people into a relationship with God.<sup>1</sup> With the ground work established by the Princeton Seminarians of Alexander A. Hodge, Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield, “inerrancy” became the new code word that would define Fundamentalism in the years to come. In his systematic theology, Charles Hodge (1874) summarized his views saying:

It means, first, that all the books of Scripture are equally inspired. All alike are infallible in what they teach. And secondly, that inspiration extends to all the contents of these several books. It is not confined to moral and religious truths, but extends to the statements of facts, whether scientific, historical, or geographical. It is not confined to those facts the importance of which is obvious or which are involved in matters of doctrine. It extends to everything which any sacred writer asserts to be true.<sup>2</sup>

Despite its negative slant in the battle for the Bible, inerrancy had an advantage over its creedal predecessor, infallibility, by virtue of its scientific charisma. If modernists were using science to belittle and relativize Scriptural authority, then these defenders of the Faith would likewise appeal to scientific methodology. Hence Charles Hodge drew the parallel:

If natural science be concerned with the facts and laws of nature, theology is concerned with the facts and the principles of the Bible. If the object of the one be to arrange and systematize the facts of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jack ROGERS, Donald K. MCKIM, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (Harper & Row: San Francisco, 1979), p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Charles HODGE, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, reprinted 1960), p. 163.



external world, and to ascertain the laws by which they are determined; then the object of the other is to systematize the facts of the Bible, and ascertain the principles or general truths which those facts involve.<sup>1</sup>

In time, Truth would be reduced to propositional statements. The once transcendent authority of the Bible would be codified into rationally guaranteed formulas. As such, the role of the fundamentalist theologian would be to use reason to uncover the alpha and omega of revealed truth as it is recorded in these biblical propositions. Therefore, it followed that by means of the Scriptures the reader could literally possess truth.

Although the word “inerrancy” never occurs itself in either the Old or New Testament, it was assumed that passages such as 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21, implicitly taught the doctrine. The Bible, therefore, is inerrant because it says so, was the conclusion.<sup>2</sup> James Barr, however, questions the extent that fundamentalists really relied on such passages. Barr asserts that “on the contrary, things work the other way: he (the fundamentalist) believes the Bible implicitly in any case, and all that these passages do is formulate for him suitably that belief in the Bible that he already has.”<sup>3</sup> However, whether fundamentalists arrived at their conclusions based on external examination or an internal presupposition, the fact remains that “inerrancy” became the linchpin of fundamentalism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis Sperry CHAFER, *Major Bible Themes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, reprinted in 1974), pp. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup> James BARR, *Fundamentalism* (London, SCM Press, 1977), p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> In 1976 Harold Lindsell polarized the debate surrounding inerrancy by positing confession of inerrancy as the undeniable passport into the evangelical community. See Harold Lindsell, *Battle for the Bible*. . . His aim was directed, in part, against the influence of modernity but it was indirectly aimed at the burgeoning charismatic movement which was seeking inclusion under the evangelical banner.

The publication of Lindsell's polemic, *The Battle for the Bible*, was swiftly countered by Fuller Theological Seminary, the bastion of evangelical theology in this century. The result was the publication of Jack ROGERS and Donald K. MCKIM'S book *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible an Historical Approach*, *loc. cit.* In it they claimed that adherence to an inerrant Bible, held by many conservative, evangelical groups is a relatively modern occurrence, dating primarily from the so-called Princeton School of Theology associated with Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge and Benjamin Warfield. Rogers claimed that reformers, such as Luther and Calvin, found the authority of Scripture in its content, the message of Christ and His salvation. The Bible was infallible as it fulfills what it was intended to do, namely proclaim the message of salvation which the Father had wrought in His Son, Jesus Christ. The Roger/McKim proposal was then in turn challenged by the work of John WOODBRIDGE, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982). In the wake of this debate, the only emerging consensus was that there was no consensus on the nature of biblical authority within the larger evangelical camp.

Therefore, it followed that the Pentecostal inclusion under the fundamentalist canopy would hinge in a large part on this incorporation of inerrancy into official parlance. Illustrative of this tendency are these comments by William H. Rogers in the *Pentecostal Testimony*:

God is life; the Bible is life. God is light, Power and Truth; the Bible is the same.

There are those who cry at times back to Christ and let the Bible go. But if you get back to Christ, He will direct you to the Scriptures. If you go back to the Scriptures, they will direct you to Christ. They are both inseparable. To deny one is to deny the other....To talk of going back to the Bible and mean by that that we may have a knowledge of Christ apart from the Bible, is as senseless as it is ignorant and sinful. To deny the inerrancy of the Scriptures is to be without an authoritative revelation of God or a history of Jesus Christ. To deny the infallibility of the Bible is to deny the supreme authority of Jesus Christ and the abiding values of His blood atonement.<sup>1</sup>

Conspicuous by its absence is the question whether such a resolution is compatible with the spirit of early Pentecostalism with its implicit emphasis on the Spoken Word. It would seem that Pentecostals were bent on distancing themselves from their historical tradition which intuitively resisted the strictures of empirical rational discourse. Again typical of this tendency is the 1947 August edition of the *Pentecostal Testimony*, in which Beatrice L. Sims offers a scientific proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Citing the work of Ivan Panin, a converted Russian Nihilist who developed a complex system of numerology, Sims contends that he demonstrates irrefutably that the Scriptures follow a uniform design from Genesis to Revelation. Sims concludes by arguing:

One does not prove that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal by an appeal to Authority, but by cold, unimpassioned, mathematical reasoning, about which, as Pastor Panin sagely observes, there can be no dispute.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WM. H. ROGERS, "The Glory and Authority of the Bible," *Pentecostal Testimony* (June 1, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> BEATRICE L. SIMS, "The Marvel of the Ages: A Scientific Proof of the Inspiration of the Scriptures," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Aug. 1, 1947).

As impressive as such a claim may sound, its affinities lie embedded within fundamentalist rhetoric. The only logical conclusion for its inclusion within the Pentecostal tradition was as a pragmatic attempt to accommodate Pentecostalism into the main-stream “orthodox” conservative Protestant tradition.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2.3. The Influence of Neo-Orthodoxy

Ironically, the relationship between the Word of God as Spirit and as letter would be addressed in a systematic fashion, but under the guise of neo-orthodoxy. In his *Church Dogmatics*, Karl Barth readily promotes the authority, sufficiency and the verbal character of the Scriptures but he stops short of defending fundamentalism’s inerrancy of Scriptures. In the eyes of Barth such a strategy betrays the spiritual and dynamic character of Scriptures. Barth would write of God continually speaking anew through the pages of Scripture so that “The Word” becomes the Word of God. However, Fundamentalism rode roughshod over his theology. Barth was still far too subjective in his use of Scripture to be considered seriously by fundamentalists. As for Pentecostals, their concession to fundamentalist rhetoric virtually guaranteed a similar negative indictment concerning the work of Barth—this despite many natural affinities.<sup>2</sup>

David DuPlessis, aka. Mr. Pentecost, is one early Pentecostal who recognized an affinity with Barth. In an interview conducted late in his life, DuPlessis was asked if

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Sheppard, a former theologian with the AG, is one Pentecostal who has consistently objected to this tendency. Publishing his comments in a renegade journal of Pentecostal thought, *AGORA*, Sheppard was fearful that his own denomination was ignoring their distinctly Pentecostal history of biblical interpretation, in favor of Lindsell’s brand of inerrancy. Contrary to the hermeneutical strictures imposed by inerrancy, Sheppard asserts that “Pentecostals have primarily used the Bible to interpret theologically the reality of their experience rather than deduce an abstract system of orthodox doctrines which could, then, become a purely rationalistic test of Christian faith.” Gerald SHEPPARD, “Pentecostal Tradition: Part One,” *loc. cit.*

To Lindsell’s charge that if one opts out of inerrancy, they *ipso facto* proclaim the Bible to be errant, Sheppard says, “I do not confess the errancy of Scripture, but its truth and authority...it is demeaning and irresponsible to call those who reject Lindsell’s position errantist. It is his language game and many of us refuse to play it. Gerald SHEPPARD, “Sheppard Responds,” *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> When respondents to Project Exousia were asked, in the Spirit of Barth, if “the Gospel as the transcendent Word of God will appear somewhat different to the church in every age, since the Spirit always has a fresh message for the churches,” they rejected the affirmation. The results were SA-4%, A-15%, U-8%, D-35%, SD-38%. See annexe A, #35.

the dynamic theology of Karl Barth was a more appropriate model for Pentecostals than the static dogmatism of fundamentalist theology. DuPlessis responded by saying:

That's right. In fact, in our first meeting when I came to Switzerland, Karl Barth and I talked about matters which related to this very point. We were discussing the Holy Spirit and Barth's theology, and he said to me, "I can see you've been talking to fundamentalists." I asked Barth, "Well now, what is a fundamentalist in your book?" He said, A fundamentalist is somebody who knows some Scripture and thinks he's arrived. If you differ with him you're lost, and if you dare to come out with more than he's thought of, you've gone astray. Because he's arrived, he can never go on in his theological development, but sticks in one place with no vision." I asked Barth, "And you haven't arrived?" "No," he said, "I'm a seeker, and a seeker does not arrive. How can I arrive when Jesus Christ is the way, not the terminal." Now that's a key difference between Barth and the fundamentalists. For Barth the truth in Jesus Christ liberates us from defending ourselves, and the truth of the Word of God continues to unfold to us through the Holy Spirit as we go all the way toward the full stature of Jesus Christ. that's the best message a Pentecostal can discover.<sup>1</sup>

Pentecostals, however, between their formative years from the 1925 to the 1950s would work at downplaying this message as they quietly acquiesced to the fundamentalist agenda of inerrancy.

#### 2.2.4. Dispensationalism

Accommodating themselves to the fundamentalist position on inerrancy, it was a natural step for Pentecostals to further adopt and adapt the theological dispensational construct of fundamentalism. Dispensationalism, as it became affectionately known, served as the cornerstone of Fundamentalism.<sup>2</sup> Promoted by the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), it essentially was a rationalistic approach to the Bible that divided church history into a series of epicycles known as "dispensations."

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<sup>1</sup> David DuPLESSIS, "Agora talks to David DuPlessis," *Agora*, 2:1 (1978), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Dispensationalism was originally popularized by Plymouth Brethren John Nelson Darby's commentaries and was made accessible to the rank and file believer through the publication of *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909). In addition, dispensationalism found many early disciples who used their influence to spread its tenets. Among the more notable dispensational leaders were R.A. Torrey (1856-1928), James Gray (1851-1925), C.I. Scofield (1843-1921), William J. Eerdman (1833-1923), A.C. Dixon (1854-1925) and A.J. Gordon (1836-1895). For a critical assessment of dispensationalism see George MARSDEN *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). and James BARR, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

Wrapped in a tight theological construct, history was generally divided into seven periods. Beginning with the dispensation of innocence, humanity was pictured twisting through consecutive dispensations of conscience, human government, promise, law, and grace while ending with the Millennium. Within the time frame of each dispensation, God is said to have established a test of obedience for humanity. The subsequent failure of humanity hastened the termination of the respective dispensation with a spiritual judgement, spelling the dawning of a new dispensation.

Granted, dividing history into specific time frames is nothing essentially original.<sup>1</sup> Historians and theologians have generally found it natural and practical to divide history into manageable portions for the purpose of study. However, dispensationalism made its mark by shielding the church itself from historical introspection. To accomplish this, it was necessary to view the Bible through two independent lenses—one for the church and one for the nation Israel. Israel was described as being locked into a struggle with God who has chosen to call her His own. The promises of the Old Testament ensure that despite Israel's frequent failure, God will not relinquish His eternal covenant with her. Old Testament promises are interpreted with exacting reference to their literal earthly fulfilment in the nation of Israel. Nevertheless, where the Church fits into the dispensational scheme is not quite clear. It appears to exist as a parenthetical age that amounts to God's pausing to offer salvation to the gentiles as a substitute for Israel's continual rebellion. What is clear is that when God decides to test the Jewish nation for the last time before pouring out His wrath on humanity, He will "rapture" the Church thus sparing it from any physical harm. Protected in this "intercalation," the Church is further rescued from the burden

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<sup>1</sup> Some defenders of dispensationalism, in what can only be understood as a desperate attempt to use historical precedent as justification, have postulated that Dispensationalism is not a new hermeneutical device. In what amounts to a spurious use of name dropping. Jimmy SWAGGART, in his study book, *Gods Plan for the Ages, A Study of the Dispensational and Prophetic Plan of God* (Baton Rouge: J. S. Ministries, 1986) expresses solidarity with Augustine whom he attributes with saying "Distinguish the ages, and the Scriptures will be in harmony." However, to suggest that Augustine or any other church leader up to and including the Reformation would have recognized the dispensational package devised by Darby/Scofield goes beyond any reasonable scholarship.

and consequences of previous dispensations as she is left to march through a somewhat irrelevant history awaiting for the return of Christ.

The appeal of dispensationalism laid in its ability to allow its adherents to enforce and maintain a curious version of biblical literalism in the face of modern scientific analysis. Difficult biblical passages could now be ignored or suspended because they were the remnants of a previous dispensation and are, therefore, not applicable in a literal sense. So explains Lewis Sperry Chafer, an early influential fundamentalist:

In this connection the Bible student must recognize the difference between a primary and a secondary application of the Word of God. Only those portions of the Scriptures which are directly addressed to the child of God under grace are to be given a personal or primary application. All such instructions he is expected to perform in detail. In secondary applications it should be observed that, while there are spiritual lessons to be drawn from every portion of the Bible, it does not follow that the Christian is appointed by God to conform to those governing principles which were the will of God for people of other dispensations.<sup>1</sup>

To the uninformed, dispensationalism appears as an esoteric curiosity. But for those raised in the tradition, the discovery of dispensations is defended as a derivative of a common sense, or literal interpretation of the Bible. In fact, says Chafer, "it is impossible to interpret the Bible in its normal, literal sense without realizing that there are different ages and different dispensations."<sup>2</sup>

Fundamentalists could, therefore, argue quite forcefully that based on a literal understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, women should not speak in church. Ironically they could then ignore the rest of the chapter that dealt with prophesying and the speaking in tongues because those activities ceased with the apostolic dispensation. "The apostolic age," says fundamentalist John MacArthur, "was unique and it ended. History says it, Jesus says it, theology says it, and the New Testament attests to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Sperry CHAFER, *Major Bible themes*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974. p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

fact. What happened then (i.e. charismatic gifts of the Spirit) was not to be the norm for succeeding generations of Christians.”<sup>1</sup>

The dispensational scheme gave fundamentalists a systematic key to unlock the treasures of Scripture. It bore all the earmarks of its day. Its rationalism and scientific flavour could be pitted against the onslaught of liberal historical criticism and evolution. It had the further advantage of handcuffing any significant action of the Holy Spirit. Christians living in an age of Grace, with renewed minds were left to use Holy Ghost sanctioned reason to seek any answers to the questions of life they might have. As a result, the Gifts of the Spirit were rendered redundant—the leftovers of a previous dispensation.

For Pentecostals to adapt dispensationalism as a hermeneutical tool was certainly a confusing task. On the one hand, fundamentalist dispensationalism and Pentecostal primitivism did enjoy some similarities. They were both ahistorical—dispensationalism accomplished this by putting the church age in parentheses thus isolating it from the rest of history; Pentecostals did it by suppressing the relevance of church history and positing themselves as the recreation of primitive Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, they both believed that the existing established churches were by and large apostate and that God only dealt with remnants—of which they were one. And finally, they both posited an imminent triumphal return by Christ in which there would be a final accounting.

On the other hand, for Pentecostals to use dispensationalism, they would nonetheless, still need to redefine it to suit their distinctive form of primitivism or

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<sup>1</sup> MACARTHUR, *The Charismatics*, *op. cit.*, p.83.

<sup>2</sup> GRANT WACKER, “Are the Golden Oldies Still Worth Playing? Reflections on History Writing Among Early Pentecostals,” *Pneuma*, 8:2 (Fall 1986), pp. 81-100. and “Playing for Keeps, The Primitivist Impulse in Early Pentecostalism,” in *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*, ed. Richard T. Hughes (Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 196-219.

restorationism.<sup>1</sup> Again, as was so characteristic of the early Pentecostal pursuit towards “orthodoxy”, pragmatism asserted itself as both guide and saviour.

The difficulty for Pentecostals to adapt dispensationalism lay in finding a solution to circumvent the strictures of dispensationalism when they appeared to violate the Pentecostal message. For example, how could Pentecostals legitimately use the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 as a proof text and still maintain a cardinal law of dispensationalism which taught that the function (for the church) of Old Testament prophecy ceased with John the Baptist? Dispensationalists invariably pointed out that such a text is in the Old Testament and, therefore, ultimately concerns the nation of Israel—not the Church. Pentecostals reacted either by pragmatically ignoring these conflicts when necessary or by pragmatically tampering with the rules to allow their inclusion. In the case of the legitimacy of Spirit Baptism, based on such proof texts as Joel 2:28-32, J. G. Hall, known by Pentecostals as the “walking Bible,” offers this solution:

In the prophecy of Joel the baptism is present from God's side and, strictly speaking, remains for its fulfilment in the tribulation is (sic) but partly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost; i.e. we are blessed with the Spirit early.<sup>2</sup>

In essence, by adopting an “already but not yet” theological construct to explain the asterisk relationship between the church and the nation Israel, Pentecostals believed they were able to stave off most the objections encountered by the fundamentalists.

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<sup>1</sup> As a caveat, Gerald Sheppard suggests that it would be premature to conclude that early Pentecostals held a universal belief in dispensationalism or its ancillary buzz words: tribulation and rapture. Writes Sheppard: “For Pentecostals the emphasis on eschatology belonged more naturally to the sense of a final glorious revelation and outpouring of the Spirit in the last days, than, as with fundamentalists, to the dark prospect of impending destruction for those not suddenly taken out of this world....My suspicions are that a number of Pentecostal denominations which came to hold to popular dispensationalism during the 1920s and the following decades are now reading back into their pre-1920s statements a firm consensus on the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture which was not originally present among them. Gerald SHEPPARD, “Pentecostals and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an uneasy relationship,” *Pneuma*, 6:2 (Fall 84), p. 9.

Nonetheless, whether Sheppards suspicions contain merit or not, dispensational rhetoric was firmly entrenched both within the AG and the PAOC by the early 1930s.

<sup>2</sup> J.G. HALL quoted by SHEPPARD, “Pentecostals and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism,” *op. cit.*, p. 25.



Not all Pentecostal adaptations of Dispensationalism attempted to imitate the lead taken by the fundamentalists. Perhaps the most Promethean dispensational scheme was undertaken by Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the International Four Square Gospel.<sup>1</sup> While Mrs. McPherson maintained the pessimism of dispensationalism concerning the future of secular humanity that dispensationalism proclaimed, she would conflate Scofield's seven dispensations into three dispensations analogous to the Trinity. The first dispensation under the tutelage of God the Father began with the birth of Adam and is recorded in the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. This dispensation may have been marked by humanity's failure, but it ended in God's faithfulness as "God the Father kept His word, and true to His promise, gave Jesus, as His great Love Gift to the sinner."<sup>2</sup> The second dispensation began with the incarnation of Jesus Christ and was recorded in the four Gospels. The ministry of Jesus, however, was restricted to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. As such, it required the dispensation of the Holy Spirit to complete the plan of redemption in its fullest sense.

Thank the Lord for salvation, for Jesus who shed His precious blood, but remember that just as it took three stories to complete the ark which lifted Noah and his family above the waves, just so it has taken the combined efforts of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to form the ark that shall catch up His people above the waves of tribulation that shall soon sweep o'er this earth.<sup>3</sup>

To her credit, McPherson's depiction of dispensationalism was more reflective of the Pentecostal tradition. It in effect declared that the gifts of the Spirit, by way of their dispensational promise, are not only legitimate but essential in the operation of the church. For their part, however, the PAOC did not engage in such an innovative adaptation. Instead they preferred to adapt, amazingly, almost verbatim the fundamentalist methodology. Illustrative of this trend are the graphic reproductions of

<sup>1</sup> For a review of Aimee Semple McPherson's theology of dispensationalism see Robert CORNWALL, "Primitivism and the Redefinition of Dispensationalism in the Theology of Aimee Semple McPherson," *Pneuma*, 14:1 (Spring, 1992), pp. 23-42.

<sup>2</sup> MCPHERSON, *This is That*, op. cit., p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408.

fundamentalist Dispensationalism included in the *Pentecostal Testimony* by Thomas Holdcroft.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of dispensations on Pentecostal thought cannot be undermined. Dispensationalism was a hermeneutical tool with profound ecclesiological and eschatological implications. The challenge for Pentecostals laid in their ability to affirm the eschatological implications of the system while pragmatically denying its ecclesiological ramifications, which suggested that the gifts of the Spirit were no longer available for the church.

#### 2.2.5. Experience

Acceptance into the fundamentalist/evangelical family was still contingent on one major factor. It would not be enough to appeal to the inerrancy of Scriptures rhetorically and adopt a dispensational hermeneutical package, Pentecostals would further need to distance themselves from their early reliance on experience. To use William James categories, they would need to abandon their historical tough-minded temperament in favor of the fundamentalist/evangelical tender-minded temperament.

Unofficially, however, experience still played a significant role in Pentecostal hermeneutics. Pentecostal services regularly included in their liturgy a time for testimonies—individuals would stand and very informally recount what God had done in their life during the past week, month ect. And experience was the one sure proof that Pentecostals were right concerning the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

To offset this grass roots reliance on experience, official rhetoric began to downplay the Pentecostal relationship between experience and hermeneutics.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas HOLDCROFT, "A Study in dispensations," *Pentecostal Testimony* (August 15, 1945).

Illustrative of this tendency is this apologetic piece by J. Narver Gortner in the *Pentecostal Testimony*.

God wanted to show me that an experience, it matters not how good it may have been, is not something to be trusted. It is just an experience. God would have us trust Him. God is a jealous God. He will give none of His glory to another. He will not give any of it to an experience even though the experience came to us as a result of our trusting Him. He would have us appreciate the experience, but would have us exercise care lest we exalt it and forget the One through whom it came, and apart from whom it would have been impossible.<sup>1</sup>

Gortner concludes that experience can be misleading and become an idol in itself. Ironically, how does he arrive at his conclusion—through experience. Despite much wisdom in the previous commentary, it fails to ask the central question of how experience should inform and interpret God's revelation?

Rather than wrestle with such questions, the officialdom of Pentecostal denominations such as the PAOC began transferring their reliance on experience to that of creedal propositions. Creeds, the traditional guardians of orthodoxy, became the new signposts designed to guide believers into Truth. In time, like the denominations which formulated them, these creeds quickly moved from being treated as a reluctant necessity to being accepted as part of the fabric of their faith. Again, J. Narver Gortner writes:

I recently picked up a book entitled, "My Religion in Everyday Life," by Dr. Josiah Strong. Opening it almost at random, I read the following paragraph: "This is a practical age, and we are a practical people; hence it is not the theory but the practice of religion that appeals to us. Not creed, not logic, but experience is the test. That religion is best which in a great variety of circumstances works best."

The paragraph set me to thinking. I came to the conclusion that experience is important, that it is indeed true that it is more important than is creed or logic, but at the same time that it is scarcely possible for one to have an experience that is worth while without a creed. What is a creed? A lot of things have been said against a creed that might better never have been said. A creed is simply a formulated statement of what one believes. And is it possible for me to have an experience in God unless I believe something? And, in order that I may have a satisfactory experience, an experience that will take me through, I must believe

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<sup>1</sup> J. Narver GORTNER, Experience vs. God," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Sept., 1949).

what God in His Word has said is necessary in order that I may be saved.<sup>1</sup>

Gortner is able to justify the formulation of creeds by equating them with “what God in His Word has said.” In a *tour de force*, creeds became acceptable because in describing them as a mere extension of the Bible they were locked into a reciprocal relationship with its authority.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2.6. Conclusion

Between the years 1925 and 1950, the evidence would indicate that as a denomination, Pentecostals pursued orthodoxy by hermeneutically aligning themselves with fundamentalists/evangelicals.<sup>3</sup> The decision to do so appears as a pragmatic necessity for survival—in part as a means to solicit respectability, but more importantly, as a means to assuage internal conflicts. And so on the one hand, Pentecostals pragmatically learned when to embrace fundamentalist orthodoxy and when to “opt out” if it was deemed incompatible with experience.

Responding to the oft asked question “What is the doctrinal position of the Pentecostal Movement?” J . Purdie responded:

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Charles Ratz, a long-standing Bible College teacher for the PAOC wrote, “a creed is like a backbone. A man does not need to wear his backbone in front of him; but he must have a backbone and a straight one or he will be a flexible if not a hump-backed Christian.” Charles RATZ, “Value of Truth,” *Pentecostal Testimony* (November, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Many individuals stand out as exceptions. One of the most visible was David DuPlessis. “Are we Recognizing or Organizing?” (July 15, 1959). “Since the distinctive character of this world-wide movement is a spiritual experience and not a peculiar doctrine, our fellowship must of necessity be spiritual.”

Furthermore, on the crucial issue of inerrancy, Pentecostal Thomas Holdcroft falls far short of Lindsell’s standard of inerrancy. On the one hand, Holdcroft sounds like a card carrying fundamentalist. For instance he agrees that the “Biblical revelation constitutes intelligible and verifiable statements of propositional fact...and it asserts a full array of factual data to direct all matters of faith and practice.” On the other hand, in the crucial area of science and history, Holdcroft believes the Bible does not intend to establish itself as an authority as scientific expressions should be understood in a popular sense in that they lack technical precision. Then, in what many fundamentalists would consider sliding down a slippery slope in inerrant parlance, Holdcroft goes on to further suggest that perhaps the mechanical difference between the Testaments may, among other things, have accounted for the New Testament writers quoting an inaccurate translation from the Septuagint. Such thinking, however unwittingly, casts a dark shadow on the fundamentalist ideal of inerrancy as stipulated in the *Statement Essential and Fundamental Truth* by the PAOC. HOLDCROFT, “Bibliology,” *loc. cit.*

The answer can be given that the Movement believes the same basic doctrines as are contained in the teaching of historic Christianity as set forth in the three Ancient Creeds of the early Church known as the Apostle's, the Nicene, and the Athanasian; and also the Confessions of Faith drawn up at the time of the Reformation by the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These Creeds and confessions are not considered to teach anything above or beyond the Scriptures, but only set forth in systematic form the truths contained within the Holy Scriptures. Thus, the Pentecostal Movement is an orthodox, spiritual Church holding and teaching what the historic Evangelical Church has held and taught since Apostolic days.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that the rank and file Pentecostal who had been brought up on an anti-creedal diet would have difficulty knowing anything about the Ancient Creeds, Purdie's comments illustrate how far the Pentecostal Movement had shifted from its original platform. No longer a repristination of the Apostolic church—Pentecostals now stood in company with the historic churches, "differing only in emphasis ...on certain biblical teachings that are distinctive to her testimony." For better or for worse, success was changing the course of denominations such as the PAOC.

### 2.3. Techno-Efficacious Paradigm: 1950-

After struggling for more than forty years on the fringe of Christendom, Pentecostals were now achieving some measure of respectability. Thomas Zimmerman's<sup>2</sup> election as chairman of the National Association of Evangelicals<sup>3</sup> in 1960 and the coincidental inception of the Charismatic movement within the main-line Protestant denominations (1960) and later the Roman Catholic church (1967) virtually cemented their legitimacy and begged people to take notice.<sup>4</sup> Combined, these factors

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<sup>1</sup> James Eustace PURDIE, *What we Believe*, Toronto, n.d.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Fletcher Zimmerman served as the general superintendent of the AG from 1959 to 1985.

<sup>3</sup> See annexe C.

<sup>4</sup> Since the late 60s a flurry of scholarly non-Pentecostal publications have been printed which examine the Pentecostal Movement. Though the tone of these publications tend to be negative, their substantial press, nonetheless, in a *tour de force* served to underscore the essential legitimacy of Pentecostalism even if they considered it misguided. Among some of the more important treatments that were published at this time were: John NICHOL, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). Robert Glenn GROMACKI, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and

virtually guaranteed the inclusion of Pentecostals under the growing evangelical canopy.

With this new respectability came a gradual shift in direction. The old apologetic paradigm, which had directed the activities and the ideology of groups such as the PAOC for over 25 years, was becoming redundant. In some respects, it could be said that the emerging paradigm was less a “shift” than it was an “adding on.” The foundation did not substantially change but its emphasis and ancillary activities was undergoing a metamorphosis.

Success and growth were becoming the bywords of a new generation. This is not to suggest that Pentecostals had necessarily shunned success before. The pragmatic impulse of Pentecostalism guaranteed to some degree that success would always play a role. As early as the General Conference of 1940, the PAOC carried this resolution:

Resolved that the worker who over a period of years proves unsuccessful, be demoted and their credentials recalled by the General Conference on recommendation of the District Executive.<sup>1</sup>

What constituted success, however, was never really defined. But it is clear from the historical record, that success was more than just “bean counting.” During their developmental years, Pentecostals were still so anti-social, and separated from mainstream society that barring a mighty move of God, their exclusive character was counter-productive to mass conversion. Consider this resolution carried in 1938:

Whereas worldliness has been a great factor in the downfall and loss of spirituality in the denominational churches and whereas the trend to worldliness is apparent in our ranks as a Pentecostal Fellowship. Be it

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Reformed Pub., Co., 1967). Fredrick DALE BRUNER, *The Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970). James DUNN, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Reexamination of the New Testament Teaching of the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism Today*, (Naperville: Allenson, 1970). Walter HOLLENWEGER, *The Pentecostals* (Minnesota: Augsburg, Pub., House, 1972). William SAMARIN, *Tongues of Men and Angels* (New York: MacMillan, 1972). John KILDAHL, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes*, (Mississauga, PAOC Archives, 1940).

resolved that the General Conference go on record as disapproving of those things which are generally understood as worldliness such as attending of theaters, shows, hockey matches, professional ball games, carnivals, dances, bingo, card parties, associating with worldlings in skatings and attending places of amusement in general, and be it further resolved that we consider it a very dangerous practice for our people to absent themselves from their responsibilities in connection with their church to take part in worldly activities.<sup>1</sup>

Such rigidity, reflects a degree of legalism but it also effectively illustrates to what length Pentecostals tried to separate themselves from the rest of society. By 1960 this line between Pentecostals and contemporary society began to wear thin as Pentecostals were climbing the social ladder and enjoying it.

It was only a matter of time before success would become synonymous with numerical growth. To this end, Pentecostals led the way through the 1970s and 1980s with technology and mass marketing techniques.<sup>2</sup>

To be sure Pentecostals were not alone in their obsession with church growth. Conservative evangelicals of all persuasions were analyzing the efficiency of their organizations. Says Elmer Towns, one of the patriarchs of the Church Growth Movement:

First, America has given itself over to the measurement of institutions and the statistical evaluation of education. We have developed standardized tests, percentiles, and median scores. It is perhaps only natural that Americans would attempt to measure and analyze the church. Second, more attention has been paid to the efficiency of organizations. It follows that the church too should be studied in the light of improving its outreach and ministry. Third, there has been a communication explosion in America. The time is right for journalism and media to focus on church decline and growth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes*, (Mississauga, PAOC Archives, 1938)

<sup>2</sup> During the 1980s religious television was dominated by Pentecostal churches and Pentecostal paraorganizations. Operating in some cases multi-million dollar budgets, these programs became the focus of much public attention. See Michael HORTON, ed., *The Agony of Deceit: What some Preachers are really Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990); Quentin J. SCHULTZE, *Televangelism and American Culture: the Business of Popular Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991); Razelle FRANKL, *Televangelism: the Marketing of Popular Religion* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Elmer TOWNS, John VAYGHAN & David SEIFERT, *The Complete Book of Church Growth* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1982), p. 9.

Pentecostals, however, with the privileged place they had granted pragmatism, and their relative short liturgical history, were far more flexible and capable of adapting the demands of the new technology to their program. They were not burdened with maintaining a perceived sense of higher virtues as were their more tender-minded brethren. Indeed pragmatism and the new technology seemed like a marriage made in heaven. Aided in part by Peter Wagner, an acknowledged crusader of Church Growth, Pentecostals soon became champions of the new technology and pragmatism was becoming an unacknowledged *cause célèbre*.

The impact of this change was again profoundly reflected in the Pentecostal application of biblical authority. The result of which was the emergence of two influential hermeneutical streams within Pentecostal circles. The first was by way of adoption, while the second was by way of conformity.

### 2.3.1. Grammatico-Historical Hermeneutics

Until the 1960s, Pentecostals had generally relied heavily on a pragmatic hermeneutic set within a dispensational framework. Affirming the divine authority of the Scriptures, Pentecostals assumed that their interpretation was self-evident and self-authenticating. Little time was devoted to any systematic development of this hermeneutic.<sup>1</sup> By 1960, Pentecostals, following the example of other conservative evangelicals, adopted the grammatico-historical method of exegesis as their own.

As was noted earlier, the grammatico-historical method was a conservative response to liberal Higher Criticism.<sup>2</sup> As a method, it carefully in distinguishes the literary types and historical context of Scripture before seeking their application.

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<sup>1</sup> STRONSTAD, "Trends in Hermeneutics," *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The results of project Exousia were divided on the legitimacy of "higher criticism." When were asked if the discoveries through "higher criticism" have only served to undermine the authority of Scripture, the analysands responded as follows: SA-20%, A-27%, U-12%, D-24%, SD-17%. See appendix 1, #8.



While the grammatico-historical method is still the hermeneutical approach of choice by classical Pentecostals, it is not the method that was most readily associated at a popular level with Pentecostalism during the 1970s and 1980s. Given the pragmatic bent of Pentecostals and the emergence of the “new technology,” it was only a matter of time before these two would merge together. The result was the creation of a “user friendly” hermeneutic.

### 2.3.2. User Friendly Hermeneutic

Within this new hermeneutical rubric, the phrase “standing on the promises,” was no longer uttered as a source of assurance embedded in the sovereignty of God, rather for many it became a tool to extract favors from God. Increasingly, in the lingo of popular culture, many Pentecostals learned how to “use” rather than “receive” the Scriptures. Apologist, C.S. Lewis in his book *An Experiment in Criticism*, offers this distinction:

A work of (whatever) art can be either “received” or “used.” When we “receive” it we exert our senses and imagination and various other powers according to a pattern invented by the artist. When we “use” it we treat it as assistance for our own activities. The one, to use an old-fashioned image, is like being taken for a bicycle ride by a man who may know roads we have never yet explored. The other is like adding one of those little motor attachments to our own bicycle and then going for one of our familiar rides. These rides may in themselves be good, bad, or indifferent. The “uses” which the many make of the arts may or may not be intrinsically vulgar, depraved, or morbid. That’s as may be. using is inferior to “reception” because art, if used rather than received, merely facilitates, brightens, relieves or palliates our life, and does not add to it.<sup>1</sup>

The remarks of C.S. Lewis are particularly relevant to the manner in which many Pentecostals made use of the Scriptures during much of the 1970s and 1980s. This tendency to “use” rather than “receive” Scripture is illustrated in a significant fashion with Paul Yonggi Cho. With a congregation of 500,000 plus adherents in South Korea, Yonggi Cho was the pastor of the largest church in the world. A Pentecostal,

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. LEWIS, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 88.

formerly affiliated with the Assemblies of God in South Korea, Yonggi Cho left his greatest mark to date on the Pentecostal message with the publishing of his book, *The Fourth Dimension*.

The “fourth dimension” for Yonggi Cho is located in the realm of the subconscious or the spirit of inner man.<sup>1</sup> Through the use of dreams and visions the Holy Spirit is said to communicate to our spirit. Yonggi Cho says, “only through a vision and a dream can you visualize and dream bigger churches....Through visualizing and dreaming you can incubate your future and hatch the results.”<sup>2</sup> In this economy, the Bible was written in the fourth dimension. By reading Scripture, it is said, we can enlarge our dreams and our visions.<sup>3</sup> For Yonggi Cho, dominion in this fourth dimension is primordial. Once you master the technique you are no longer at the mercy of destiny but you can give order to your circumstances and situations.<sup>4</sup>

The key to unleashing our dreams is found in the power of the Spoken Word. Revealed to Yonggi Cho through prayer, God spoke:

You can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in your church—but nothing will happen—no soul will be saved, no broken home rejoined, until you speak the word. Don't just beg and beg for what you need. Give the word. Let me have the material with which I can build miraculous happenings. As I did when creating the world, speak forth. Say 'let there be light,' or say, 'let there be firmament.'<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding the subjective nature of this revelation, Yonggi Cho illustrates how the Scriptures could be wielded with the skill of a craftsman to achieve an assortment of Promethean results. The Bible is loaded with curative powers that when rubbed properly can achieve the unlimited desires of the heart. “If the Holy Spirit imparts faith into your heart to remove a mountain,” reiterates Yonggi Cho, “do not

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Yonggi CHO, *The Fourth Dimension* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1979), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73,74.

pray and beg for the mountain to be moved; rather speak, Be removed to yonder sea! and it shall come to pass.”<sup>1</sup>

Integral to Yonggi Cho’s hermeneutics was his ability to differentiate between the two Greek words for “word,” *logos* and *rhema*. Yonggi Cho defined *logos* as the general Word of God contained within the canon of Scripture, while *rhema* is a specific Word to a specific person in a specific situation.<sup>2</sup> *Rhema* then, is said to evolve out of *logos*. When the Holy Spirit quickens a particular Scripture to your situation, by faith *logos* becomes *rhema*, allowing you to speak forth the Word.

Paul Yonggi Cho’s high stature as a successful pastor assured him a broad and generally uncritical audience in Pentecostal circles.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps that can be partly attributed to several independent Pentecostal groups in North America who were promulgating essentially the same message minus the mysticism. Influenced by the writings of E.W. Kenyon, Pentecostal televangelists Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagin have been instrumental in what critics have dubbed, the “Prosperity Gospel” or “Name it and Claim it theology.”<sup>4</sup> Substituting the eastern mysticism surrounding much of Yonggi Cho’s thought, Copeland and to a lesser extent Hagin have inserted “The American Dream.” Inherent, however, in all of these ideologies is the ability to dispense with traditional hermeneutics which sought to interpret and understand the meaning of Scripture and replace it with a methodology that uses Scripture as a prescription for successful living.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87-113.

<sup>3</sup> Valued as a guest speaker in many parts of North America, Yonggi Cho’s popularity waned somewhat with the publication of the polemic, *The Seduction of Christianity* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1985). Its authors Dave HUNT and T.A. MCMAHON took aim at Yonggi Cho and other prominent evangelist/pastors who in their estimation were promoting a new form of neo-gnosticism. While some Pentecostal churches embraced the publication as manna from heaven, other churches dismissed Hunt as a disgruntled evangelical.

<sup>4</sup> Among the many recent books to explore this recent phenomena are Michael HORTON ed., *The Agony of Deceit: loc. cit.*; Micahel HORTON ed., *Power Religion: The Selling out of the Evangelical Church?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992); Bruce BARRON, *The Health and Wealth Gospel: What’s going on Today in a Movement that has Shaped the Faith of Millions?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1987).

It is difficult to assess how a classical denomination, such as the PAOC, has been influenced by this trend. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that among the rank and file their influence has been substantial. Gifted as forceful communicators, Copeland, Hagin et al., retain enough of the core of Pentecostalism—that the Holy Spirit is contemporarily active through the demonstration of His gifts empowering believers to experience victorious Christian living—that Pentecostal adherents want to believe their message.

It could be argued that these modern day peddlers of health and prosperity are the natural result of the fusion between North American rationalism, and an emerging Pentecostal pragmatic orthopraxy. If we begin with the presupposition that the Spiritual Gifts indeed are the birth-right of Christians today, and we add driving logic of the 20th century rationalistic mind-set, then it follows that there should be a method to control the usage of these gifts thus guaranteeing their effectiveness. Again, riding on the back of fundamentalism's commitment to the Bible, it was only natural that the Scriptures not only provided, but were the inspiration for that formula. In this economy, the believer was called upon to speak the Words of Scripture into being. Any subsequent failure at this point, clearly reflected the believer's inability to appropriate properly what is his/hers by inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2.3. The New Academia

With a new found respectability, Pentecostals are now making their presence known in academic circles. In 1970, Pentecostals established the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS). An international organization of scholars working within the Pentecostal tradition, the SPS publishes a biennial journal and meets annually for the purpose of establishing a forum of discussion for all academic disciplines as they

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<sup>1</sup> It is this curious blend of hope in supernatural intervention and personal guilt at ones' failure to receive that intervention that marks "Health and Prosperity" movements.

pertain to the objectives of Pentecostalism. Membership is on an individual rather than an institutional or denominational basis.

One of the objectives of the SPS is the formation of a distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic. To this end, Pentecostal theologians are increasingly addressing unapologetically their experiential disposition as not only being a legitimate, but an essential expression of their faith.<sup>1</sup> In solidarity with this trend, William MacDonald's description of Pentecostal theology as being Christ-centered, experience-certified theology is taking on iconic proportions within the academia of Pentecostalism.<sup>2</sup>

At this level Pentecostals are attempting to forge a hermeneutic that would integrate the propositional character of orthodoxy with the ultra pragmatic heartbeat of orthopraxy and the mystical affections of orthopathy. To accomplish this, many Pentecostals within the academy are readdressing the role of illumination, the dialectical role of experience, and a new emphasis on the narrativity of Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

Pentecostalist Cheryl Bridges Johns believes that the key word which could summarize Pentecostal biblical hermeneutics is the Old Testament word "to know" — "yada." Explains Bridges:

*Yada...*is a knowing more by the heart than by the mind, a knowing that arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by active and intentional engagement in lived experience.....

Within the understanding of yada, if a person knows God, she or he is encountered by the one who lives in the midst of history and who initiates covenant relationships. Knowledge of God, therefore, is

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<sup>1</sup> Among some of the more recent examples see Gordon ANDERSON, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (Nov. 12-14, 1992). Brian ROBINSON, "A Pentecostal Hermeneutic of Religious Experience," Paper presented for the 22nd Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (Nov. 12-14, 1992). Roger STRONSTAD, "Pentecostalism, Experiential Presuppositions and Hermeneutics," Paper presented for the 20th Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (November 8-10, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> William MACDONALD, "Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 58-75.

<sup>3</sup> See S.M Burgess, G. B. McGee and P.H. Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, *op. cit.*, s.v. "Hermeneutics, Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic," by French Arrington, pp. 376-89.

measured not by the information one possesses but by how one is living in response to God.<sup>1</sup>

Praxis-oriented, this new age of Pentecostal scholars have not relinquished their hold on Scripture as the final authority as truth, rather they refuse to divorce those same truths from lived experience.<sup>2</sup> Be that as it may the rank and file pew sitter remains far more familiar with the exploits and claims of a bevy of media evangelists than they are with those involved in higher education.

#### 2.2.4 Conclusion

The inability of Pentecostals to forge a distinctive hermeneutic during their formative years has resulted in a frenzy of activity in the arena of Pentecostal hermeneutics. The resulting confusion has created a substantial diastasis between grassroots Pentecostals and their academic counterparts. At the grassroots level, Pentecostals have been generally sympathetic and patient with the “user” hermeneutic of many of the popular evangelists. Meanwhile Pentecostal theologians are systematically re-examining pre-institutionalized Pentecostalism in a serious effort to formulate a Pentecostal experiential hermeneutic. Somewhere in the middle, denominational officials are trying to stay true to the course that they have forged with their Phryric alliance with fundamentalism/evangelicalism.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the tenuous task of identifying a consistent universal belief concerning the authority of Scriptures and the role that it plays among Canadian Pentecostals, some conclusions can be outlined.

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<sup>1</sup> Cheryl Bridges JOHNS, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86,87.

1. Pentecostals tend to believe that the authority of Scriptures is the only solid bulwark Christians have against relativism. Scriptures establish the unrivalled standard for belief and practice. People may quibble over its meaning, but that does not deter from its divinely appointed authority. The error in such cases lies with the interpreters and not in the Scriptures. "We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God," says James MacKnight, the general superintendent of the 165,000 member Canadian assembly, "and our ministers revere and respect it and will not stand in the pulpit and question its authority...once you move away from the word of God, it's everyone's opinion and you lose that moral base."<sup>1</sup>

The question to what degree cultural and ecclesiastical assimilation has shaped Pentecostal hermeneutics is largely lost among the rank and file. With a sense of defiance, Pentecostal preachers claim that their teachings are not biased or influenced by opinion but stand firmly on the Holy Scriptures.<sup>2</sup>

2. Pentecostals have a generally unacknowledged, experienced certified theology. While they look towards the Scriptures for its ultimate authority, their hermeneutics at a popular level revolves around experience. In the spirit of pragmatism, if it works, then it is probably justified. Pragmatism has given Pentecostals a liberty in freely borrowing contents from the homes of their theological neighbours whenever it serves their purpose. If it does not work out they can always give it back.

As a caveat, Pentecostal scholars have become far more deliberate and discerning in their use of experience. While they acknowledge the role experience

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<sup>1</sup> "Pentecostals are United on Controversial Issues," *Kingston Whig Standard* (August 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, Pentecostals would adjoin that culture is a factor in hermeneutics (see annexe A :item #3). My suspicion, however, is that culture in this case is limited to Biblical culture. How does contemporary culture influence the way we perceive Scripture is an entirely different issue.

legitimately plays, they combine it with more generally accepted methods of exegesis.<sup>1</sup> Roger Stronstad, a leading theologian within the PAOC, recently affirmed,

...my thesis is that charismatic experience, in particular, and spiritual experience, in general, gives the interpreter of relevant biblical texts an experiential presupposition which transcends the rational or cognitive presuppositions of scientific exegesis, and furthermore, results in an understanding, empathy and sensitivity to the text, and priorities in relation to the text which other interpreters do not and cannot have.<sup>2</sup>

Acknowledging the danger or "subjectifying the (biblical) text at the expense of its objective historical particularity,"<sup>3</sup> Stronstad advocates the use of grammatico-historical exegesis as the method par excellence for guarding against the excesses of religious enthusiasm.<sup>4</sup>

3. Nonetheless, be it at a popular or academic level, Pentecostals have never abandoned their primary desire to be Biblical. Pentecostals love Scripture. Interpretation is seldom the stuff of rigid exegesis. Rather it stems from a commitment to pursue the passion of Christ through the pages of the Bible. To this end, pragmatism may appear to be evident either as an impediment or as a help, but it does not overshadow the affectionate relationship Pentecostals have with the Book.

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<sup>1</sup> In the last decade, numerous articles of Pentecostal scholarly have been printed which do not shirk away from the experiential label, but seek to give it proper definition within the Pentecostal Reality. Among these are: STRONSTAD, "Pentecostalism, Experiential Presuppositions and Hermeneutics," *op. cit.*; Brian ROBINSON, "A Pentecostal Hermeneutic of Religious Experience," Paper presented for the 22nd Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (Nov. 12-14, 1992); Gordon FEE, *Gospel and Spirit*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> STRONSTAD, "Pentecostalism, Experiential Presuppositions and hermeneutics," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27,28.



## Chapter 3

# The Spoken Word

It should come as no surprise to discover the venerated role the “Spoken Word” enjoys within the Pentecostal tradition. Complete with a strong sense of God’s willingness to “break-into” the created order at His pleasure—typified by glossolalia — and an experiential approach to theology, Pentecostals have never strayed far away from their oral spirituality.

Describing the distinctiveness of Pentecostal theology, Pentecostal scholar William MacDonald observes that:

Pentecostal theology has had the character of a “witness” experience. This witness tends to have at its deepest level an oral/aural rather than optic-literary transmission. It is well suited for preaching, testifying, and one-to-one contacts. That the one addressed is “there” and in some sense accountable to God is the dynamic for the “witness.” The witness even, then, transmits itself via a divine ark from one believer to another. It works on the not unbiblical principle that belief in a person’s integrity justifies belief in his (or her) witness, especially if that witness is a testimony of what God has done for (her or) him and is willing to do for anyone. Purity of doctrine is preserved by checking to see that the new witness has experienced all that was experienced by the first witness and that both conform to the primary “witness” of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William G. MACDONALD, “Pentecostal Theology, A Classical Viewpoint,” in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 61.

Congruent to this oral tradition, MacDonald explains why early Pentecostals relied so heavily on popular media to get their message across. The use of tracts, magazines and sermon books were far more harmonious for their cause than wordy commentaries or theological tomes.<sup>1</sup> Pentecostals seemed less bent on debating the justification of their experience as they were in proclaiming the reality and power of the Holy Spirit.

Such proclamation says Michael Dowd:

is the result of Pentecostals awareness that the power of the Holy Spirit is unleashed through orality—in witnessing, telling and hearing the stories of God's mighty love and actions—which is simply not possible through theological argument. Creeds and propositions may have their place, but in Pentecostalism, as with the early church, telling the stories of God in Christ is where the transforming power lies. It is this which is not uncommonly accompanied by signs and wonders from God.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. A Rhetorical Affirmation

Notwithstanding the contemporary drama between an oral/aural and a literary/optic spirituality, Pentecostals continue to mediate the orality of their faith through the penultimate channels of preaching, prophecy, worship<sup>3</sup> and testimonies. This chapter will now investigate each of these channels by first asking, how they function rhetorically as a means of communicating and receiving the content of their faith. Second, it will demonstrate how their role in concert with each other has evolved with each subsequent paradigm shift.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 59,60.

<sup>2</sup> Michael DOWD, "Contours of a Narrative Pentecostal Theology and Practice," Paper presented to the 15th annual meeting of the Society *for Pentecostal Studies* (November 14-16, 1985), p. 3,4.

<sup>3</sup> Worship in this usage is limited to the devotional aspects of Pentecostal liturgy, namely, prayer and congregational singing.

## 1.1. The Proclaiming Word

The pulpit has long relished a critical status within the Protestant *weltanschauung*. With the notable exception of Anglicanism, the communion table has been displaced by the pulpit as the distinguishing feature of liturgy.<sup>1</sup> One's success as a pastor generally rises in direct proportion to one's ability to preach the Word. While the "ministry" certainly entails other tasks, none is considered more important than the minister's ability to confront the congregation with God's Word.

Recent literature by Pentecostals would seem to confirm that the centrality of preaching enjoys a strong, inveterate position within the Pentecostal tradition.<sup>2</sup> Preaching is said to be "the most effective way to convince unbelievers of their need to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and to encourage holiness of life."<sup>3</sup> A typical Pentecostal liturgy today aligns itself with the preaching moment. Songs of worship, testimonies, prayers and other expressions of communal faith are all seen as precursors to the sermon. Subsequently, preachers in senior pastoral positions are seldom hired for their ability to counsel, lead worship, or administrate church business — their authority lies in their ability to preach the "Word," with conviction and power.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, their strength as leaders is allayed if their preaching to convince is not appropriately acknowledged and

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<sup>1</sup> Pentecostal theologian, Ron Kydd writes, "What goes on in the pulpit is anything but trivial. That activity is not an amusing addendum to an entertainment glutted culture. That pulpit stops society in its tracks. That pulpit challenges the cocky self assurance of us 'chilled out' sophisticates. God speaks there. It's a place where the Eternal invades the temporal so that the shifting can be drawn into the Unchanging."

"The pulpit is not just an archaic piece of furniture. It could be argued that it represents the human being's willingness to hear from God." Ron KYDD, "The Power of the Pulpit" *Pentecostal Testimony* (October 1992), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Confirms Joseph Byrd, "Early Pentecostalism was shaped and carved out from its preaching and teaching. Preaching was essential to the spread of Pentecostal theology and the spiritual renewal during the movement's first decade. Pentecostals developed their oral theology and method of exegesis more through preaching than print." Joseph BYRD, "Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Theory and Pentecostal Proclamation," An essay presented to the 21st annual meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (November 1991), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Garry MILLEY, "Biblical Preaching do we still need it," *Eastern Journal of Practical Theology*, 1:1 (1987), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> In one PAOC church I attended, the congregation was asked to prioritize the job description of their senior pastor in the form of a informal written survey. From the range of options offered, the congregation overwhelmingly agreed that preaching was job priority number one. They were equally adamant that building debt reduction, ecumenical participation and home visitation were the least important activities.

affirmed by their respective congregation. Reflective of this emphasis are these comments by the General Superintendent in his address to the General Conference in 1954:

I thank God that the main emphasis in our Bible colleges is upon the spiritual rather than the academic. A writer in a recent issue of the official organ of one of our largest denominations in Canada states, "The handwriting is on the wall. Drastic changes must be made in our educational policies or other churches not bound up with the past and free of our academic complex, will be called upon God to save the world." Referring to the fact that their church requires a four years art course, the writer states, "This is one of our greatest mistakes if we wish to attract to our ministry that type of student, naturally gifted with preaching power, who may not have the nimble mind to pass examinations in subjects for which he has no aptitude. This mistake has come from playing up and foolishly glorifying academic scholarship, utterly forgetful that all courses in ministerial training ought to be adjusted to the common denominator of preaching ability."<sup>1</sup>

While it is difficult to identify universal traits which would describe the essence of Pentecostal preaching today, rhetorical Pentecostal homiletics would be sure to include the following elements.

First, Pentecostal preaching strives to accommodate the Bible as the fulcrum point of its attention. At the very least, it would acknowledge that the Scriptures serve as the privileged norm for regulating their faith. Penultimate voices such as preaching, prophecies, testimonies, prayers are all subjected to the question: "Does it agree with the "Book"? In this regard, Mark McLean, reminiscent of William James' definition of pragmatism, likens the Scriptures to the walls of a narrow corridor or hallway without which, "we in our Pentecostal enthusiasm would fall right off."<sup>2</sup> Typically, true Pentecostal preaching is said to be expository in nature, receiving its direction and authority from the written pages of Scripture. *Ipso facto*, topical sermons are frowned upon as an inferior alternative that is susceptible to the preacher's own personal biases.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter MCALISTER, *Report to the General Conference of the PAOC*, 1954, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Mark MCLEAN, "Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic," Paper presented at the 14th annual meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (November 16, 1984), p. 29.

Second, Pentecostal preaching is more kerygmatic than apologetic. In the tradition of the great holiness preachers such as Charles Finney and Dwight L. Moody, effective Pentecostal preaching lies not in its ability to give a scholarly lecture or discuss a popular subject, rather it is a passionate proclamation of the message of the cross. As a litmus test for its authenticity as a God-inspired message, Pentecostals have also added that it should be accompanied by the miracle power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Preaching “with signs following,” is not considered a simple blissful hope, but an anxiously anticipated reality.

Third, Pentecostal preaching is christocentric rather than anthropocentric. Serious Pentecostal preaching is less concerned with telling the world what’s right and wrong as it is in extolling the message of grace and forgiveness manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. In this regard, even the person of the Holy Spirit is relegated to a penultimate status as a conduit through which we gain access to Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, the role of the Holy Spirit is instrumental in inspiring and illuminating the minister both in sermon preparation and delivery. In preparing a message, a minister relies on the Spirit’s ability to shape and direct the course of his exegesis. Ministers of the gospel anticipate a further “anointing” when they step into the pulpit to address a congregation. This anointing of the Spirit, bestowed in answer to prayerful waiting upon God, says Donald Gee, “will carry our words where they will never go otherwise.”<sup>3</sup>

Although Pentecostals have been accused, at times, of resorting to manipulative marketing techniques or emotional appeals to persuade their audiences, true

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<sup>1</sup> Michael B. VANDOREN, “What is Anointed Preaching: Some areas of Concern,” Paper presented at the 21st annual meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (November), p. .24.

<sup>2</sup> “We do not have time to preach anything else but Christ. The Holy Spirit has not time to magnify anything else but the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ....We are simply a voice shouting, ‘behold the Lamb of God!’ When we commence shouting something else, then Christ will die in us. If Christ be lifted up. He will draw all men unto Him.” “The Church Question.” *Apostolic Faith*, 1:5 (1907) Reprinted in *Like as of Fire: Newspapers from the Azusa Street World Wide Revival*, ed. E. Myron Noble (Washington, D.C.: Middle Atlantic Regional Press, 1985), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Donald GEE, *Pentecostal Experience: The Writings of Donald Gee*, ed. David Womack (Springfield, Miss.: Gospel Publishing House, 1993), p. 265.

Pentecostal preaching would denounce such a practice. Without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, "all our preparation is merely loaves and fishes which are too few for so many, unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down."<sup>1</sup>

Fifth, Pentecostal preaching generally contains a prophetic rather than moralistic thrust to its message. Prophecy in this way acts as a message that fulfills a present need, rather than an example of foretelling future events. Pentecostals are reluctant to claim the office of a prophet for themselves,<sup>2</sup> but readily attest to the need of preaching prophetically. Explaining this paradox between prophecy as a noun and as a verb, David Bartlett offers this useful explanation:

The preacher does not claim precisely what the prophet claims. He or she does not claim to have received an oracle direct from God, to be delivered verbatim to its rightful audience. But he or she may claim like the prophet to be one who interprets tradition, who interprets tradition creatively, and who applies that tradition to a new situation. When the preacher makes that claim it is not illegitimate for the preacher to hope and pray for something of that self-authenticating power which Scripture claims for itself.<sup>3</sup>

Sixth, Pentecostal preaching is charismatic as opposed to being formalistic. Implicitly, this explains partly why Pentecostal preaching is characterized by its emotional appeal. Canadian Pentecostal, Gordon Atter, writing an Apologetic of Pentecostal belief, entitled, *Who We Are and What we Believe* justifies the use of emotion by saying:

IF THERE IS ANYTHING TO RELIGION AT ALL IT MUST BE EMOTIONAL—OTHERWISE IT IS A COLD, DEAD, FORMAL THING, HAVING NO APPEAL TO THE HUMAN HEART. SUCH A RELIGIOUS SYSTEM QUICKLY LOSES ITS FOLLOWERS AND DIES A SPEEDY AND NATURAL DEATH (capitalization his).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Garry MILLEY, "Biblical Preaching do we still need it?" op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> In 1973, David Wilkerson published a vision he received of catastrophes coming to the world. Using frequent injunctions like, "this is not me, this is the Lord speaking," Wilkerson appeared to be claiming a prophetic privilege for his authority. Later in reaction to subsequent criticism, especially from charismatic circles, Wilkerson stepped back and denied that he was claiming to be a prophet, preferring to be known as a watchman who observes current trends. See David WILKERSON, *The Vision* (Old Tapan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1974) see also his sequel volume, *Racing Towards Judgement* (Lindale, TX., David Wilkerson Youth Crusades, 1976). For a reaction to Wilkerson's Vision, see, Ralph MARTIN, "David Wilkerson's Vision," *New Covenant*, 3:6 (1974), pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> David BARTLETT, *The Shape of Scriptural Authority* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon ATTER, *Who We are and What We Believe*, op. cit., p. 23.

This does not mean that Pentecostals equate emotions with spirituality. Pentecostals would readily acknowledge that many emotions are not spiritual in nature and furthermore the pursuit of an emotional state as an end in itself is a misguided attempt in spiritual gymnastics. Properly understood, emotions are simply the natural by-products of any genuine experience in truth and in God.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Pentecostal preaching shares a reciprocal relationship with the life of the preacher. In this case, the medium becomes as much the message as the actual words themselves. Pentecostals would reject any theology that would divorce the authority of the discourse from the human vessel as if the message carried intrinsic merit on its own. As such, not even the granting of ordination precludes the preacher's constant responsibility to earn the right to be heard.

## 1.2 The Prophetic Word

Throughout church history, prophecy has enjoyed a diverse and illustrious tradition. Inspired by the writings of the Apostle Paul (I Corinthians 14), prophecy continued to enjoy sporadic use in the common fabric of early church liturgy.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in the third century, a shift began to occur that removed the function of prophecy from the public arena by restricting it to leadership within the church. The gift of prophecy further receded from the common life of believers during the Reformation period. Martin Luther and John Calvin held similar positions that relegated prophecy to the task of preaching. "Prophecy," said Calvin, "is simply the right understanding of Scripture and the particular gift of expounding it."<sup>3</sup> Marginalized as an extension of illumination, prophecy lost much of its former glory until its renaissance with the Pentecostal Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> MCDONALD, "Pentecostal Theology," op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Written during the Second Century, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, was a devotional work which established guidelines to distinguish between true and false prophecies. The work was frequently cited by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

<sup>3</sup> John CALVIN, *Commentary on Romans* (12:5).

In concert with speaking in other tongues, prophecy became a distinctive feature within Pentecostalism. Used in an arbitrary during the worship part of the liturgy or as a caudal appendage to the sermon, prophecy is viewed as a distinct word from God, delivered through a human agent, who addresses a particular people, at a particular time for a particular purpose. In this light, Pentecostals readily distinguish between prophecy as forth-telling and prophecy as fore-telling. While the prospect of fore-telling generates much excitement, Pentecostals confirm that prophecy is primarily designed to forth-tell by edifying, exhorting and comforting the body of Christ (1 Cor 14:3). This in no way is seen as marginalizing its function, since in either case, Pentecostals would affirm the thesis of James Dunn who apologetically defends prophecy as a word of revelation intended to communicate the mind of God. Contrary to the Reformed tradition, prophecy "does not denote the delivery of a previously prepared sermon; it is not a word that can be summoned up to order, or a skill that can be learned; it is a spontaneous utterance, a revelation given in words to the prophet to be delivered as it is given."<sup>1</sup>

Confluent with the biblical injunction to build up the church,<sup>2</sup> "prophecy" says Meredith McGuire "performs several sociological functions: expectancy, sense of mystery and immediacy of God."<sup>3</sup> Spoken generally in the first person, prophecy goes a long way in alleviating the feeling of existential estrangement from God. In this way God is seen as entering into an I-Thou relationship with His hearers. Moving from a passive presence, God is promoted into the congregational arena as an active participant. Potentially, such a practice can attribute a powerful sense of legitimacy to the order of the service and ultimately to the life of the church. As such, when the prophecy compliments the sermon, services are said to have "flowed together in the Spirit."

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<sup>1</sup> James DUNN, *Jesus and the Spirit* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1975), p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> James Dunn asserts that "Prophecy builds up because the inspired utterance speaks to the situation of need in the assembly at the time, whether the need be for a word of understanding sympathy (Ch... I Cor.... 12:26a), or for a word of challenge and rebuke to careless or slipshod or detrimental activities. Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> Meredith MCGUIRE, *Pentecostal Catholics: Power, Charisma and Order in a Religious Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), pp. 103-105.



Prophecy, however, does not always harmonize with the order of the service. Pentecostals, would recognize the risk of being duped by either satanic or human voices, thus raising the question of being able to adjudicate the authenticity of a divine oracle. In this regard, Pentecostals have devoted much energy in discussion. Although actual practices vary from place to place, Pentecostals seek directives from the apostle Paul's address to the church in Corinth (I Corinthians 14). In all, the most common injunctions concern an assessment of the messenger, an assessment of what is spoken and the methodology invoked.

Although, the apostle Paul seems to be more concerned with testing what is spoken than testing the person speaking, most Pentecostals maintain that the subject is not above scrutiny. Since prophecy, through the strength of its spiritual character instills a substantial degree of authority to the messenger, Pentecostals feel they have biblical precedent to balance that power by bringing the speaker under the authority of the community. In this way, Pentecostals are reluctant to give much weight to the words of a given prophecy if they are not consistent with the life of the speaker.

A second assessment is made concerning the content of the message. Like preaching, inspired prophecy must be harmonious with God's written Word, the Bible. Novel messages or instructions which counter the witness of biblical truth are quickly rejected. Explaining this relationship between the message of prophecy and the Scriptures, D.A. Carson suggests:

The prophecy Paul has in mind is revelatory and Spirit-prompted, and it may,...deal largely with questions of application of gospel truth (though there is no biblical restriction along such lines). None of this means it is necessarily authoritative, infallible, or canon-threatening. Such prophecies must still be evaluated, and they are principally submissive to the apostle and his gospel.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CARSON, *Showing the Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 163,164.

Detractors may suggest that the current dilemma arising out of a multiplicity of interpretations surrounding any given biblical text makes this injunction for all intents and purposes impossible to apply. Pentecostals counter by adding as a caveat that since prophecy is localized in a single congregation, it must be in keeping with the teachings of Scripture as it is locally understood.<sup>1</sup> A sovereign God should have no difficulty in framing the words of a message in such a way that it is clearly understood to be His Word for that congregation.

On the whole, authentic prophecies are furthermore expected to build up, encourage or evoke gentle urging on the part of the receptive congregation. In this light, prophecies are not expected to evoke the passionate denunciations after the pattern of the Old Testament witness. Prophecies instead tend to be vague appeals, related to themes that are consistent with the character of the Pentecostal Movement such as: the intimate presence and power of God, self surrender, and trust in God.<sup>2</sup> Their ambiguity allows for a high degree of flexibility in application thus allowing any number of individuals to appropriate the message as a personal word from the Lord. Prophecies

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<sup>1</sup> S. Burgess, G. McGee & P. Alexander eds., *Dictionary of the Pentecostal Movements*, op. cit., s.v. "Prophecy, gift of," by Cecil M. ROBECK, p. 740.

<sup>2</sup> Meredith McGuire offers some examples of prophecies which from my own personal experience are typical of the recurring themes used in Pentecostalism. Describing the presence of God:

My people,

Know that I am Lord, that I am God

I will move in power and majesty among you this night.

Be ready both in listening to my voice.

Hear me as I call to you.

Hear me as I speak to you.

I am in your midst.

Illustrative of the theme of God's power versus our powerlessness are these refrains:

"My people,

I want to move powerfully in your midst this night.

I am here

I am your Lord.

Surrender to me.

I am in power among you.

You can limit my power by not expecting enough.

Believe in me.

Believe in my power.

Expect great things and you will receive great things.

I am here.

I am with you.

I am in power among you.

Surrender to me."

MCGUIRE, *Pentecostal Catholics*, op. cit., pp. 101, 102.

that are directional in character (such as whom someone should marry) are heavily frowned upon unless they are simply confirming some previous direction.<sup>1</sup>

A final injunction involves the method in which the oracle is given. Beginning with the presupposition that God is a God of peace and order, Pentecostals believe that prophecy should be told in like manner. Careful not to bring attention to themselves, the messengers should be in control of both the tone of their voice and the timing of the oracle. The speaker in this case must be sensitive to the “flow” of the entire service and not introduce something that would be disruptive.

While not underestimating the importance prophecy plays within Pentecostal liturgy, rhetorically Pentecostals approach the use of this gift, in the words of Paul Ricoeur with a “hermeneutic of suspicion.” While the actual method employed to mediate this process of testing varies from congregation to congregation,<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals take very seriously their role in “discerning the Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

However, despite the restraint imposed on the usage of prophecy from such forms of testing, rank and file Pentecostals experience a quandary over the weight of authority that should be given prophecy. Distinguished as a type of revelation in which

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<sup>1</sup> At a General Conference in which I attended in 1980, a request was made to stop debate on the question of the ordination of women and seek the Lord's direction through prophecy on this particular issue. Unorthodox even by PAOC standards, the plea was greeted with three spontaneous messages. However, their vagueness, and lack of continuity illustrated the questionable usage of deliberately seeking “heavenly” injunctions for immediate decisions.

<sup>2</sup> In some Pentecostal churches it is not uncommon for the elders of the church to huddle together following a message of prophecy to discuss its authenticity while the congregation waits passively for their verdict. In other cases, using modern technology, the message is recorded to be carefully analyzed later. In most cases, the largest onus is on the pastor who will communicate in some way his tacit approval or disapproval. In the case where the pastor feels the speaker has allowed his/her own thoughts or emotions to unduly influence the message, the pastor may speak to the party individually following the end of the service. Or, if the pastor perceives that speaker is being used as a medium of Satan to disrupt the service, a public sanction is often given—although such occurrences are rare.

<sup>3</sup> “The word discerning (diakrisis)” says Donald Gee, “means a ‘judging through.’ The essential meaning of the word is a ‘piercing of all that is merely outward and seeing right through, then forming a judgement based on that insight.”

“The first thing this gift reveals to the one who possesses it in active operation by the Holy Spirit is the true nature of the source of any supernatural manifestation. He will know whether it is divine or satanic, whether the manifestation is to be accepted or rejected, relied upon or resisted. there will be a powerful witness within to the true source of the manifestation, and also an actual revelation of the spirit at work.” GEE, *Pentecostal Experience*, op. cit., pp. 150,151.

God is addressing His people directly, detractors believe that such a position violates the Protestant shibboleth *sola scriptura*. When Catholic charismatic Bruce Yocam claims:

When I speak in prophecy, I am not saying, "here are some thoughts which I feel the Lord gave to me; perhaps they will be helpful to you." I am saying rather, "As far as I am able to judge, this is the Lord's word to us right now."<sup>1</sup>

—non-charismatics become uneasy. They would ask, "How can you speak in the first person, mediating the voice of God and not rival the centrality of Scriptures in authority?"

It may appear to be an oxymoron, but Pentecostal Donald Gee responds by saying,

The most important thing to remember is that when the utterances of a prophet are clothed in the very language of Deity speaking in the first person singular, they are still to be "judged" before acceptance. Indeed, the use of such lofty and authoritative style of language makes the necessity of discrimination all the more urgent and vital. "I" in no wise clothes the prophesying with infallibility.<sup>2</sup>

If the response of Donald Gee is typical of Pentecostals, they have opted to live with this tension between a closed canon and a living word. Pentecostals intuitively believe that were they to ignore this tension by insisting on containing Revelation in a closed canon they would delimit God and lose the creative dynamism of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals, at least rhetorically, have opted to live with a paradoxical tension that would celebrate the centrality of Scripture while allowing God the freedom to break into the daily routine and infuse the Words of Scripture with contemporary life.<sup>3</sup> Says David Bartlett:

While the oracle or the proclamation itself may claim to be a message delivered by God, the prophet or apostle will self-consciously and imaginatively set the revelation in a larger literary or epistolary context. The word will not claim to be one part of a larger system of doctrine or one aspect of God's diverse and continuing revelation, but for that moment and that occasion, it will claim to be the word of God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce YOCAM, "He has not spoken in Secret," *New Covenant* 7:8 (1978), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Ironically when the analysts of Project Exousia were given three opportunities to attribute creative power to the Holy Spirit in the form of revelation (items # 12, 21, 35) they reacted in strong opposition. Based on the survey it would appear that clergy delimit the Holy Spirit to a supportive role of Scripture.

Even when these Pentecostals were asked respond to one of the salient themes of the Reformation which maintained a dialectical relationship between the Word and Spirit, they were reluctant to endorse this option. While 27% of the clergy surveyed strongly agreed that the Bible is dead without the Spirit, another 23% felt just as strong that the Bible can stand on its own without the Spirit's help.

<sup>4</sup> David BARTLETT, op. cit., p. 32.

### 1.3. The Devotional Word

One cannot study the question of authority within the Pentecostal Movement without mentioning the exalted place worship plays within its liturgy. Some would even describe it as the dominant character of Pentecostalism, if you equate the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a worship experience.<sup>1</sup> It is important to note, however, that Pentecostals generally delimit the parameters of worship to the participatory experiences of church liturgy, namely: congregational singing, collective oral prayers and sometimes the celebration of sacraments.<sup>2</sup>

Worship in Pentecostal parlance is the “occupation of our hearts with God himself.”<sup>3</sup> It is an end in itself that seeks to reflect back to God His glory. It is not, at least in theory, a vehicle to “warm up” or prepare the congregation for the sermon. From its inception to its conclusion, its desire is to bring people into the presence of God. In this regard, Pentecostals differentiate between praise and worship. Explaining this difference, Brian Stiller writes:

In our society we often praise people, but we don't worship them. When we praise people (e.g., a renowned sports hero such as Jesse Owens or Babe Ruth), we feel admiration and respect because of their

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<sup>1</sup> Dick FOTH, “The Church as a Worshipping Community,” *Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1977-1982): A Study in Developing Ecumenism*, Vol. 2., ed. Jerry Sandidge (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang), p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> In general, rank and file Pentecostals experience an allergic reaction to the word sacrament. They denigrate sacramental theology as a means of identifying God as some Pavlovian dog, tied to a ritualistic, mechanical response. Despite such reservations, Pentecostals do celebrate the church ordinances of adult water Baptism and Holy Communion. However, in contrast to the venerated value the Roman tradition and some “high” Protestant traditions places on these ordinances, Pentecostals have denuded them from all but symbolic power. Baptism, for example, does not confer God's grace, it merely witnesses to a believer's decision to follow Christ. Holy Communion in like manner, is marginalized by being celebrated on an average only once a month as a means to remember the penalty Christ paid on behalf of sinful civilization—nothing supernatural occurs. As a caveat, Pentecostals will often take advantage of this latter ordinance as an opportunity to pray for the sick after the manner of James 5:13-16.

In addition to these two ordinances, Frank Macchia makes the case that glossolalia (and by extension we could include prophecy) in its broadest usage serves as a kind of audible “protest” or “inchoate” sacrament that accentuates the free, dramatic and unpredictable move of the Spirit of God. see Frank MACCHIA, “Tongues as a Sigh: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,” *Pneuma*, 15:1 (Spring 1993), pp. 61-76.

<sup>3</sup> Ern BAXTER, “Before the Throne,” *New Wine* (October 1982), p.20. See also John PIPER, *Desiring God: Meditation of a Christian Hedonist* (Portland, Multnomah Press, 1986).

accomplishments, and we praise them by speaking of their remarkable achievements...If we understand the term correctly, when we praise God there should be no essential difference in the basic principle...In praising God, we speak of what He has done for His people in the past...we also praise Him by recounting what He has done and is doing for us as His children and heirs...

We reserve worship, however, for God alone. When we worship God, we think of His glorious nature, His attributes as described in the Word...And *because of His nature, because of who God is*, in worship we adore and glorify Him.<sup>1</sup>

Rhetorically, Pentecostal worship is characterized by its participatory nature; its spontaneity; its emotional and vocal response; and its anticipatory temperament.

Pentecostal liturgy is characterized first by its level of involvement. The congregation becomes an active participant in the worship experience. Finding ample justification for their exuberant expressions of faith in the Scriptures, Pentecostals may in the course of a service be seen lifting their hands (Psa. 134:2, 1 Tim 2:8), clapping their hands (Psa. 47:1), falling "prostrate before the Lord" (Dt. 9:18), "dancing before the Lord" (2 Sam. 6:16), or breaking out in collective oral prayer.<sup>2</sup> Among the more Promethean practices celebrated, in some parts, are the wave offering,<sup>3</sup> Jericho March,<sup>4</sup> snake handling and the drinking of poison.<sup>5</sup>

Second, to embrace such a charismatic expression of worship, it stands to reason that Pentecostals treasure spontaneity over ritual forms of worship. Worship says Ramon Hunston, a minister with the PAOC, is:

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<sup>1</sup> Brian STILLER, "Evangelical Megatrends: Major Influences Shaping the Canadian Church," *Faith Alive* (Spring 1985), pp. 22,23.

<sup>2</sup> Praying simultaneously in oral prayer, members may be heard praying either in the vernacular or glossolalia. The overall effect is to saturate the assembly with a low "rumbling" as no one voice stands out above the rest. Occasionally in the midst of such rhapsodic prayer, someone may take the lead and speak out in a word of prophecy or give a message in tongues which is followed by an interpretation. In such cases the audience will generally cease praying out loud and remain silent until the oracle has come to an end.

<sup>3</sup> Loosely based on Lev. 23:9-10, celebrants remove a fresh handkerchief or similar aid and begin waving an offering to the Lord, in anticipation of His soon return.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the march of the children of Israel around the walled city of Jericho, participants may rise to their feet and begin marching in procession around the perimeters of the sanctuary.

<sup>5</sup> While organized Pentecostal churches deplore such behavior; based on a literal application of the questionable MSS texts of Mark 16:15-18, snake handling and the drinking of poison (usually strychnine), are still practiced in some isolated regions of the Appalachians.

That expression of the soul which seeks no personal gain or aggrandizement. We should note that there is a factor of spontaneity about worship and the error of teaching that certain acts or doing certain things will produce worship is an artificial emotional release that is far from the biblical reality of worship.

Worship begins deep in the soul as the spontaneous reaction to the greatness of God.<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to more traditional liturgies, the "order of service," is seldom published in advance for adherents to follow. The onus is on the leader to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Occasionally, as a result, even the sermon itself may be preempted or postponed altogether, by a special move of the Spirit.

This is not to say that Pentecostalism is left untouched by ritual. The seasoned Pentecostal will recognize the existence of form and ritual within any given local congregation. While it is true no uniform pattern exists on a national scale,<sup>2</sup> local assemblies betray themselves with their own unique idiosyncrasies.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Pentecostals' reluctance to acknowledge their reliance on established forms, sociologist Thomas O'Dea has demonstrated the interdependence of the charismatic moment in worship and ritual.<sup>4</sup> Thomas O'Dea, in his study on religious dilemmas, acknowledges the danger that the objectification of religious symbols presents. "Themes," says O'Dea, "can degenerate into clichés and at times symbols may become simply objectively manipulatable 'things' to be used for achieving ends. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Ramon HUNSTON "The Unchanging Purpose of the Church," *Pentecostal Testimony*, (March, 1985), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Some independent Pentecostal assemblies, influenced by the teachings emulating from both Restoration and Kingdom Now theology have venerated especially the liturgical forms of the Old Testament as being uniquely blessed by God. Typically, in such cases, dancing in the Spirit becomes one of the most idealized expressions of worship.

<sup>3</sup> A typical liturgy in Pentecostal circles may proceed something like the following. 1. Call to worship: Upbeat chorus followed by a prayer; 2. Informal greeting: the congregation members may leave their seats and greet two or three other people in the sanctuary; 3. Prolonged time of singing: generally a mixture of hymns and choruses and sometimes punctuated with a testimony; 4. soloist; 5. sermon; 6. altar call: members will be asked to respond in some way to the impulse of the message; 7. closing hymn.

<sup>4</sup> See Thomas O'DEA, "Five Dilemmas in the Institutionalization of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1:1, (October 30, 1961), pp.30-41 and Thomas O'DEA, "Sociological Dilemmas: Five Paradoxes of Institutionalization," in *Sociological Theory, Values & Sociocultural Change*, ed. Edward A. Tiryakian (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

last case religion becomes semi-magic."<sup>1</sup> Again discerning Pentecostals realize that they have not been exempt from such behavior. Commenting on this reality Tommy Reid, a pastor affiliated with the AG, says:

Some of our worship services are completely earthbound, based almost entirely on fleshly construction. The service is often designed to make an emotional impact and produce an emotional response...I deeply love to praise the Lord, but whooping it up to the tune of "Since Jesus Came into My Heart" does not necessarily qualify as genuine worship. The Bible tells us to live in the Spirit and pray in the Spirit, but somehow we tend to automatically equate the moving of the Spirit with a noisy production.

Since God began dealing with me about my worship services, I have discovered the congregation can move into true spiritual worship without being told to raise their hands and without any musical backup at all. In many Pentecostal churches today, once the drum stops beating and the organ stops throbbing and the volume of the service dies down, the emotionally motivated Christian goes into an emotional low.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, O'Dea makes the point that if the faith of the community is to be shared and transmitted, it must take the inevitable risk of symbolizing the transcendent. Failure to do so would trivialize the worship event as something purely individual, woefully dependent on our present feelings. "The symbolic elements of worship," says O'Dea, "are not simply an expression of individual response, but have an autonomy enabling them to pattern individual response."<sup>3</sup> Worship as such becomes a shared event, and has the capacity of transcending our emotional vicissitudes.

Thirdly, while the end of Pentecostal worship is not emotion, it cannot help but evoke powerful emotions. Permeating the worship experience is a sense that when believers come to grip with the measure of God's greatness versus their own finitude, the response cannot help but be emotional (Luke 7:36-50).

The emotional character of Pentecostal worship is perhaps best reflected in their singing. From the onset of Pentecostalism, Pentecostals have distinguished themselves with spirited, enthusiastic singing. Making use of whatever musical instruments were

<sup>1</sup> O'DEA, "Five Dilemmas," op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Margaret POLOMA, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> O'DEA, "Five Dilemmas," op. cit., p. 34.



available, Pentecostals have borrowed and adapted a wide variety of singing styles as their own. In addition to the traditional hymns associated with such Reformation composers as Isaac Watts and John and Charles Wesley, Pentecostals have made extensive use of Black music and Negro spirituals; Gospel Hymns;<sup>1</sup> Gospel songs;<sup>2</sup> and choruses and Scripture songs.<sup>3</sup>

Fourth, Pentecostal worship is distinguished by its anticipatory temperament. When Pentecostals worship, they expect things to happen. In some cases, it may be a feeling of liberation from a morass of oppression. Or it may heighten a believers' awareness of God's presence by removing any sense of estrangement from God. Or it may simply create a sense of belonging among members in that congregation.

In some cases worship can be directional in content — when worshippers believe that God has responded to some felt need in their lives. In each case, giving God absolute predominance is underlined as being the key ingredient to meaningful worship. Explaining how this works, Joseph Garlington, a leading charismatic pastor, writes:

The times when I've seen God move sovereignly on His people during worship have always been when the Holy Spirit senses that we do not have an "agenda." In other words, there is a sense among the people that all that's important to us is to worship, and have the Lord show up and be pleased. Then if He wants us to go on with the ministry of the Word or whatever else we have planned, we will. But it's like following the wind of the Spirit — you have to want what He wants.

I've been in situations where we've worshipped the Lord and spent time praying, when a prophetic word came: "Ask me what you desire; ask me for the thing that is closest to your heart." I remember one woman on such an occasion asking the Lord to give her husband salvation. In seven days, he had an experience that brought him to the Lord. I've been in

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- <sup>1</sup> Testimonial in nature, Gospel hymns have been defined as "a sacred folk song, free in form, emotional in character, devout in attitude and evangelistic in purpose and spirit. Among the composers of this genre of music, some of the most notable have been Fanny Crosby, William Bradbury, W. J. Kirkpatrick, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Ralph Carmichael, Jack Hayford, E.S. Lorenz. See, *Dictionary of Pentecostal Movements* op. cit., "Pentecostal and Charismatic Music," by D.L Alford, p. 688-695.
  - <sup>2</sup> Emerging out of the 1930's, these experientially oriented songs would tell the story of redemption or announce the Second Coming or deal with the hardships and joys of present Christian life. Ibid., p. 692.
  - <sup>3</sup> Short in length, often taken verbatim from the texts of scripture, these songs were distinguished by their catchy harmonious melodies. They rose in prominence with the burgeoning charismatic renewal of the 1960's and remain one of the most influential contributions of the charismatic movement on classical Pentecostalism. Ibid., p. 692.

other situations as well where the attitude of the people was right, and as we began to worship in that setting, healing took place.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.4. The Communal Word

A fourth expression that personifies the Pentecostal oral witness comes in the form of public testimonies. Generally unrehearsed, and spontaneous in nature, testimonies can be classified as public narrative stories which relate something that God has done for the individual. Following no universal pattern in style nor timing, the forum of testimonies has been extensively used by Pentecostals to further create a feeling of the immediacy of God, to create a sense of community, to emphasize the non-functional authority of the laity; and to maintain a certain sense of Holy Spirit ordered unpredictability.

If the singing of psalms and hymns is useful in creating a sense of the presence of God, public testimonies serve to put some flesh on that "presence." Testimonies audibly declare, "there is no experience of the Sacred without everyday experience."<sup>2</sup> They are intended to serve notice that God does indeed hear and answer the prayers of His faithful followers.

By applying a generous subconscious narrative hermeneutic on personal experiences, Pentecostal believers regularly criss-cross their stories with those in the Bible. With the emphasis usually on the victorious, testimonies strive to open the pages of Scriptures to the real communal struggles of the congregation. Testimonies affirm that biblical narratives such as the feeding of the five thousand, the healing of the crippled beggar at the gate of the temple, the arrival of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room, are no longer isolated events that happened 2,000 years ago but they have the potential of

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph GARLINGTON, "Forum," *New Wine* (October, 1982), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Daniel PLÜSS, *Therapeutic and Prophetic Narratives in Worship: a Hermeneutic Study of Testimonies and Visions: Their potential significance for Christian Worship and Secular Society* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1988), p. 263.

being dynamically recreated in everyday life. Their stories become ours and reciprocally our story becomes theirs.

While personal narratives, have the potential to encourage fellow believers with their own personal stories, they can also be a source of unwelcome irritation. Pentecostals in typical western logic, have been particularly guilty of molding God into predictable behavioral patterns, dictated by the narrative. The application is made and expectations are simultaneously heightened and restricted to a predetermined response. If the actions of God, therefore, do not appear to follow the alleged pattern, the believer is often thrown into an existential crisis: either God is not who He said He is, or believers internalize the dilemma by pointing the finger of failure at themselves.

This tension, created by favoring the volitional character of people over a sovereign God is an inherent weakness for many Pentecostal groups but is, in particular, highlighted by many of the prominent independent Faith Gospels. In an interview presented on PBS television, Randall Balmer asked Fred Price, a successful charismatic pastor, "how can you have people in your church who have read their Bibles, shared your teaching but don't find themselves to be wealthy in any way, not interpret their plight as anything other than a deficiency in their faith."

Fred Price, responded by saying, "What I do is teach people their rights in Christ as pastor/teacher....It is up to them how to make application of it....You know full well, some students make A's and some don't. It's not the teachers fault or the school's fault." To which Balmer asked, "is it the individual's fault?" "It has to be," reiterated Price.<sup>1</sup>

A possible explanation for this dilemma created by the personal narrative story can be explained by briefly analyzing the second contribution of the testimonial.

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<sup>1</sup> "Mine Eyes have seen the Glory: Coming of Age" Vol.3 ,*Gateway Films Vision Video*, (WTT/ Chicago & Isis Production Ltd., 1992).

Reinforced by a local communal language,<sup>1</sup> testimonies do indeed create a sense of comfort and community by enclosing its members in a subculture secure from worldly tensions. Testimonials, however, within a Pentecostal setting, must not be confused with the role testimonies play in a typical Alcoholic Anonymous meeting. In the former, testimonies tend to accentuate the victories: believers recount answers to prayer, any admission of failure is exactly that, a sign of failure. In the latter, testimonies frequently accentuate the negative: adherents recount failures and rally around each other in a demonstration of solidarity.

It is through their exclusive commitment to stories of success, that Pentecostals have created this internal dilemma that ultimately jeopardizes both their sense of the community and the immediacy of God. Typically, this tension is accentuated in churches dominated by a tender-minded temperament where truth is formulated into propositional affirmations which guarantee certain results. Tough-minded churches in the spirit of AA seem more prepared to come to grips with the cold reality of failure even within the church.

Thirdly, testimonies elevate the significance Pentecostals attribute to the "Priesthood of all Believers." In some cases testimonies can function in much the same way as preaching, empowering the laity to rise above normal impotency.<sup>2</sup> In her anthropological study on the nature of the woman's voice in Pentecostalism, Elaine Lawless alleges that women, in particular, can use the testimony as a platform to rise above the fears created by a traditional biblical hierarchy that places women below men.

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<sup>1</sup> Testimonies tend to follow staid patterns of speech within each local congregation. Adepts quickly pick up on the lingo allowing them to participate as insiders. In theory, Pentecostals believe that their testimonies serve as a witnessing tool to the unconverted. In practice, however, one can only speculate how much the outsider can possibly discern given all the "insider talk" such as: sinner friend, born again, backslidden etc.

<sup>2</sup> Elaine LAWLESS, "Shouting for the Lord: The Power of Women's Speech in the Pentecostal Service." *Journal of American Folklore*, 96 (1983), p. 455.

From the vantage of the floor, women can freely “manipulate the creative force of their verbal art,” says Lawless.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is questionable to what degree, if any, women “manipulate” their speech — if you translate manipulate as deliberate coercion — it is clear that any lay-person can through the testimonies wield a certain sense of power and or authority. The sincerity of the message, its uniqueness, its style and the character of the proclaimer all contribute to establishing the individual's credibility and authority. The congregation at this point becomes very discerning. Testimonies that are deemed inauthentic<sup>2</sup> are greeted with conspicuous silence. On the other hand, testimonies that strike a chord with the general congregation may be applauded or responded to with amen's, prayer, or even a song.

Finally, testimonies create an atmosphere of unpredictability which is deemed congenial to the aim of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals fear ritual, and consciously or unconsciously use testimonies as another counter balance to offset routines that potentially could usurp the freedom of the Holy Spirit. However, as a caveat it should be added that not even testimonies are impervious to succumbing to predictable behavioral patterns. Within any given community, testimonies are inclined to follow standardized formulas which are monitored carefully by the pastor in charge. Employing formulaic expressions and pauses, testifiers often move through the narrative in a fluid “God speak” quickly discernible to all insiders. Should new converts, take the risk and give a testimony, their inexperience is refreshingly betrayed by the departure from standardized

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> This could occur for several of reasons i.e., the character of the individual—if the individual life is in contradiction to the testimony offered, he/she is discounted; the frequency of testimonies—by and large if someone dominates the floor Sunday after Sunday, that individual's authority is diminished by the multiplicity of words; tone and style—nervousness, loudness, and content all play a role in determining the weight of any given testimony.

formulas. Time is, however, working against neophytes and within months of their inclusion, their speech usually reflects the dominant patterns of their group.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. An Historical Assessment

### 2.1. 1906-1925

Of the various oral expressions of faith duly noted, the Prophetic Word is clearly the most characteristically Pentecostal. Once early Pentecostals had found their "tongue", their new openness to the gifts of the Spirit unleashed a flurry of prophetic activity. Prophecy served as a continual audible reminder to the people that God himself had initiated this latter day revival. If that wasn't enough, early leaders went so far as to record actual prophetic utterances. Noting this phenomena, Pentecostal scholar Cecil M. Roebuck, Jr., documents the *Pentecostal Evangel* (The official organ of the Assemblies of God) as having recorded and published between January 29, 1916 and October 2, 1920 nearly two dozen visions, dreams, verbatim prophecies and interpretations of tongues.<sup>2</sup> Published without comment and sometimes anonymously, Roebuck goes on to question early Pentecostal rhetoric that subjected the authority of prophecy to Scripture. Duly noting that the publication of prophecy cannot help but grey the hierarchy distinction between written canonical scripture and spontaneous oral utterances, Roebuck concludes "there is a sense in which the ability to test the prophetic word has been impaired once an oracle has been placed in a written form and widely distributed."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Refreshingly there are always exceptions. In a recent service which I attended, a young lady was invited to the front of the church to give her "testimony." Using a question/answer format the pastor asked her when she was "saved?" She replied, "I do not remember. It seems as if I have always been saved." The pastor who was visibly caught of guard at her not being able to cite chapter and verse as to the hour of her salvation, proceeded on hoping to get a more Pentecostal response the next time. He asked her, "can you remember what it was like the moment you were baptized in the Spirit?" Again she responded in a jubilant fashion, with no sense of derision, that it was not a "big deal." Her enthusiasm coupled with her refreshingly non-traditional responses illustrates how close the testimony lies to the heart of Pentecostalism.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil M. ROBECK, "Written Prophecies: A Question of Authority," *Pneuma*, 2 (Fall, 1980), pp. 29,30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

As Roebuck observes, this impairment further extends to the scope of the prophetic word. If prophecy is given to a particular people at a particular time, written oracles confuse the issue of the intended audience. Does a written prophecy extend itself beyond the borders of the local group and include the Christian or non-Christian community at large?<sup>1</sup>

While most prophecies during this nascent period were stirring examples of forth-telling, one predictive prophecy stood out that especially caught the attention of Pentecostals and the media. On the eve of April 19, 1906, the *Los Angeles Times* reporting on the fledgling Azusa Street revival recorded a vision that was given to a worshipper earlier that day. It predicted an “awful destruction to this city unless citizens are brought to a belief in the tenets of the new faith.”<sup>2</sup>

Less than twenty-four hours later, Los Angeles felt the tremors as San Francisco was leveled by an earthquake. The significance of the prediction and the event was not lost on the worshippers of Azusa Street and the citizens of Los Angeles. For three years the arrival of the earthquake served as a catalyst to expand the parameters of the Pentecostal revival around the world.

For early Pentecostals access to God was immediate. Worship was spontaneous. Hymn books and musical instruments were considered, by many, a commercial proposition — devoid of spirit, and gave way to the genesis of the “new song.” So pure and powerful was this song that Bartleman believed that it was impossible to describe in human words. Whether it was sung “in the Spirit” without words or “tongues,” it was dropped like a “heavenly chorus” into the voices of seekers. It had

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Vinson SYNAN, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub., House, 1971), pp.107,108. see also *Los Angeles Times* (April 19, 1906). Seizing this opportunity to heighten people’s awareness of the Pentecostal Movement, Frank Bartleman quickly printed a tract entitled, “The Earthquake Tract.” The tract linked the San Francisco earthquake with the “sure voice of God to the people on the Pacific Coast. It was used mightily in conviction, for the gracious after revival.” BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, op. cit., pp. 47-53.

the effect of bringing a “heavenly atmosphere as though the angels themselves were present and joining with us...It seemed to still criticism and opposition, and was heard for even wicked men to gainsay or ridicule...It is certainly a rebuke to the ‘jazzy’ religious songs of our day,”<sup>1</sup> claimed Bartleman. Hymns on the other hand, “move the toes, but not the hearts of men,” and were only legitimate if they could be sung without the use of books allowing the Holy Spirit to quicken the words to the worshipper’s memory.<sup>2</sup>

If God was not making Himself immediate to the people through the “new song,” then He revealed Himself through the stories of the early converts. In early Pentecostal liturgy testimonies were a frequent phenomena. People may have had difficulty accommodating or interpreting their experiences within their own particular church traditions, but at the very least they could tell their story. Stories were told verbally and were often recorded in periodical format for quick distribution to the public at large. Some were stories of surrender:

About 28 years ago,...the Lord sanctified my soul. Then I commenced to try to preach. About two years after, the Lord appeared to me in a dream. He so filled me with His Spirit that people were not able to stand up before me, for a time. A few days after, He told me to give up my business, and make my wants known to Him, and not to man. I obeyed. The Lord supplied my every need....But I heard of people receiving the Holy Ghost and speaking with tongues. I came to Los Angeles to investigate, and found it was a fact, and earnestly commenced to seek the Lord for the baptism with the Holy Ghost. And the Lord, knowing my heart, came and took possession of me and spoke with my tongue. I want to say to every person, test God and you will never deny the baptism with the Holy Ghost.<sup>3</sup>

Others were testimonies of God answering prayer.

The first time I was out of wood after the Lord had shown me to trust Him, I asked the Lord for wood and the wood did not come. The Lord had shown me that I could not ask for what I already had....I went down into the basement that morning and found some hard knots that had been laid aside and had enough wood for that day. The next morning I asked the Lord for wood. The wood did not come. I picked up enough chunks and chips to do that day.

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<sup>1</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, op. cit., pp. 56.,57.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> T.W. MCCONNELL, *Apostolic Faith* , 1:1 (September, 1906) reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, op. cit., p. 3.



The next morning I went to the Lord and said, "Father, there are no more chunks and chips, we are out of wood. Send the wood." I went down to the city and forgot all about it. Did not think of it, until I returned home, and my daughter said, "Papa, who brought the wood?" I told her that "she need not trouble, the Lord would send it." But she said, "Some man brought wood, who was he that you sent it by?" I thought she was joking, but she said, "Look in the box in the basement." I went down and found a large load of wood already for the stove and just the length that we used in our stove.<sup>1</sup>

Common to all the testimonies was the immediacy of a personal God, who took great interest in his creation.

Curiously, preaching, the prince of conservative Protestant witness was in many respects relegated to a back seat in early Pentecostal circles. Preaching suffered from its unfortunate association with preachers. Again Frank Bartleman made much ado about the fact that it was the preachers who had the hardest time adapting to the sudden rise of Pentecostalism. According to Bartleman, the "preachers" struggled with their reputation and good works until God would finally wrestle them away from their pride.<sup>2</sup>

Breaking from an ecclesiastical tradition that seemed bent on distinguishing the authority of the pastor/priest either through dress or the benefit of a raised platform, the Azusa Street mission was noticeable for its lack of vestry, platform or liturgical decorum. William Seymour, the black leader of the Azusa Street Mission, undoubtedly was a curious spectacle when he rose to his feet replete with a shoe box covering his head as he prepared to speak.<sup>3</sup> The significance of such an action was understood by the congregation. Again Bartleman reports:

No one knew what might be coming, what God would do. All was spontaneous ordered of the Spirit. We wanted to hear from God, through whoever He might speak. We had no "respect of person."...We only recognized God. All were equal.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 58,59.

An analysis of the early historical record concerning the ministry of preaching, reveals an ambiguous thread woven throughout the discourse. On the one hand, young converts were exhorted not to lean on preachers,<sup>1</sup> on the other hand it was Pentecostal preachers who did the exhorting. What was clear, was that there were apparently two types of preachers in the mindset of Pentecostals. There were those schooled in the tradition of the historical churches. Presumably these preachers were incapable of bringing people into the liberation of the Holy Spirit, as they were stricken by denominational bias and prejudice. On the other side, there were sawdust trail preachers, whose authority rested largely on the spontaneity and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. With generally little theological training, these self-proclaimed preachers won over converts with their passionate pleas of a new age dawning.<sup>2</sup>

Fittingly, Charles Parham defended the integrity of his message by making reference to his unpretentious upbringing and limited theological training.<sup>3</sup> Growing up in Kansas, Parham claimed that he could not have been influenced by outside theological discourses. Parham explains:

Thus, (we were raised) with no preconceived ideas, with no knowledge of what creeds and doctrines meant, not having any traditional spectacles upon the eyes to see through,—for our parents were not religious—we scarcely knew anything about Church and Sunday School..."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas A. ROBINSON, "The Azusa Street Mission and Its Influential Newsletter: A Reprint of the First Issue of the Apostolic Faith, September 1906," *North American Religion*, Vol. 1 (1992), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Mapes Anderson makes the observation that this explains, in part, why the early Pentecostal message found such a receptive audience among the disenfranchised. While converts from the lower classes could never envision any real rise in social standing, they could through Spirit Baptism achieve a certain sense of upward mobility. They, in fact held the upper hand spiritually. ANDERSON, *Vision of the Disinherited*, loc. cit.

Writes the *Apostolic Faith*: "God does not need a great theological preacher that can give nothing but theological chips and shavings to people. He can pick up a worm and thrash a mountain. He takes the weak things to confound the mighty. he is picking up pebble stones from the street and polishing them for his work. he is using even the children to preach His Gospel. A young sister, 14 years old, was saved, sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost and went out, taking a band of workers with her, and led a revival in which 190 souls were saved. Salaried ministers that are preaching will have to go out of business. He is sending out those who will go without money and without price." "Back to Pentecost" *The Apostolic Faith*, 1:2 (October, 1906) reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> For a reference on what Parham thought of formal training see GOFF, *Fields White Unto Harvest*, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

<sup>4</sup> PARHAM, *A voice Crying in the Wilderness* op. cit., p. 12.

As a result, Parham believed that his “coming of age” as a preacher was in no way biased but rested on the authority of the witness of the Holy Spirit. Says Parham:

Thus by becoming thoroughly familiar with it (Scriptures) and reading it just as it says and not being warped by preconceived notions or interpretations we have been enabled to weather the theological gales and outstrip the clergy who attempted to tear away the main-sail and wrap it in the dogmatical confines of a single organization; thus by turning the rudder of the ship, have been guided through storms of persecution, passing the forts whose guns were loaded with fierce hatred and cruel prejudice, able today to say: The ship sails in the peaceful seas of full salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, the Spirit seemed to move freer with less emphasis on the preaching event and more emphasis on devotional worship. Emotion and affections were prioritized over content and contemplation. Sermons were short and generally limited to exegeting Mark 16:17-18 or Acts 2:4. In their place time was consumed by the more populist oral expressions of testimonies, prophecies, healing, singing and seeing visions.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2. 1925-1950

By 1925, the combined effect of a gradual institutionalization, a sudden desire to achieve a reputation for being thoroughly orthodox and a need to curb some exhibitional excesses, resulted in a shift away from an intuitive Pentecostal disposition. Preaching, prophecy, worship and testimony were still visible components within a Pentecostal matrix, but increasingly they were being domesticated into behaving in an orderly fashion.

While emerging black Pentecostal denominations remained the most faithful to their original oral roots, classic white Pentecostalism began taking on the color and tone of their white fundamentalist/evangelical neighbours. The Holy Spirit as a verb was increasingly being replaced by the Holy Spirit as a “noun.” It was becoming less an

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, op. cit., p. 53,58.

existential prompter that would lead believers and more a propositional doctrine to be defended. The early Pentecostal ideology which intuitively promoted the immediacy of Christ, was giving up its place for a faith which was a bit more manageable.

Testimonies, once spontaneous interruptions, in the course of a service were now slotted into set time periods during the order of a service. Following the singing of several songs/hymns, the pastor would ask the congregation if anyone had a Scripture verse, or story that they would like to share about something that recently happened to them. One by one people would stand to their feet and address the congregation. Punctuating these narratives, the pastor would frequently lead in some choruses. Still unstructured, it was not uncommon, that allotted time for these testimonials could exceed one hour in length. On rare occasions, they could even supersede the pastor's sermon.

Within the PAOC, exceptional testimonies of a miraculous nature, were often given national exposure by being printed in their official periodical publication *The Pentecostal Testimony*. True to its name, each issue was filled with narrative stories of how God healed, answered prayer and filled people with the Spirit. In this way *The Pentecostal Testimony* served a vital role in reassuring Pentecostal believers that their experiences of God were not abnormal.

Similarly, Sunday worship welcomed back the return of hymn books and musical instruments.<sup>1</sup> Choirs and professional musicians began adorning raised platforms in Pentecostal buildings. By 1940, lively congregational singing was beginning to wane as congregations leaned more extensively on its choirs and special performers.<sup>2</sup>

However, perhaps the most abrupt shift occurred with the Prophetic Word. After a clearer examination of Scripture, restraints were imposed on the use of prophecy in

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<sup>1</sup> There are Pentecostal groups that still adamantly reject the use of musical instruments within their liturgy.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionary of Pentecostal Movements*, op. cit., "Pentecostal and Charismatic Music," by D.L. Alfred, p.692.

church worship. While these restraints had the effect of diminishing many flagrant abuses they also dampened the normative usage of prophecy for fear of being sanctioned.

Routinized into the fabric of a distinctive Pentecostal liturgy, prophecy would continue to serve a penultimate function well behind preaching until a brief revival in 1948. During a week of special prayer meetings at Sharon Bible College in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, members of the audience were called out and through the use of prophecy and the laying on of hands, spiritual gifts were said to have been given to the called individuals.<sup>1</sup> The event in conjunction with the practice of custom-made prophecies touched off the creation of the New Order of the Latter Rain.<sup>2</sup>

Reacting quickly, PAOC church officials accused the New Order leaders of usurping the centrality of Scriptures by removing the restraints on prophetic usage. Thomas Holdcroft, a statesman for the PAOC and a witness to the New Order split, describes the objectionable method:

In New Order practice, the gift of prophecy was made to function routinely to identify individuals by name. It would then proceed to instruct its subjects in a detailed manner regarding personal and practical affairs, both in regard to the work of God, and in matters of everyday living. Such prophecies were considered to be certain, unalterable, and above evaluative scrutiny.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly this flurry of prophetic activity came on the heels of the inaugural address of the First World Pentecostal Conference in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1947, given by General Secretary David DuPlessis. With prophetic-like urgency, DuPlessis declared,

There is nothing that can ever take the place of the Holy Spirit in the church. Let us pray for a greater outpouring than ever, and remember when the floods come it will not keep to our well prepared channels but it will overflow and most probably cause chaos in our regular programs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas HOLDCROFT, "The New Order of the Latter Rain," *Pneuma* , 2:2 (Fall 80).

<sup>2</sup> See annexe B.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> David DUPLESSIS quoted by Richard RISS, "The Latter Rain Movement of 1948," *Pneuma* , 4:1 (Spring 1982), p. 32. Earlier in his ministry, David DuPlessis was himself the subject of a prophecy. On

DuPlessis' comments illustrated both the promise and insecurity that prophecy generated within the Pentecostal Movement during those developing years. The fact that the fervor created by the New Order waned almost as fast as it started demonstrates the fragility of this particular gift as it oscillates between questionable excesses and the desire to control its usage.

### 2.3. 1950-

As Pentecostals came of age, they began retooling themselves with modern technology. The oral/aural ethos of Pentecostalism began integrating a conservative orthodoxy with an industrious, evolving orthopraxy. The result has allowed Pentecostals to risk flirting with some of their original intuitive ideals.

For instance, as the world responds to the nomanilizing tendencies of the technological society, Pentecostals have attempted to homogenize technique with the eclectic character of church worship. Taking full advantage of sophisticated sound systems, new electronic instruments, and other "toys,"<sup>1</sup> Pentecostals are making a "joyful noise" unto the Lord as never before in their history. The emerging hybrid of technique and worship has resulted in a spontaneous/choreographed style of worship which dominates the Pentecostal scene today. The "spontaneous" of early

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a January morning in 1936, a Yorkshire evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth met DuPlessis at his office in South Africa. Placing his hands on DuPlessis' shoulders he announced:

"There is a revival coming that at present the world knows nothing about. It will come through the churches. It will come in a fresh Way When you see what God does in this revival you will then have to admit that all that you have seen previously is a mere nothing in comparison with what is to come. It will eclipse anything that has been known in history. Empty churches, empty cathedrals, will be packed again with worshippers. Buildings will not be able to accommodate the multitudes. Then you will see fields of people worshipping and praising together. The Lord intends to sue you in this revival. For you have been in Jerusalem long enough. The Lord will send you to the uttermost parts of the earth. If you are faithful and humble, the Lord will use you and if you remain faithful and humble, you will see the greatest events in Church history. quoted by Peter HOCKEN, *Streams of Renewal: The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Paternoster Press, 1986), p. 19.

The prophecy sent DuPlessis on a journey that would fan the Pentecostal message into the Catholic and historical Protestant churches eventually launching the Charismatic movement.

<sup>1</sup> Many Pentecostal churches today are replacing their hymn books with overhead projectors. Notwithstanding the cost and expedient factor, (projectors can keep up with current, fresh songs much easier than traditional hymn books) overhead projectors have the advantage of freeing the hands of worshippers and allowing more spontaneity and continuity between songs.

Pentecostalism is in the service of technique. Technique in the form of dance,<sup>1</sup> pageantry, drama, mime, worship teams (composed of background singers), and snappy choruses which are easily memorized, are all effectively used to suggest/accommodate an aura of Holy Spirit anointed spontaneity. For example, the spontaneous and unrehearsed public testimonies which characterised early Pentecostals have been largely replaced with a more structured presentation. While Pentecostal pastors have sought to retain an aura of informality concerning testimonies increasingly it is in appearance only. Sometimes a pastor will choose appropriate people before the service that have a story to share that compliments the thrust of the sermon. The pastor will then instruct the testifier as to the length of the narrative and its content. In some cases, if the testifier is nervous or the pastor is afraid of the unpredictable, the pastor may use a question-answer format to control the course of the narrative.

These changes have not come without controversy. There are still many churches (predominantly rural) who refuse to yield to these trends. Defiantly, they lament the loss of doctrinal content within the new songs. Or they may equate many of the new musical styles and the inclusion of choreographed dance with the encroachment of secularism, or in Pentecostal vernacular, "worldliness." And finally, they deplore, what they perceive to be manipulative techniques on the part of the leader to provoke a certain emotional response. Advocates, of the new technique, on the other hand, stand by their successes. An increase in participatory worship, a renewed appeal to the Sunday altar service, and an awakened emotional impact are some of the bench marks used to appease critics.

Similarly the course of preaching has not been left untouched by the tentacles of technique. Through the medium of television, charismatic preachers both in title and

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<sup>1</sup> While both spontaneous and choreographed dance do occur in a few PAOC churches, it is generally frowned upon as being too licentious. With a rich holiness background, the PAOC appears profoundly uncomfortable with dance as an expression of worship. That dance is practiced in some churches is a result of the charismatic renewal.

practice have gained much public notoriety. Pentecostals have combined their natural panache and enthusiasm with a new professionalism, whereby they have honed their skills as orators.

However, while propositional sermonizing continues to be the mainstay of Pentecostal preaching, many Pentecostals are winding back the clock and taking a hard look at the largely subconscious narrative approach of early Pentecostals.<sup>1</sup> This, coupled with a renewed scholarly interest in narrative theology by the church at large, has suddenly attributed Pentecostal theologians an unexpected degree of legitimacy.

Addressing the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Michael Dowd made this astute observation between Pentecostal experience and narrative theology.

Pentecostals first and foremost offer an experience with God—not a way of understanding God. One does not experience the Living Word by boiling the biblical text down and then extracting “transcultural biblical principles.” While these surely are helpful in formulating certain aspects of theology they are virtually useless in helping others to experience the Word of God for themselves. The Apostle Paul states that, “Faith comes through hearing” and that “what is heard is the Word of Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

Clearly Dowd and many other Pentecostal practitioners are beginning to champion the cause of the early narrative tradition of Pentecostalism. Many see it as the only adequate means of translating the reality of encounters with God through the esoteric mediums of dreams, visions, prophecy, tongues and interpretations into ecclesiastical life and fellowship.<sup>3</sup> For some by embracing technique they have attempted to rekindle the orthopathy of an earlier Pentecostal generation.

Reflective of this desire to integrate orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy is a new openness to the gift of prophecy. Prophecy has always remained close to the heart

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter written to Michael Dowd, Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, a Pentecostal scholar affirmed, “Pentecostals have been doing narrative theology for years although without the added dimension of critical self-reflection...With the discovery of narrative theology we are suddenly on the cutting edge of contemporary theological scene.” See DOWD, “Contours of a Narrative Pentecostal Theology,” op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



of Pentecostalism. Donald Gee affirms that “prophecy provides a most essential balance to the didactic and logical ministry of the teacher. Prophecy often appeals to the emotions and teaching to the intellect. Prophecy sets on fire that which teaching enlightens.”<sup>1</sup> Ironically, however, Pentecostals themselves have generally enjoyed a love-hate relationship with it. On the one hand, there are no Pentecostals who would deny its legitimacy and its relevance for contemporary usage. On the other hand, they are as nervous about its usage as are their detractors.

It is, therefore, not surprising that charismatic bodies represent the vanguard of prophetic activity today among the lay rank and file.<sup>2</sup> What is surprising, is that all of this is occurring at a time when technology and the rationalism that it spawns is having an enormous impact on biblical interpretation and church practice. It would seem that prophecy has somehow escaped the standardizing power of a technocratic society. In fact, it may be argued that the resurgence of prophecy, is in direct proportion to the mechanical strictures imposed by technology. In this way prophecy serves partially as a means to temper or soften the impact of encroaching technology. It leaves Pentecostals with a sense of mystery and the presence of God—two victims of this latter part of the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> GEE, *Pentecostal Experience*, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> The charismatics, however, not only renewed interest in prophecy but they also resurrected the office of the prophet. Most recently, Kansas City has been at the center of another controversy concerning such a practice. The Kansas City Fellowship affiliated with John Wimber's Vineyard network of 300-plus churches, overtly features on its pastoral staff the prophets Bob Jones, John Paul Jackson and Paul Cain. Receiving revelations through dreams, mental impressions, trances, physical symptoms, audible voices et al., these prophets speak prophetically as a regular feature of their church which hosts 7,000-plus people each Sunday. Contrary, however, to the order of the Old Testament, it is assumed that these prophets are not infallible. Error is a real possibility. For this reason the prophets subject themselves to the teacher/elders of the church who must weigh the legitimacy of each oracle. See Michael Maudlin, “Seers in the heartland,” *Christianity today* (Jan. 14, 1991), pp. 18-22.

### 3. Conclusion

Pentecostal and charismatic services have been historically characterized by the high degree of participation in which the laity partake. Both individually and collectively, the involvement of the laity is the linchpin of Pentecostal liturgy. As the leader, it is the role of the pastor to serve as a catalyst in setting the tone and direction of the liturgical response by remaining open to the stirring of the Holy Spirit.

Pragmatism, says William James is "interested in no conclusions but those which our minds and our experiences work out together."<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the oral/aural dimension of Pentecostal spirituality is closely monitored by the results it produces. Pentecostals do not apologize for stirring the hearts of their recipients, when the end result produces changed lives, new commitments and increased spiritual awareness. In fact, says Donald Gee, "if we have today such ministry in our churches that men and women cannot be moved, there is something wrong with our preaching."<sup>2</sup>

The Spoken Word in Pentecostalism provides an essential link between the demands of principled theology and the realities of everyday life. Again Donald Gee speaks for Pentecostals when he says,

I believe our hearts covet reality. You can have your big campaign, your boosting and advertising. I want something that will last seven days in the week and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, something that is just as real whether there is a big preacher around or not, whether I am in a big assembly or out in the backwoods on a farm. I want reality.<sup>3</sup>

In the end, the Spoken Word in Pentecostalism flourishes as a three cord alliance consisting of orthopathy, orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The orthopathy in Pentecostals longs to experience their spirituality in a way that is unfettered by any human predilection to control. The orthodoxy in Pentecostals desires to nurse a commitment to right

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<sup>1</sup> JAMES, *Pragmatism*, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Donald GEE, "The Emotions of God," *Pentecostal Evangel* (September 21, 1929), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Donald GEE, "Two Men Finding Treasure," *Pentecostal Evangel* (August 10, 1929), p. 8.

contemplation. Emotion is encouraged but not any kind of emotion. Experience is given a platform to speak but it is bridled by an accompanying commitment to the supremacy of Scripture. And finally, the orthopraxy in Pentecostals is constantly interjecting the haunting question of William James, "Does it work?" Quilted together the three integrated "ortho's" go a long way in preventing theoreticians from falling into an abyss of abstractions, possibilities, and callous principles.

In all, the oral/aural dimension of Pentecostals is an experiment of grand design. In the measure Pentecostals successfully synthesize orthopathy, orthodoxy and orthopraxy together, they appear to recapture much of the flavor and excitement of what the early church may have looked and acted like. However, despite such noble aspirations, such a synthesis is difficult to achieve. Unfortunately, breakdowns in the matrix have often left Pentecostals in a problematic position where they must struggle with their own assortment of "demons." An unbridled orthopathy has left Pentecostals struggling with emotionalism, where emotional vigor acts as a spiritual barometer; and ritualism, where the resonance between the external and internal is breached and the symbol becomes a stumbling block where previously it had been an orderly conduit. Likewise, an inflexible orthodoxy has sometimes resulted in an internal struggle with conformism or individualism, where worshippers either comply with the expression of the majority or abandon themselves with maverick indifference to fellow believers. And finally an indiscriminatory orthopraxy has left Pentecostals struggling with the perimeters of experimentalism, where the innovative tends to usurp traditionalism; consumerism, where new seems better than the old; and technique where spirituality easily degenerates into formulas, not as a means to achieve certain results, but for the experience itself.

Pentecostals, themselves would probably not deny the total legitimacy of the above allegations. They recognize the tension that accompanies all preachers who

endeavor to be a spokesperson for God and yet must struggle with their own sense of “fallenness,” which tends to exalt self over God.<sup>1</sup> But Pentecostals would hastily add that their critics have the habit of singling out the exceptions while ignoring the majority who are faithfully preach and live the “Word” with power and conviction.

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<sup>1</sup> In a conversation I had with one preacher about the fall from grace of Jimmy Swaggart, he said, “for so long, Jimmy was told he was a great preacher— his fault was that he believed it.”

## Chapter 4

# The Institutional Word

For early Pentecostals, it was anathema to talk of an Institutional Word. Theirs was a movement without a human leader. Jesus Christ, mediated through the Word (Bible) and Spirit, was their only leader. The Holy Spirit, unleashed through the Latter Rain would be sufficient to guide them into Truth and provide church unity.<sup>1</sup>

However, while such a primitive impulse sounded like good theory, it resulted in poor practice. For early Pentecostals, Truth items were constantly in dispute. Should believers be baptized in the name of Jesus only or should they be baptized in the name of the Trinity? Is tongues the *initial* evidence of Spirit baptism or is it merely one evidence among many? Is prophecy a form of revelation on par with the Bible? And how should Pentecostals behave? In some circles, it was forbidden to wear makeup, jewellery, even wedding rings, or having bobbed hair. Whereas in other parts, these were acceptable practices. Who would adjudicate these dilemmas?

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<sup>1</sup> Though Pentecostal fervor began to spread in Canada as early as 1906, formal organization seemed to be unnecessary. G.A. CHAMBERS, who later became the first General Superintendent of the PAOC, explains: "We took the position that God was forever through with organization, so for a number of years the movement in Canada like that in other countries did not feel our need of system and order but every man was a sort of a law unto himself or as in the days of the Judges, 'Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.'" *Pentecostal Testimony* (November, 1934) p. 7.

In partial response to this predicament, on the seventeenth of May 1919, seven men formally petitioned the Government of Canada for legal recognition as an ecclesiastical body under the title: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Despite a prevailing bias against formal organization of any kind among Pentecostals, these men deemed such an approach was necessary to:

- a. conduct a place or places of worship;
- b. organize and conduct schools of religious instruction;
- c. carry on home and foreign missionary work for the spread of the Gospel;
- d. carry on charitable and philanthropic work;
- e. publish, sell and distribute Christian literature and paper;
- f. collect, solicit and accept funds or other subscriptions for the carrying on of the work of the co-operative body and for any other religious, charitable or benevolent purpose;
- g. exercise any of the powers usually conferred on duly incorporated benevolent societies by either Dominion or Provincial authority;
- h. dispose of the entire undertaking of the corporation.<sup>1</sup>

Although their name was latent with national pretensions, it did not as yet extend to the Western Provinces. For their part, leaders in Western Canada chose in 1919 to associate themselves as a District Council with their American counterparts, the Assemblies of God (AG).

It would be another year before the nascent PAOC would in turn assume the relation of a District Council of the General Council of Assemblies of God and thereby unite themselves with the District Council of Western Canada.<sup>2</sup> Despite this close allegiance with the AG, Canadian Pentecostals still retained their legal name and identity with the Canadian Government.

Five years later, at a General Conference held in London, Ontario, in August 1925, the PAOC voted to cut all organic ties with their American neighbours, the Assemblies of God, desiring instead to enter into a mutual co-operative independent

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of this petition to the Honourable Martin Burrell, Secretary of State of Canada, can be found in the National Archives of the PAOC located at 6745 Century Ave., Mississauga, Ontario.

<sup>2</sup> November 23, 1920.

relationship. This relationship exists to this day allowing ministers to freely transfer their credentials from one country to the other.<sup>1</sup>

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Canadian experience and subsequent growth of the PAOC paralleled their American counterparts in many respects. Both were linked to the impact of Azusa Street; both groups shared a predominate Holiness background; both movements reluctantly consolidated themselves within a formal organization; and finally, both emerged with little or no preparation. For instance, neither group initially subscribed to any clearly articulated creedal confession. Nor was there any ready means for training their eventual clergy. Instead, they rallied around an intuitive sense that they were uniquely chosen and equipped by God to usher in the end times. The tool for such a task was the latter unleashing of the power of the Holy Spirit as a means to spread the Gospel supernaturally and see sinners converted.

Early leaders, however, recognized the need to establish formal polity structures to ensure both the survival and perpetuity of the burgeoning Pentecostal movement. Whatever else the Holy Spirit represented, it was unpredictable and needed some sort of control. This is not to suggest that pioneer Pentecostals did a complete turnaround by rejecting earlier misgivings about organization. They simply did not want to repeat the perceived errors of the established churches by falling into a pattern of dead formalism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed review of the history of the PAOC, the following works should be consulted, Gordon ATTER, *The Third Force* (Peterborough, Ontario: The College Press, 1962). Gloria KULBECK, *What God hath Wrought: History of the PAOC* (publisher unknown). Zelma ARGUE, *Contending for the Faith* (Winnipeg: Messenger of God Pub. House, 1928). Ron KYDD, "Pentecostal Charismatics and the Canadian Denominations," *Église et Théologie*, Vol. 13 (May 82), pp. 211-231. Thomas MILLER, "The Canadian Azusa: The Hebden Mission in Toronto," *Pneuma*, Vol. 8 (Spring 1986), pp. 5-29. Thomas MILLER, "The Significance of A.H. Argue for Pentecostal Historiography," *Pneuma* (Fall 1986), pp. 120-158. Brian ROSS, "James Eustace Purdie: The Story of Pentecostal Theological Education," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Society*, 17:4 (1975), pp. 94-103. Paul HAWKES, *Pentecostalism in Canada: A History with Implications for the Future* (San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1983). Thomas Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, ed. Wm Griffin (Mississauga: Full gospel Publishing House, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> In his report, as General Superintendent of the PAOC, Walter McAlister addressed the General Conference of September 16-22, 1954, saying, "As we grow larger, someone will undoubtedly suggest that we should adjust our academic requirements for the ministry, to be in line with other large denominations. Let us learn from their experience and avoid their mistakes." Presumably, McAlister was equating academic preoccupation with dead formalism, where the student ignores the Spirit and is versed only in the letter of the faith. National Archives of the PAOC.

Today, however, with a constituency of over 1,000 congregations, serving 206,000 members<sup>1</sup> the PAOC has moved considerably away from its original idyllic goals. Its growth and subsequent size has not granted it immunity from the three way tension seen throughout Christian history between “the disciplined life of the Spirit, the trend toward licentiousness and antinomianism, and the subtle bureaucratic buildup.”<sup>2</sup>

With this perspective, this chapter will examine the institutional structure of the PAOC. Again the objective is three-fold, first we will summarize present polity structures by highlighting relationships between various factions of administration (i.e. National/District Office, pastor, church board and laity). Second, we will limn out an historical sketch which will take the PAOC from its original aspirations as a “Fellowship” in 1919 to its present day bureaucracy as a denomination. Third, throughout the chapter, we will demonstrate that a chameleon pragmatism is the *modus operandi* behind the institutional veneer of the PAOC.

## 1. Rhetorical Affirmation

Classical church polity has traditionally been divided into three distinct models, namely: Episcopalian, congregational and Presbyterian. In Episcopalian polity, a strict chain of command is maintained. Leadership flows from the highest offices downward.<sup>3</sup> In such a matrix, parish priests are subordinate to the episcopate and choices and decisions in local matters are largely dictated by their immediate superiors.

In contrast, the local pastor in a Congregational polity is directly accountable to the congregation. In theory, it is the congregation who holds ultimate authority. The

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes*, (1992).

<sup>2</sup> Wayne OATES, “The Life of the Spirit and the Problems of Bureaucracy,” *What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches*, Theodore Runyon, ed., (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975). p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> David MOBERG, *op. cit.*, p. 94.



pastor is elected to serve the needs of the congregation. Beyond the local relationship — pastor/congregation — the role of denominational authority is often ill defined.

The Presbyterian model appears as a middle road between the previous two types. The seat of authority flows from the middle level of the denomination.<sup>1</sup> The “presbytery” consists of a pastor and an elected board of elders from the congregation. Serving together, they provide an elaborate system of checks and balances while governing the working affairs of the church.

In her study on the AG, Margaret Poloma noted that Pentecostals have broken with traditional church polity.<sup>2</sup> In essence, she demonstrates that Pentecostals operate within two separate spheres. While the relationship between a local pastor and denominational officials at both a national and regional level is best defined by the Presbyterian model, the relationship between pastors and their congregations flow from a congregational polity.

### 1.1. The Corporation and the Pastor.

Elected from among their pastoral peers, denominational authorities serve as a form of corporate hierarchy to which the pastors voluntarily submit themselves.

This corporate hierarchy is described as follows:

1. Local Assembly: consists of all members within each local assembly. Though qualification is left to the discretion of the Local Assembly, it is understood that members shall share in maintaining scriptural order, a standard of holiness and agreement with the Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths of the PAOC and shall be faithful in financial support.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> While her comments reflect her study of the AG, they are equally appropriate in describing the position of the PAOC.

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, “Article XII, Local Assemblies,” *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*. (1990). p. 17.

2. District Conference: consists of all ministers resident within its boundaries and holding current valid certificates with that district and such delegate as may be appointed by affiliated assemblies to represent them at District Conference.<sup>1</sup>
3. District Executive: consists of a superintendent, a secretary/treasurer and several presbyters.<sup>2</sup>
4. General Assembly: consists of all ordained ministers of the corporation, holders of ministerial license for women and missionaries...and duly appointed delegates from any affiliated Local Assembly.<sup>3</sup>
5. General Executive: consists of the General Superintendent, the General Secretary, the General Treasurer, the Director of Overseas Missions, the Director of Home Missions and Bible Colleges, and the Director of Church Ministries and the duly elected superintendent of each district and branch conference, and five members at large elected by the General Conference.<sup>4</sup>

Although it would appear to function not unlike an Episcopalian polity, differences are substantial. First, the chain of command, in theory, runs in the reverse direction as compared to a traditional hierarchy. The senior position of the General Executive appears at the bottom of the chain, while the Local Assembly sits on top. The order is intended to give the impression that the General Executive is ultimately responsible to the Local Assembly and not the other way around. Again, in theory, the General Executive has very little influence over the governing of a self-supporting Local Assembly.

Each church governs its own affairs, without interference from head office. Suggestive helps are sometimes passed on to our churches, but they realize the sovereignty and transact their own business. In many cases they ask that the title to their property be held at head office in the name of the Fellowship but in each instance a declaration is given stating that the property is owned by the local congregation and held in trust. This is done of their own volition...The organization is not our master. It is our servant, and those of us who are called upon to serve as elected officers are at all times cognizant of the fact that head office is the creation of the

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "Article X, District Conference," *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*, (1990). In addition to Districts divided along geographical boundaries, the PAOC has also created linguistic divisions called Branches. Branches are granted the same independence of operation which is accorded district conferences as to authority. see "Article XI, Branch," p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, "Bylaw #23, Section 6, Officers," *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*. (1990). p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, "Article VIIb, General Conference," *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*. (1990). p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> PAOC, "Article IXb, Officers," *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*, (1990). p. 16.

conference and its only reason for existence is that the work of the whole group can be carried on with greater efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

Even the designation “general/district superintendent”<sup>2</sup> is designed to reflect his role as facilitator as opposed to lord.<sup>3</sup> Local Assemblies can own their own property, hire their own pastors, administrate their own financial affairs and conduct church spiritual affairs as they see fit. As such, General and District Executive influence is in fact, indirectly propagated by the local pastors as they submit themselves to their elected peers. Functioning as a conduit, pastors allow the larger corporation to maintain an arms length control over the Local Assembly.

To the outside observer, the dynamics of the pastor/corporation relationship within the PAOC seems very harmonious. For instance, when the PAOC finally resolved the contentious issue of women’s ordination, the *Kingston Whig Standard* declared “Pentecostals are United on Controversial Issues.”<sup>4</sup> Other Christian traditions may struggle with contemporary issues such as abortion, homosexual rights, the role of women, divorce and remarriage, but Pentecostals, such as the PAOC, strive to maintain an unequivocal unity through a heuristic appeal to the authority of the Bible.

However, from an inside perspective, such unity is not as clearly articulated. Clergy often find themselves involved in a tug-of-war. By virtue of their ordination, they are subjected to the aims and demands, both morally and fiscally, of the corporation. On the other hand, by virtue of their position as pastor, they are responsible to their particular local congregation to which they have been elected. As a result, pastors are

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<sup>1</sup> “The Organization of Churches,” *PT* (April 15, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> The general superintendent serving the national interests of the PAOC and the district superintendent reflecting regional concerns are the two highest organizational positions of the PAOC within their respective jurisdictions.

<sup>3</sup> In the District of Eastern Ontario and Quebec the present superintendent prefers to use the designation pastor than superintendent. Accordingly, he is the district pastor and not district superintendent. Presumably pastors are more concerned with spiritual needs whereas superintendents are negatively viewed as functionaries of bureaucratic control.

<sup>4</sup> “Pentecostals are United on Controversial Issues,” *Kingston Whig Standard* (August, 84).

charged to laboriously balance the demands and goals of the corporation with the needs and spiritual yearnings of the rank and file pew sitter.

Interestingly, however, despite such a potential for tension, Project Exousia rejected overwhelmingly any suggestion that either national or district leaders are over meddlesome. Pastors do not feel that the Holy Spirit is in danger of being domesticated (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Authority of National/District Leadership**

5. District and/or National officers exercise too much control over the local church.	5%	SA	
	13%	A	
	7%	U	
<i>mean</i> =2.075	35%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.205	40%	SD	-mode
missing - 0			
7. Freedom of the Spirit is threatened by the present level of bureaucracy within the PAOC.	10%	SA	
	23%	A	
	10%	U	
<i>mean</i> =2.523	25%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.4	32%	SD	-mode
missing-2			
28. The PAOC is structured more than is necessary.	6%	SA	
	25%	A	
	21%	U	
<i>mean</i> =2.715	31%	D	-mode
<i>sd</i> =1.189	17%	SD	
missing - 4			

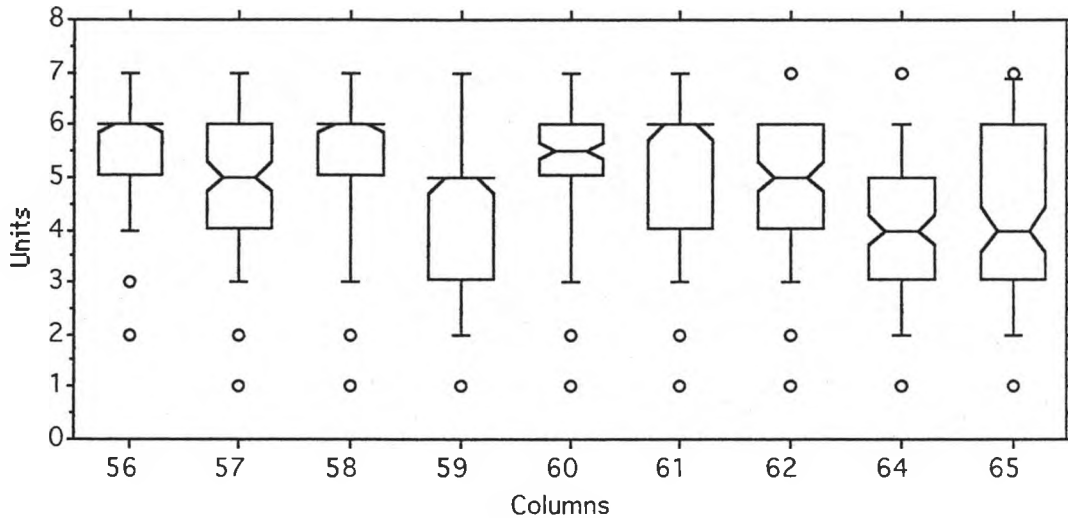
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Source: Project Exousia

To the contrary, on the whole, clergy are satisfied with the work of both national and district offices (see Table 4.2), the only apparent weakness being the Department of Spiritual Life and Evangelism, and the leitmotif for the 1990's: the "Decade of Destiny." Presumably in the first case, the lower score is a result of its low profile. And in the second case, the "Decade of Destiny" was a little more than a year old at the time of the survey — hardly enough time to make a firm evaluation.

**Table 4.2 Box Plot Graph<sup>1</sup> Depicting Attitudes of PAOC Clergy towards Executive Departments**

"On a scale of 1-7, with 1 showing little satisfaction and 7 showing high satisfaction, rate the overall efficiency of the following official voices of the PAOC"



NOTE: 56=General Executive; 57=Department of Home Missions and Bible Colleges; 58=Department of Overseas Missions; 59=Radiant Life Curriculum; 60=District Office; 61=The Pentecostal Testimony; 62=National Bible Colleges; 63=Department of Church Ministries; 64=Department of Spiritual Life and Evangelism; 65=Decade of Destiny. Source: Project Exousia.

From a clergy perspective, communication between the various levels of administration appears healthy (see Table 4.4, item #19). Pentecostals live on their ability to exchange ideas and strategies to reach the greatest number of people with the maximum amount of efficiency. If one minister serendipitously discovers a useful idea for evangelism or Christian education or raising finances or church planting etc., national and district offices will springboard the idea quickly to neighboring churches.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, national

<sup>1</sup> A box plot is a graphic method for displaying the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles of a variable. The top of the box represents the 25th percentile. The bottom of the box represents the 25th percentile. The middle 50% of the values are contained within the span defined by the box boundaries. The line in the middle of the box represents the median. Any lines extending above and below the box are referred to as "whiskers" and are associated with the 25th and 75th percentile. Any values above or below the 10th and 90th percentiles are represented by small circles. In this case, since there is no whisker above the box, the box contains 75% of the appropriate responses.

<sup>2</sup> Published five times a year, *Resource* magazine is the national leadership magazine of the PAOC. Each issue is filled with ideas relating to the various church ministries, ie., Sunday School, Youth Alive, Men's Fellowship, etc. It provides a voice for the consistency to receive and disseminate the success of others.

and district offices fulfil a utilitarian role as they co-ordinate mission activities and provide a resource center for ideas and information.

**Table 4.3. Attitude towards Role of National Officers**

"Which of the following tasks do you see as being the most fundamental role of National Officers?"

Element	Count	Percentage
A. Co-ordinating home and overseas missions.	12	17%
B. Providing moral and spiritual direction for the PAOC	42	58%
C. Acting as a voice for Pentecostals in the Political/Social arena	2	3%
D. Shaping and protecting official church doctrine	4	6%
E. General Resource Center	10	14%
F Providing financial stability for the PAOC	1	1%

Source: Project Exousia

Beyond their role in co-ordinating mutually beneficial activities such as missions and disseminating resources, executive departments are expected to fulfil their primary mandate by providing moral and spiritual direction for the local church (see Table 4.3). On the whole PAOC churches covet their autonomy, but they welcome spiritual directives from their elected overseers. Sometimes acting more as traveling evangelists, district and national leaders hopscotch across the country and through preaching and teaching seminars attempt to inspire some kind of uniform spiritual agenda for the local church.

Table 4.4. Clergy and Censorship

19. The present relationship between local clergy and executive leaders encourages both the development and exchange of ideas.	14%	SA	-mode
	34%	A	
	16%	U	
	23%	D	
	14%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.107			
<i>sd</i> =1.291			
missing - 3			
25. Ordained dissenters in matters of official dogma should not be tolerated.	18%	SA	-mode
	38%	A	
	13%	U	
	26%	D	
	4%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.354			
<i>sd</i> =1.193			
missing - 4			

Source: Project Exousia

In matters of doctrine, however, clergy appear less inclined to be creative. Theological authorship always invites the possibility of dissension. One can never imagine new possibilities unless one is granted the freedom to question the old. The survey (see Table 4.4, item #25) would indicate that PAOC clergy are uneasy about how to handle dissenters. While a majority of analysands believe dissenters should not be tolerated, a substantial 43 % were either unsure or disagreed in some way with the item. Perhaps the ambiguity is reflective of the onus clergy feel to practice self-censorship. From the question over the Trinity, to the chronicling of eschatological events, to the evidence of Spirit Baptism, officials are often willing to turn a blind eye to dissenting opinions if they are kept private with the individual.<sup>1</sup>

This should not suggest that clergy within the PAOC never question the status quo. When an issue proves to be troublesome to some pastors, informal, discreet discussions among clergy may be carried out over coffee tables across Canada.

<sup>1</sup> For many years the doctrinal statement of the PAOC used to contain the warning, "We consider it a serious disagreement with the Fundamentals for any ministry among us to *teach* contrary to our Distinctive Testimony that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is regularly accompanied by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit of God gives the utterance, and we consider it inconsistent and unscriptural for any minister to hold credentials with us who thus *attacks* as error our Distinctive Testimony." The implication was clear. Holding divergent views is one thing, divulging them in public is another.

Eventually the reverberations are felt which may prompt action from a National level. In

1982 Resolution #31 was the result of such murmuring. It read:

WHEREAS, It is essential that we be of one mind and heart with regard to our Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths, and it is necessary to give unqualified approval to such statement; and

WHEREAS, Each credential holder initially signed an affirmation of this statement and from time to time may be asked to reaffirm this at the General executive's discretion, in the application for renewal of credentials; and

WHEREAS, Questions have been raised involving statements on eschatology; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the General Executive appoint a committee to consider this aspect of our Statement of Faith and report to the General Executive spring meeting, 1983.<sup>1</sup>

Who raised these questions? and how can you raise questions when you are required to give unqualified approval to a doctrinal statement? are apparently one of those mysteries spawned by a pragmatic Institutional Word.

## 1.2. The Pastor and the Congregation

If a Presbyterian polity describes the pastor/corporation relationship, then a congregational polity describes the pastor/congregation relationship. In theory, the congregation in Pentecostal polity occupies the top rung of the hierarchy. Functionally both the pastor and District/National officers are servants of the Local Assembly. Typical of congregational polity, a congregation has the responsibility to hire its own pastor.<sup>2</sup> Generally, the local church board<sup>3</sup> solicits several possible candidates from the District

<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #31," *General Conference Minutes*, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> The exception to this rule is in the case of an assembly who is unable to assume all financial obligation in providing a place of worship and adequate salary for its pastor or who is unable to provide properly qualified leadership for election. In such situations, the pastor is appointed by the Home Missions Committee operating out of the District Executive Committee. see PAOC, "By-Laws for Dependent Assemblies," *Local Church Constitution* (1990), pp. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> Article VII, Section 3 of the *Local Church Constitution* reads: "The church board shall consist of the pastor and not fewer than three board members....After the setting in order of the church and the creation of the church board, the lay members of the board shall be elected in accordance with the resolution of this church. The pastor shall act as chairman of the board."

Qualifications for the role of board member are outlined in By-Law II, Section 2A of the *Local Church Constitution*. It reads as follows: "The official board shall be composed of members with the



Office. Then without further coercion on the part of the District, a short list is created from which the church board, after the appropriate interviews, will invite one person to come and “preach for a call.” The congregation then, in theory, attempts to make the will of God known through a majority vote of two-thirds. Should the hopeful candidate not obtain the required vote of confidence, the election process starts over again by inviting a new candidate.

However, while church members, in keeping with congregational polity, have a great deal of liberty in hiring a pastor to lead them, they have limited freedom in a pastor’s dismissal.<sup>1</sup> Generally, pastors will remain with their local church until they feel it is time to move elsewhere. In the case of moral failure, or false teaching, the District Office, operating more like a presbytery, can step in and remove the offending pastor.<sup>2</sup>

Functionally, the role of the pastor is quite diverse. The local Church Constitution states that the pastor is considered:

...the spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall direct all of its activities. He shall arrange for all special meetings, missionary conventions or revival campaigns. He shall act as chairman of all the business meetings of the assembly, and of the church board. He shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees and departments. He shall provide for all the services of the assembly, and no person shall be invited to speak or preach in the assembly without his approval. No congregational or church board meeting shall be held in his absence without his written authorization.<sup>3</sup>

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necessary scriptural qualifications of deacons (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Where such persons are not available, persons of good report and sound judgment, examples to the congregation in matters of stewardship, church attendance, and spiritual maturity, and seeking constantly, as sanctified vessels, to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18) may be elected.”

<sup>1</sup> The Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland (PAON), which is affiliated with the PAOC, makes it a standard practice to hold a vote of confidence on the pastor after four years in office. Each subsequent term is for a duration of two years. PAON, *General Constitution and By-Laws*.

<sup>2</sup> Causes for dismissal as determined by the PAOC include the following: (a) adultery or sexual deviation (b) any moral or ethical failure other than sexual misconduct or any conduct unbecoming to a credential holder (c) general inefficiency in the ministry (d) a failure or inability to represent our Pentecostal testimony correctly, (e) a contentious or non-cooperative spirit, (f) an assumption of dictatorial authority over an assembly, (g) an arbitrary rejection of district counsel, (h) a declared open change in doctrinal views, (i) a habit of running into debt which brings reproach upon the cause, (j) the officiating of a marriage in violation of our stand on marriage and divorce, (k) violations of generally accepted ministerial courtesy, (l) any proven act or conduct which, in the opinion of the district executive, after a full investigation of the evidence, may be regarded as requiring disciplinary action, see “By-Law #10, Section 7B,” *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*, (1990) p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, “By-Law II, Officers, Section 1, Pastor,” *Local Church Constitution* (1990), p. 9-12.

As can be seen from the aforementioned citation, a pastor's role is defined more in terms of titles and goals than means. How a pastor assumes the role of spiritual overseer is not explicitly stated. Translated into common experience, a pastor is often expected to be a dynamic preacher, teacher, psychologist, administrator,<sup>1</sup> building superintendent, professional musician and a taxi driver. So great and ambiguous are expectations at times, that pastors often find it difficult to articulate what they really do for a living.

Despite such a polyvalent profile, in keeping with the best of Reformation tradition, PAOC clergy recognize the right and privilege every believer has in reading and interpreting Scripture (see Table 4.6, item #37). However, by infusing the hiring process with sometimes hyper-spiritual meaning, and by frequently abnegating their responsibility in policy-making, the congregation is usually left, by default, impotent in seriously challenging a pastor's interpretative skills. It becomes, therefore, relatively easy to encourage laity to read and study the Bible for themselves when no one is in a position to voice a difference in opinion from that of the pastor. While this is not reflective of all leadership at the pastoral level, it is a problem that is inherent with Pentecostal polity. Indeed, it is often the wish of the congregation to have someone spell out the "thus saith the Lord" and thereby eliminate any ambiguity.

The PAOC may well then ask the question posed by Harrison in his study on the American Baptist Convention, "Why does the constituency obey leaders who claim pragmatic authority? (see Table 4.6 #34, 36). Do they follow the guidance of executives because they accept them as legitimate authorities, or simply because the executives pass instruments of sanction and control?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An assembly's administrative role is ultimately assumed through its elected church board. Church boards are designed to assist a pastor in an administrative capacity in matters pertaining to the assembly, its spiritual life and financial affairs. Although the pastor is generally the chairman of the board, it is the duty of the board to provide an adequate salary for their pastor and any other employees of the church. Again, how a board carries out these administrative responsibilities is not explained leaving the path open for a wide range of individual interpretations.

<sup>2</sup> HARRISON, *Authority and Power*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

In part, from the point of view of the congregation, adherents follow because they have participated in the calling process. The moment a call is extended to a pastor, theologically speaking, the congregation believes that they have enacted the will of God for themselves. Any subsequent disagreements are more of a problem with God than with the elected pastor in charge. And in part, from the point of view of the pastor, pastors claim authority by modeling an aura of moral and spiritual superiority. Pentecostal ministers feel that it is expected of them to live a life that is above reproach. If all believers should maintain a life of holiness, then pastors should be a little bit holier than the rest (see Table 4.5, item #38). "The church has a right" says Gordon Atter:

to expect its pastor to be an example of godliness. If the shepherd does not walk straight, how can his people walk straight if they follow him? A godly life will make up for many other weak points. A church is more likely to thrive under the leadership of a God-called, godly minister, than under a brilliant orator who is shallow in his Christian life, even though the other is rather poor in pulpit ability.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, clergy will frequently cocoon themselves in a darkly veiled transparency in a subconscious effort to perpetuate the myth of spiritual perfection.<sup>2</sup> Invariably they suffer "from this need to be what they feel they should be, what they know their congregations expect them to be and what they know or feel themselves to be."<sup>3</sup> Not only are these standards applicable to the residing pastors but this survey would suggest that they extend to their respective families (see Table 4.5, item #33).

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon ATTER, "The Pastor and His Congregation," *PT* (September, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Such a strategy has tragic consequences if any of the pastor's children break this rigid moral ethical code. Black sheep in clergy families invariably cast dark shadows on their ministry.

<sup>3</sup> Phillip HAMMOND, A. GEDICKS, E. LAWLER AND L. TURNER, "Clergy and Parishioner Friendship," *Pacific Sociological Review*, Vol. 15 (April 1972), p. 188.

Table 4.5      **Clergy and Personal Piety**

33. The minister's family should be a model to the whole community	26%	SA	-mode
	61%	A	
	3%	U	
	8%	D	
	2%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =4.008			
<i>sd</i> =.895			
missing - 2			
38. A Pastor should maintain higher standards of personal conduct than other people	46%	SA	-mode
	37%	A	
	2%	U	
	13%	D	
	2%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =4.13			
<i>sd</i> =1.063			
missing - 3			

Source: Project Exousia

Such a burden has, in the past, resulted in tragic consequences if any of the pastor's children break the current Pentecostal code of acceptable ethical conduct. Black sheep in clergy families can cast dark shadows on their ministry. Although it is seldom uttered out loud, there are many who feel if a man cannot succeed as the "priest" of his home, then he will not succeed as pastor of a congregation.

### 1.3 Decentralization, Segmentation, Reticulation

Pentecostals within the PAOC have always hastily pointed out that theirs is a church without a leader.<sup>1</sup> Decentralized into what social theorists describe as an acephalous structure (no distinctive head leadership),<sup>2</sup> no one leader represents the whole Fellowship or has dictatorial powers binding on all participants.<sup>3</sup> A leader does not have power to decide directly actions outside of his operating sphere.<sup>4</sup> Each elected

<sup>1</sup> "One outstanding characteristic of the revivals that began to break out was the noticeable lack of a distinctive HUMAN LEADERSHIP. No one man could claim to be responsible for the revivals that followed; but, rather, it was clearly a revival wave of Holy Ghost, apostolic power." Gordon ATTER, *The Pentecostal Movement*. loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> In their study on the organizational framework of Pentecostal denominations, Gerlach and Hine suggest that the adjective polycephalous (many headed) probably describes more accurately the climate surrounding Pentecostalism. In the absence of clear cut direction, many people will rise and take leadership in their respective area of responsibility. Luther P. GERLACH and Virginia H. HINE, *People, Power, Change Movements of Social Transformation* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.), pp. 34,35.

<sup>3</sup> "Organization of Churches," *PT* (April 15, 1950).

<sup>4</sup> During the 1992 General Conference in Ottawa, a question was raised concerning the exclusive use of the masculine gender when referring to National and District Offices. In keeping with the recent inclusion of ordained women, it was suggested that perhaps an inclusive language be adopted. The response,

official is responsible to perform only those duties which fall under his mandate. As a caveat, however, the word "power" itself, would be considered a misnomer. Officials are elected to serve the constituency and not to behave as autocrats.

In such a decentralized structure, the criteria for leadership at a district or national level tends to be based on charisma and not on the fulfilment of bureaucratic requirements. Charisma, as defined by Gerlach and Hine, is "that quality which endows an individual with the power of persuasive influence over others and inspires dependent faith and personal loyalty in his followers."<sup>1</sup> Consistent with this definition, when General and District officers are nominated biennially, by secret ballot,<sup>2</sup> from among attending registered delegates,<sup>3</sup> they are not granted the opportunity of either knowing who is interested in the position or who is most qualified. In many cases delegates are hardly fluent with the respective job description. They are denied traditional key elements in participatory democracy and must rely on their own spiritual intuition for their choice. Once a slate of names is nominated, the conference floor then votes on one of the selected candidates.<sup>4</sup> The end result is frequently the formation of a charismatic oligarchy. Candidates are, by default, elected primarily by virtue of their personality/popularity. Any merit in terms of academic qualifications or experience is relegated to a secondary concern, if it even enters into the picture.<sup>5</sup>

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quick and concise, was that there was no mistake. Apparently, access to executive officer positions will remain restricted to men.

<sup>1</sup> GERLACH and HINE, *People, Power, Change, op. cit.*, p. 39

<sup>2</sup> The 1934 General Conference resolved that "we find the will of the Lord by secret ballot on nominations." It is very much this same sentiment that lies behind present election procedures. Pentecostals would strongly frown on any form of lobbying for a candidate. Ironically in other areas, Pentecostals quickly grew beyond the notion that the Holy Spirit is quenched through adequate preparation, (ie. sermon preparation).

<sup>3</sup> In addition to ordained ministers, registered delegates include: holders of ministerial license for women, missionaries under appointment and appointed lay delegates. Assemblies having a membership of fifty or less are entitled to one lay delegate while those with more than fifty are entitled to two lay delegates. See "Section 16, Local Assemblies, #2 Self-Governing Assemblies, #7b," *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions* (1990), p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> This process can create some comical situations. During the 1992 General Conference, nine ballots were required to elect a candidate for the office of Church Ministries.

<sup>5</sup> The practice of lobbying for any given candidate is strongly discouraged. James MACKNIGHT, the general superintendent of the PAOC is quoted, "I don't think we will ever find ourselves as a denomination going around trying to put together blocks of voting power to try and get one person out of office and someone else in." *Kingston Whig Standard*, *loc. cit.*

If Pentecostal churches such as in the PAOC are decentralized, they are also, say Gerlach and Hine, segmentary. Contrary to a centralized bureaucracy, where the parts are subjected to the center, in Pentecostalism the parts operate independently of each other but will fuse together out of an altruistic devotion for the aims of the group. What holds these units together is a reticulate, weblike network that is maintained through personal ties between members and leaders; travelling evangelists; ideology; ritual practices and regional associations.<sup>1</sup> The importance of this latter association for the PAOC is extremely important. Because of the vastness of Canada, many rank and file pastors are excluded from actively participating in church affairs at a national level. To alleviate this problem, the PAOC has created a middle level of management at the regional level. In all, the Dominion of Canada is divided into seven regional/district groups. Among its responsibilities, the District Office is required to:

establish and maintain such departments and institutions for the district conference as may be required, such as camp meetings, Bible Schools, missionary rest homes, printing and publishing plants, and orphanages or other eleemosynary institutions.<sup>2</sup>

They are also required to “examine, license and ordain ministers who have met the requirements of the General Conference as set forth in the by-laws of the PAOC.”<sup>3</sup> In general, the District Office is primarily concerned with facilitating the promotion of the gospel within its regional boundaries. In so doing, it receives voluntary contributions<sup>4</sup> from churches representing their constituency for the purpose of planting pioneer churches and carrying out the functions of its office. Although doctrinal questions may be raised at a district level they must ultimately be referred to the General Conference for final approval.

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<sup>1</sup> GERLACH AND HINE, *People, Power, Change, op. cit.*, pp. 55-63.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, “By-Law #23, Section 4e,” *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions* (1990).

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, “By-Law #23, Section 4c,” *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions* (1990).

<sup>4</sup> Autonomous churches are *encouraged* to give 10 % of their receipts to District Office. Dependent or developing churches are *required* to give 10% of their revenue to District Office.

## 1.4 Variables of Control

Indissolubly tied to the question of organization is the question of control. Control is the hardware that drives the institutional process. If organizational authority is achieved through voluntary interest in obedience, control is the process of how this is achieved.<sup>1</sup> It can be exercised negatively as a means to impose one's will on the other, or it can be exercised positively as a means of providing a necessary service or as a means through which one is persuaded to comply to the collective good. In either case, control can be evidenced by the ability of one party to either pilot or sanction someone's behavior.

As in most organizations, however, neither the amount ("the total influence exerted in an organization without reference to the specific location within the organizational hierarchy of those exercising influence")<sup>2</sup> nor the distribution ("extent to which occupants of hierarchical positions differ in their influence")<sup>3</sup> is uniform. Both items are subjected to variables that effect both the *amount* of influence by any church or pastor and the direction of *distribution*.

### 1.4.1. Size of Congregation

Within Pentecostal polity, no variable carries more influence than the size of the congregation. In a movement that has come to equate success with size — large urban churches wield a disproportionate amount of influence. So much so that one AG pastor cynically remarked:

If you are successful, you can do anything. There's pragmatism in the fellowship that permits people, if they are successful, to get away with murder! There's no question about the intrinsic worth of something—

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold S. TANNENBAUM, *Control in Organizations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> James, HOUGLAND, JR., AND James WOOD, "Determinants of Organizational Control in Local Churches," *JSSR*, 18:2 (1979) pp. 132-145.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

simply an attitude—"If it's successful, don't knock it." If you are successful, that's an inherent license to do what you want to do.<sup>1</sup>

As a church grows, so does its power base, threatening the normal chains of command. In North America, this tension was evident in several recent high profile cases where denominational authorities appeared reluctant to intervene in disciplining moral failure on the part of successful pastor/evangelists.<sup>2</sup> No such passivity is accorded a pastor who does not have a power base to support him/her.

Within the PAOC, the size of congregation also effects the level of influence a congregation may exercise at General Conference. A self-governing assembly has the right to send up to two lay delegates. They are granted full privileges to either vote or discuss at the appropriate time matters related to their needs. Conversely smaller assemblies are represented only by their pastor who often cannot afford to attend the conference.

#### 1.4.2. Financial Contributions

Closely related to the first variable, missionary donations from local congregations increase both a church's profile and its amount of control within the denominational circle. When approximately 78% of the national office budget, comprised of voluntary missionary contributions of its assemblies, is spent on home and overseas missions,<sup>3</sup> leadership is reluctant to bite the hand that feeds it. Not surprisingly it has been a PAOC practice for many years to publish the amounts received from each church

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by POLOMA, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Within the AG, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker made headlines during the 1980's for their aberrant behavior. After building their own considerable religious empires both men were eventually defrocked due to moral failure. In Canada a similar fate befell Ralph Rutledge who pastored one of the flagship congregations of the PAOC. In each case, questions were raised concerning the actions of denominational officials both preceding and following the respective scandals. In the case of Jimmy Swaggart for example, district officials were willing to soften disciplinary action by rescinding standard procedures until national officials overturned the ruling of the district.

<sup>3</sup> The 1992 Report of the Biennial General Conference reported that Missions giving for 1991 was \$13,161,641. Support and revenue from all sources amounted to \$16,805,604 for the fiscal year of 1992.



as they gave to missions. As the denomination increased in size, the logistics of that practice brought it to an end. Instead the National office prints in the *Pentecostal Testimony*, the missionary contributions of the top 50 churches across the country.

#### 1.4.3. Charismatic Appeal

A third variable is related to the style of clerical leadership. In their study of "Clergy Authority",<sup>1</sup> Hammond, Salinas and Sloane conducted a survey among 10 Christian denominations, of which one was the AG. Each of the clergy was presented with three sketches based on Weber and Harrison's authority types. They were given the option of legal-rational,<sup>2</sup> pragmatic<sup>3</sup> and charismatic authority.<sup>4</sup> Then on a scale of 0 to 10 they were asked how closely this description fits them. While only 13 out of the 25 selected members of the AG responded, they overwhelmingly chose the charismatic profile at 92% while the legal-rational accounted for the other 8%. In a qualified difference to their study, the results of Project Exousia would seem to indicate that while PAOC clergy would likely have responded positively to the charismatic profile (see Table 4.6, item #31) it is by no means the whole story. Items #10, 34, 36 and 37 strongly detect a complimenting pragmatic presence.

While PAOC clergy readily assert that their authority is unavailable to laity, it does not appear to be an ontological difference or a difference based solely on the charisma of individuals. Clergy would claim that it resides in their call, which presumably reflects God's will for the congregation, but it is secured by the pragmatic responsibilities of their

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip E. HAMMOND, Luis SALINAS, and Douglas SLOANE, "Types of Clergy Authority: Their Measurement, Location, and Effects," *JSSR*, 17:3 (1978), pp. 241-253.

<sup>2</sup> The clergyman feels that his authority comes as a result of his training, which is recognized by the church in his ordination. In a way, then, he regards himself as a religious "specialist" as a result of his education in theology and other subjects. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> The clergyman feels that his authority must be demonstrated regularly. He believes that his right to preach, to lead worship, and so forth, disappears if he fails to be effective, and therefore, he feels that his authority is dependent upon his effectiveness. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The third clergyman regards his authority as coming directly from God. He received a Divine call which, in his view, remains in force. His authority, he feels, is a direct gift of grace. *Ibid.*

mandated office. Elected to provide leadership, it is their job to perform the executive functions of the church. Ministers are required by virtue of their office to participate in virtually all committees and thus are directly involved in all policy-making. They are even responsible for choosing committee members, thus further ensuring a favorable representation (to themselves). This coupled with either disinterested, confused or inexperienced members, frequently puts the pastor on an elevated pedestal, where the pastors' authority becomes God's authority. In extreme cases speaking for God can become a euphemism for speaking as God.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 4.6 Authority of Clergy vs. Laity**

10. Clergy demonstrate a degree of authority that is generally unavailable to laity.	11%	SA	-mode
	50%	A	
	9%	U	
	23%	D	
	7%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.328			
<i>sd</i> =1.166			
missing - 3			
31. A pastors scholastic achievement and experience are substantively less important then his/her spiritual call.	27%	SA	-mode
	44%	A	
	5%	U	
	15%	D	
	9%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.641			
<i>sd</i> =1.277			
missing - 3			
34. Distinctions between clergy and laity are simply functional in nature.	19%	SA	-mode
	47%	A	
	5%	U	
	24%	D	
	5%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.511			
<i>sd</i> =1.199			
missing - 3			
36. The authority of local ministers lies in their person and not in their office.	13%	SA	-mode
	15%	A	
	9%	U	
	35%	D	
	28%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =2.504			
<i>sd</i> =1.391			
missing - 7			
37. The minister has a uniquely God-given authority to rightly interpret the Scriptures.	17%	SA	-mode
	20%	A	
	6%	U	
	34%	D	
	24%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =2.714			
<i>sd</i> =1.447			
missing - 8			

Source: Project Exousia

<sup>1</sup> For an informed essay on the tensions inherent within a pragmatic congregational tradition see Larry INGRAM, "Notes on Pastoral Power in the congregational Tradition," *JSSR*, 19:1, (1980) pp. 40-48.

A gifted charismatic leader is likely to have a lively charismatic congregation. Within the PAOC, churches that are distinctively charismatic often become flagship congregations for neighbouring affiliated churches. As a result, an unofficial oligarchy of assemblies is often created. Again, in such instances, denominational officials experience a disproportionate amount of difficulty in either charting the course of the “charismatic” local assembly or in applying corrective measure in cases of doctrinal or moral failure.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.4.4. Church Autonomy

A fourth variable of control concerns the autonomy of the local congregation. With a strong emphasis on evangelism and church planting, the PAOC regularly supports, either on a national or district level, developing assemblies. As these assemblies are not in a position to meet all their financial obligations and require financial assistance, their district executive committee assumes direct control over the affairs of the church. Pastors are appointed by a Home Missions Committee. Pastors in turn must consult with the District Office on all financial matters.<sup>2</sup> In controlling the financial purse of the local church, denominational officials understandably possess a higher degree of directive power over a congregation in comparison with autonomous churches.

Where the church is autonomous, the directive power of executive officials is limited. To maintain, therefore, a moderate amount of influence over self-governing assemblies, the denomination must seek alternative ideological and functional means of control.

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<sup>1</sup> Such a flagship church exists in Quebec City. Centrally located in the heart of Quebec this single church has spawned or greatly influenced several churches around it. In the meantime they have frequently fudged the “rules,” by among other things, inviting evangelists who were not approved by the PAOC to come and speak, and by giving support to the start of a new Bible College for French Canada.

<sup>2</sup> In such cases, pastors will submit a yearly budget to their governing district for approval. Once the budget has been approved, a pastor need only consult the district for new expenditures.

*Via negativa*, denominational officials accomplish this by invigilating in matters of moral conduct. Officials require that all their pastors adhere to a moral code loosely based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.<sup>1</sup> In the event that ministers fall short of expectations, denominational leaders have the authority to remove them from the pulpit.

*Via positiva*, denominational officials maintain an arms length influence over autonomous churches by providing a variety of useful services. Bible Colleges are such an example where they endeavor to thoroughly indoctrinate potential pastors in the distinctive theological and experiential characteristics of the Pentecostal faith and thereby ensure future leadership. Rhetorically their goal is not uniformity but unity in the Spirit. From a Canadian point of view, J.E. Purdie, aka. Mr. Bible College, wrote:

With S. Paul we believe the important thing is that we all speak the same things and that there be no dissensions among us, but that we be completely joined together in love and have the same mind and same judgment upon great matters; that we teach the same doctrines; contend earnestly for the same theological position, and that we all stand without compromise on the Latter Rain distinctive testimony.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to maintaining institutions of learning, District and National Offices serve as resource centers for materials,<sup>3</sup> co-ordinate regional, national and overseas activities<sup>4</sup> and provide a single national voice for social and theological agendas.

## 1.5. Conclusion

In such a decentralized, segmentary and reticulate organization, the pastor serves as the linchpin connecting the corporate aims of the denomination with the individual needs of the local congregation. The resulting burden placed on the pastor in

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<sup>1</sup> In conversation with ministers from various regions, it would appear that ministers interpret these strictures freely from region to region. For example, while it is considered forbidden for a pastor to attend a movie theater in one region, in another it may raise no more than an eyebrow.

<sup>2</sup> J.E. PURDIE, *Pentecostal Testimony* (October 15, 1948).

<sup>3</sup> Operating out of the National Office in Mississauga, Ontario, The Full Gospel Publishing House distributes materials that are of benefit to its churches. Books, Bibles, Sunday School materials, and promotional materials can all be purchased that reflect the Pentecostal emphasis.

<sup>4</sup> Inter-church activities are promoted by both at a District and National level designed to enhance such things as family life, spiritual growth, evangelism, stewardship, Christian education, public relations etc.

such a situation is alleviated to the degree that all sides agree to soothe any disputes or decisions with an enormous amount of good will. In the event that such generosity of spirit is not maintained, it is usually the pastor who absorbs the brunt of any ill-will as there is no clear structure for adjudicating between disagreeing factions.

This tension is alleviated if pastors can visibly demonstrate the success of their particular church. In such cases, denominational officials are generally reluctant to become too involved in the daily affairs of the church. They may cringe when rumors of unorthodox practices or even moral failure on the part of the clergy come to light, but the pulse of their response is considerably different than with a church that is struggling numerically or financially—two major criteria for success.

## **2. An Historical Assessment**

In seventy-five years, the PAOC has evolved from a fledging movement characterized by a constant suspicion of organization to a denomination whose level of bureaucracy rivals its oldest competitors. In broad strokes, this section will trace this development while seeking to understand the rationale which has fueled it.

### **2.1. 1906-1925**

It is no secret that early Pentecostals were devoutly anti-organizational. With every opportunity, self-made leaders vilified even subtle moves towards institutionalization. To live in the Spirit was to live outside flesh — read organization. If charismatic spirituality was a “cry for freedom,” then organization was the “voice of bondage.” The former was a product of true Christian faith while the latter was a product of religiosity. Organization was characterised as a “party spirit,” a yoke of (ecclesiastical)

bondage,"<sup>1</sup> that only "intensifies and perpetuates division."<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals heralded the end of "ecclesiastical hierarchies." The only leader required for true organization was Jesus himself, with the Holy Spirit being the impetus for fellowship.<sup>3</sup>

Early Pentecostal leaders were a motley group of swashbuckling free lancers who (a) rallied around a theological conviction that they were a reprimination of the primitive church, (b) shared an eschatological vision that they were living in the last days (c) and held an ecclesiological persuasion that formal churches were just that — formal and devoid of any true sense of the Spirit.

Pentecostals met in railway cars, home cottage meetings, abandoned buildings, school houses, tents — generally anywhere but denominational church buildings. In fact these early Pentecostals had very little commitment to typical church conventions. Buildings had no value beyond their utilitarian purpose in assembling like-minded believers together. As a result, Pentecostals were reluctant to spend unnecessary time or money in procuring or maintaining them. Instead Pentecostals pooled their money to support evangelistic efforts that could reach the greatest number of people in the least amount of time. Periodicals, missionaries and informal camp meetings became the focus of an apocalyptic pragmatic generation.<sup>4</sup>

Preachers traveled by foot, horse back, or would often hitch rides on passing wagons, to reach their next preaching point. Offerings were neither taken nor were salaries generally given. Instead preachers received monetary handouts stuffed into their hand or pocket following a meeting. Most ministers were required to support their families in work outside of their evangelistic commitment.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BARTLEMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> MILLER, "The Canadian Azusa," *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> BARTLEMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> ANDERSON, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78. William Seymour writes, "He (God) is sending out those who will go without money and without price." Back to Pentecost," *Apostolic Faith* (October, 1906). Reprinted in *Like as of fire op. cit.* p. 7.

Despite such noble ideals and practices, early Pentecostals began recognizing the need to adopt some form of organizational control. Fundamental disagreements over belief, opportunistic charlatans and the need to curb excesses and abuses made organization imperative. The first few paragraphs of the minutes of the newly constituted PAOC read like an extended apology for having to organize. It explained:

Preamble and Resolution of Constitution

WHEREAS, The Pentecostal Ministers representing a number of Assemblies in Canada, met together for the means whereby they could better co-operate for the furtherance of the Gospel. After prayer and consideration, it was unanimously agreed that a co-operative body was a necessity.

WHEREAS, We deem it advisable in order to avoid creating unscriptural lines of fellowship and disfellowship, to affiliate on the basic principles of love, righteousness and truth, with due recognition of each other, allowing liberty of conscience in matters of personal conviction;

THEREFORE, Be it resolved, that we as representative Ministers form Pentecostal Assemblies in various parts of Canada, shall henceforth be known as "THE PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF CANADA," whose purpose is neither to legislate laws of government, nor usurp authority over the various local Assemblies, or to deprive them of their Scripturally recognized rights and privilege, but to co-operate with them, and assist them by all legitimate means consistent with New Testament principles and Christian conduct.

RESOLVED, That we disapprove of making a doctrinal statement of fellowship and co-operation, but that we accept the Word of God in its entirety, conducting ourselves in harmony with its Divine principles and Apostolic example "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the body of peace," till we all come into the unity of the faith.—Eph. 3,13.<sup>1</sup>

If organization was inevitable, Pentecostals were at least determined to avoid the errors of their church ancestors. They billed themselves as the first religious group who would successfully bridge the gulf between institutional form and experiential faith. They would rally around a need to co-ordinate global missionary efforts but at no time were they going to create a *legislative* central organization. Even their adopted doctrinal statement began with the warning that such a declaration is:

...*not* intended as a creed for the Church, *nor* a basis of unity for the ministry alone.... The human phraseology employed in such statement is

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference Minutes of May 17th, 1919, reprinted in "Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada," *Pentecostal Testimony* (February 1926).

*not inspired nor contended for....No claim is made that it contains all truth in the Bible, only that it covers our present needs as to these fundamental matters. (italics mine)*<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these precautions aimed at avoiding the pitfalls of ecclesiastical organization, early Pentecostals were careful in tempering the weight of clerical authority. Ministers were called by God to function as servants to the body of Christ. Ordination was a simple ceremony which involved two or more regular ordained ministers imposing their hands on a candidate who had sufficiently proven his call to the ministry.<sup>2</sup> In no way did they wish to be guilty of restricting the free movement of the Holy Spirit which was liable to "burst through anyone."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps in reaction to historical churches, Pentecostals repudiated any thought that these servants were in any way ontologically different or superior to laity. Individuals were to be honored for their God-given gifts and not for their pedigree, natural talents or education.<sup>4</sup> Everyone was either a "Brother" or "Sister," in the Lord. All were deemed equal. Typically, for years the General Conference minutes of the PAOC reflected this same orientation. Individuals were referred to as "Brother Chambers" or "Sister Smith," etc.

Fearful of over organizing, leaders swerved clear of the image and language of denominationalism. They were a Fellowship and not to be confused with a denomination. Denominations were the vestiges of a spiritual carcass that had long since given up its life. They existed as an ecclesiastical (read political) attempt to preserve a forgotten spirituality.<sup>5</sup> A "Fellowship" on the other hand, was not weighed down by ecclesiastical

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> General Conference Minutes of 1919, Nov. 25th -28th Kitchener, Repealed By-law 23. Pentecostals reacted negatively to the pompous ceremonies which distinguished main-line denominations. Keep it short and simple was their motto. See F.W. Lemons, *Our Pentecostal Heritage*, (Cleveland, Tenn.: Pathway Press), p.154.

<sup>3</sup> Frank BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, *op. cit.*, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Early Pentecostals struggled more with the image of denominationalism than with its form. In his essay on denominationalism in America, Sidney E. Mead makes the case that every American denomination thought of itself, first and foremost, as a voluntary association of like-hearted and like-minded individuals, who united on the basis of common beliefs for the purpose of accomplishing tangible and defined objectives. With time, however, the image of denominationalism shifted to that of a secular insitution where denominations became man-made efforts to preserve a fledging spirituality. Sidney E.



corruption. It existed on a voluntary basis. Explains General Superintendent Walter McAlister:

I thank God for the privilege of being a member of this great Fellowship of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. This is a voluntary co-operative fellowship, and I would like to suggest that we continue to operate on this basis. I dislike regimentation. I dislike conscription. I dislike forcing people to do this or that. Love should be the compelling force, not law. Salvation is on a voluntary basis. No one will be forced into heaven. Service for Christ is on a voluntary basis. We will be rewarded for willing service.

Membership in our organization is voluntary, but if we are happy to carry the credentials of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, let us gladly and willingly co-operate with our brethren in the ministry, and also with the program of our District Conference, and of our National Office. A man who accepts all the benefits, and who assumes none of the obligations, is unfair. Let each one of us ask ourselves the question, "Am I pulling my share of the load?"

I feel it is my duty to remind you that there is a fixed law of sowing and reaping. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. If you sow the seeds of loyalty, and of co-operation, you will reap a harvest of the same. But if you sow seeds of disloyalty, don't complain if you discover that you must reap that kind of harvest.<sup>1</sup>

Denominations were considered the fallout of bitter doctrinal feuds. Pentecostals were not going to fall into that trap. When individuals in the PAOC struggled over the issue of One God and Trinitarian views and the baptismal formula, they resolved that they "go on record as disapproving not only of the above issues, but of all other issues that divide and confuse God's people to no profit, and that aggressive evangelism be our motto."<sup>2</sup> They were not going to discriminate against individuals because of doctrinal sensibilities—the only requirement being the acceptance of speaking in other tongues.<sup>3</sup> In the words of William James, Pentecostals were asking "What are the practical consequences? What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true?"<sup>4</sup> Evangelism was the key. Were souls being saved? Were

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MEAD, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America," in *Denominationalism*, ed. Russell Richey (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), pp. 68-136.

<sup>1</sup> WALTER MCALISTER "Report to General Conference," National Archives (1954).

<sup>2</sup> General Conference Minutes of 1919 Nov. 25th-28th Kitchener.

<sup>3</sup> HAWKES, "Pentecostalism in Canada," *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> JAMES, *Pragmatism*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

people being filled with the Pentecostal experience? In the wake of these two adjudicating questions all other issues seemed idle.

However, such precautions were not sufficient in assuaging critics who worried that any move towards organization would result in forfeiting the work of the Holy Spirit. Frank Bartleman prophesied the end of Azusa Street Mission the day he saw a sign placed on the property.

The truth must be told. "Azusa" began to fail the Lord also, early in her history. God showed me one day that they were going to organize, though not a word had been said in my hearing about it....Sure enough the very next day after I dropped this warning in the meeting I found a sign outside "Azusa" reading "Apostolic Faith Mission." The Lord said: "This is what I told you." They had done it. Surely a 'party spirit' cannot be 'Pentecostal.'...The church is an organism not a human organization."<sup>1</sup>

A sign spelled organization. Organization spelled control. Control spelled the end of Pentecost — at least in the mind of Bartleman. Similarly in Canada, Mrs. Ellen Hebden resolutely refused to have anything to do with talk of organization.

We desire to state most emphatically that in the Lord's work at 651 Queen St. and at 191 George St., Toronto, we have no connection whatever with any general organization of the Pentecostal people in Canada. As a "missionary church" we stand alone in God's divine order and extend the right hand of fellowship to every member of the body of Christ...and we decline absolutely all responsibility for any so-called representatives of the Pentecostal work in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

However, despite these objections, and warnings, by 1920 the move towards organization had become the norm, not the exception among Pentecostal groups in North America.

### 2.1.1. Conclusion

The fact that organization was a pragmatic necessity to curb abuses and effectively promote evangelism did little to relieve Pentecostals' fear of organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank BARTLEMAN, *Witness to Pentecost*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen HEBDEN cited by MILLER, "The Canadian Azusa," *op. cit.*, p. 21.

They feared that organization would impede a vivacious Holy Spirit. When the inevitable occurred, and organizations such as the AG and the PAOC were formed, they were justified with apology. Membership was strictly on a voluntary basis; officials would not interfere with local Assemblies; authority would not be legislated and creeds were not really creeds.

Concomitantly Pentecostals attempted to avoid the earmarks of denominationalism. Pentecostals would have agreed with S.S. Maimela that “denominationalism is the sinful tendency toward the fragmentation of the church, the one body of Christ, into various religious splinter groups against God’s will that the church be One in Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Structure would be kept at a minimum. Doctrine would not be made a watershed qualifier. The class systems of “reverend,” and laity would be abolished — instead everyone was either a brother or sister in the Lord. And finally church membership was redundant, if not anathema — the Holy Spirit was sufficient in maintaining unity.

If Pentecostals were not interested in denominationalism neither were they going to enshrine their monuments. Azusa Street would not become a museum of “where it began.” Azusa Street was significant as a metaphor of what an unfettered Holy Spirit could do, but Pentecostals refused to idolize the place as if it had inherent mystical properties of its own. The building served a utilitarian purpose as a meeting place but the center of attention was a creative Holy Spirit.

For these early Pentecostals, reason was in service of a pragmatic, prejudicial orthopathy. A Pentecostal confessional faith implied a yieldedness and availability to God where a love for God and a passion for God’s Kingdom provided the only required

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<sup>1</sup> S.S. MAIMELA, “Denominationalism — an embarrassment for the church,” *Denominationalism: its sources and implications: proceedings of the sixth symposium of the Institute for Theological Research held at the University of South Africa in Pretoria on the 8th and 9th September 1982* ed. W.S. Vorster, 1982, p. 1.

foundation for Christian fellowship.<sup>1</sup> To this end, the resulting ecclesiastical Fellowship could be utilitarian in value, but it could never become an end in itself.

## 2.2. 1925-1950

Once the trend towards organization began, Pentecostal leaders recognized the need for a uniform approach to ministerial training. This was no small undertaking since Pentecostals were so caught up in evangelism that they had little time left for theology. Modern Theology was simply a "religion without an experience, a theory without facts, a form of worship without power,"<sup>2</sup> the fruit of which led to endless divisions and bickering. Not surprisingly, Pentecostals suspected that apostasy in the historical churches was due in no small part to their embrace of the theological enterprise. The question that was asked was: how could the Holy Spirit have anything to do with something so contentious? Surely the Holy Spirit is antithetical to any preoccupation with formal education.

Armed with the power of the Holy Spirit, and spurred on by an apocalyptic passion for the Kingdom, early Pentecostals were reluctant to fritter away their time in colleges. Yet the demands of their own success, as their "Fellowships" began to grow, forced Pentecostals to reconsider their options. Workers were needed as never before to consolidate and energize the burgeoning Pentecostal population.

In 1925, the General Conference of the PAOC resolved that a temporary Bible School be established in Winnipeg. The institution was called the Central Canadian Bible Institute (changed a year later to the Canadian Pentecostal Bible College) and began its first term in November of that same year with a faculty of five and an enrolment of 31 students. With no entrance requirements, a year later, the enrolment had more than

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<sup>1</sup> LAND, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-181.

<sup>2</sup> J. N. HOOVER, "The Tragedy of Modern Theology," *PT* (March 1930), p. 12.

doubled. In Spring, 1928, three years after it had opened its doors, the first Graduation of the Canadian Pentecostal Bible College took place. Testimony to the school's popularity — enrolment by 1930 had already exceeded 130.<sup>1</sup>

The man chosen to preside as Principal of the College was J.E. Purdie. An Anglican by birth and a Wycliff College graduate, more than any other individual, Purdie established the tenor of theological training in the PAOC. Purdie summarized his passion with two driving objectives:

...at the time of the inception of the College (in 1925), two things were impressed upon the mind of the Principal. First, that while in the best and most evangelical Theological Colleges or Seminaries of that day, strong emphasis was laid upon the Bible as the infallible Word of God, yet the student was not sufficiently familiarized with the actual content of the Holy Scriptures themselves; secondly, that while in the best Bible Schools on our continent, there were very good courses on the Bible itself, yet there was a lack of instruction in real Systematic Theology as taught in the best Seminaries. For these two reasons, we drew up a course in which both elements are well-balanced.<sup>2</sup>

Before long the move towards systematic training resulted in the opening of several regional colleges throughout Canada. While each college was unique and reflected regional diversity, several common denominators could be observed. First, the Bible continued to enjoy a privileged status as being the textbook *par excellence*. With limited access to theological libraries, students usually found all the inspiration they needed within its pages. Second, colleges were intensely evangelistic in appeal. Little time was devoted to theological speculation or controversial issues. Instead students were schooled in courses that were designed to convict — not convince people of their need for salvation. Third, they were practical in scope. Being a Pentecostal meant being separated, or distinct from the ethos of modernism. Graduates were expected to look, speak and behave noticeably different from their secular counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup> KULBECK, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> J.E. PURDIE, "God's Faithfulness...The Experience of Twenty Years, 1925-45," *The Portal*, 1945 (College Year Book), p. 3, cited in Brian Ross, "James Eustace Purdie: The Story of Pentecostal Theological Education," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, 17:4. (1975), p. 97.

Yet despite these cautionary measures, Purdie and his associates still ran into opposition from those who felt that there was no need of formal training. "God makes preachers," critics said, "we don't need any Bible College." Undaunted Dr. Purdie continued teaching for twenty-five years and witnessed about 40 of his own graduates teach in other Colleges.<sup>1</sup>

In some cases Bible College graduates were invited directly into established congregations complete with financial remuneration. However, given the youthfulness of the PAOC, established churches were relatively few in number. More often than not, graduates were required to "exercise faith, and learn to pray with new understanding, 'Give us this day our daily bread,'"<sup>2</sup> as they pioneered new churches in towns that had not as yet been exposed to the Pentecostal message.

Elected District officials Coordinated and oversaw church planting projects. District conferences. District offices were responsible to support any burgeoning assemblies within their boundaries both morally and financially when possible. Money was often made available for such purposes through the contributions of established churches and the partial tithes of credential holders. Since, their inception the PAOC has been proficient in raising funds for both Home and Foreign Missions. Explaining the financial success of the PAOC during this period, Gloria Kulbeck writes:

It is a fourfold secret. First, when Pentecostal people are faced with a financial need, they pray, believing that God will come to their aid. Second, the vision of the Pentecostal denomination is such that "frills" are forgotten. Funds are used only to further the cause of Christ, and are carefully husbanded. Third, the vast majority of Pentecostal pastors are educating their people to give at least ten per cent of their income to the work of the church, and if possible, a generous offering besides. Fourth, the Pentecostal denomination has been blessed with godly and responsible financial leadership.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> KULBECK, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> KULBECK, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

The price for such financial favors provided by either District or National offices was absolute compliance to the aims of the organization. Pastors were required to adhere to a series of stipulations that governed their conduct and evangelistic efforts. And churches were limited to choosing only pastors who held credentials with the PAOC, thus completing the concentric circle of accountability.

From 1925 to 1950, the PAOC grew from a fledging few to 45,000 adherents. Concomitantly so did the level of organizational control. Pentecostals were no longer a fringe movement; they were rapidly becoming a force to take seriously. To some, Pentecostals were now the "Third force in Christendom."<sup>1</sup> As a force to take seriously, Pentecostals had earned a begrudged respect from the ecclesiastical community. Pentecostals knew a good thing when they saw it and seized the opportunity to fine tune their image by downplaying their emotionalism and by crystallizing what had previously been dynamic.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with this transition, some Pentecostals began employing the title Reverend in reference to their ministers. The epithet "Rev." appeared for the first time in the minutes of the General Conference of 1931. Uneasy with what some pastors felt was a move towards a subtle hierarchy, seven years later the Eastern Ontario District Conference carried the following resolution on September, 15, 1938:

Resolved that whereas unnecessary and unscriptural titles such as reverend and doctor are being adopted by workers, Be it resolved that the workers in this District be discouraged from using such, and revert back to more simple and scriptural terms. And furthermore that this resolution be sent to the General Conference.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ATTER, *The Third Force*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> In an insightful essay on denominationalism, H. Richard Niebuhr writes, "Institutions can never conserve without betraying the movements from which they proceed. The institution is static whereas its parent movement is dynamic....When a denomination or fellowship turns to the defensive and loses its consciousness of the invisible catholic church, Niebuhr concludes, it becomes a victim of petrification, creeping paralysis, confining, confusion, externalization, capitulation's, self-congratulatory, self confident and self-righteous. H. Richard Niebuhr, "Institutionalization & Secularization of the Kingdom, in *Denominationalism*, ed. Russell, E. Richey (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), pp. 229-246.

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (Sept. 15, 1938).

Subsequently, at the General Conference held September 11-13, 1940, in Toronto, the aforesaid resolution was presented and defeated. The Saskatchewan District Conference then amended the resolution by favoring the "Christian term 'reverend'."<sup>1</sup> It was carried. Was the epithet "Rev.", unscriptural or Christian? Did it imply ontological significance or did it simply underline a functional difference? Was it a license to serve the congregation as lord or was it simply a sign of respect or courtesy? Whatever the propounded reason, the term "reverend" did enjoy obvious pragmatic advantages over the generic appellation "brother" or "sister." In a burgeoning movement that was seeking respectability, the term Reverend added a certain credibility and dignity to the Pentecostal enterprise. And by extension, it undermined critics who enjoyed painting Pentecostals with broad paintbrush strokes as yokel religious fanatics who swung from rafters in makeshift barns.

Likewise qualifications for ordination were changing. Previously individuals were required to prove their calling through a demonstration of their gifts and success, now it was an additional prerequisite that all workers "must have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost before receiving credentials."<sup>2</sup> Ordination itself, was vested with new authority. Whereas individuals were initially ordained in a small ceremony overseen by at least two ordained members, by 1931 the responsibility to ordain and assign preaching points was now in the hands of the District in which a candidate resided.<sup>3</sup> Preachers were no longer merely called of God but they now had District sanctioned authority.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1940).

<sup>2</sup> The 1938 General Conference in Calgary formally acknowledged a previous understanding that credentialed ministers must be filled with the Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. Should for some reason this not be the case it was further resolved that any such worker that they be dealt with by their District accordingly.

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (London, 1931).

<sup>4</sup> Concomitantly, with an ever professionalization of the ministry, preachers began receiving a salary for their work. Salaries commensurated with the size of the budget, which reflected the size of the church. Large churches received larger salaries, smaller churches received smaller salaries. When clergy were asked if their salary should be based on the combination of experience and education or the size of the church, they narrowly opted for the latter. (see annexe A, #27, #40.).



By 1930 Pentecostal leaders who avowed not to legislate laws of government, were doing everything possible to identify true Pentecostals by delimiting their conduct and theology. Increasingly Pentecostals were becoming known for what they did not do rather than what they did do. Pentecostals did not attend theaters, shows, hockey or baseball games. They did not participate in dancing, bingo, card parties, skating or any place of amusement in general.<sup>1</sup> Subverted as a sub-text was a commitment to the immediacy of the Holy Spirit —the life and breath of the Pentecostal Movement.

### 2.2.1. Conclusion

The pragmatist says William James, “clings to facts and concreteness, observes truth at its work in particular cases, and generalizes. Truth, for him, becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working-values in experience.”<sup>2</sup> For Pentecostals the facts testified to the rightness of their organization. Converts were being made, churches were growing and doctrinal peace was being maintained. The Fellowship was useful. Therefore, it must be true or it must be leading to a state that is worthwhile.<sup>3</sup> It was certainly worthwhile for Pentecostals to establish a quorum of orthodoxy; it was worthwhile to establish structures that could curb and prevent the appearance of excessive behavior; and it was worthwhile because it was successful.<sup>4</sup>

In a phrase which echoes the ethos of pragmatism, Pentecostal historian, Gloria Kulbeck concluded that the early Pentecostal fear of organization has been unfounded. She writes, “the experience of 40 years has shown that these regulations have not

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (Calgary, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> JAMES, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> In 1938 the General Conference passed this resolution: Resolved that the workers who over a period of years prove unsuccessful be demoted and their credentials recalled by the General Conference on recommendation of the District Executive.

What constituted a successful worker was never defined except in the mind of that particular Conference. It would appear that the lofty notion of an irrevocable higher calling above any human approbation, which so characterized vocational rhetoric, was pragmatically set aside. An accommodational pragmatics defined the criteria and imposed the sanction.

restricted the expansion of Pentecost in Canada, but rather have guided evangelistic efforts into sane and beneficial channels."<sup>1</sup>

From 1925-1950, Pentecostals sought to resolve both internal tensions and outside criticism by pragmatically appealing to the forum of orthodoxy as defined by means of a confessional statement.

### 2.3. 1950-

Were the naysayers right? Did the move towards organization spell the end of the Pentecostal experiment? If numerical growth is a positive indicator, the PAOC would seem vindicated. For a young movement, the fecundity of the PAOC has been remarkable. From their inception in 1919 to 1950, they had grown from nothing to 45,000 members. By 1970 as Pentecostals began eagerly incorporating the technological earmarks of utility, productivity and efficiency in a bid to achieve maximum verifiable results those numbers would jump 200 % to 150,000 members.<sup>2</sup>

Inevitably, however, growth increased the bureaucratic burden of control and maintenance. As Pentecostals expanded their borders, they did so at the cost of taking on the look and demeanour of an historical denomination. Church membership was now no longer a subject of quandary — from a clergy perspective, it had become an imperative mandate. Adherents were reminded that among other things, membership was a pragmatic necessity in a litigating society and it was the only sure means of controlling excessive practices. If some adherents did not want to conform to the institutional aims of the PAOC or behave in an appropriate manner, they could politely be screened out of any position of real influence.

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<sup>1</sup> KULBECK, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Reginald BIBBY, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987) ,p. 14.

Membership, however, demands some sort of criteria or it is redundant. At a bare minimum, it was expected that members should “give credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. They should refrain from acts of the sinful nature and they should accept the doctrinal standards as set forth in the constitution.”<sup>1</sup> In practice, the application of such a resolution varies substantially from one congregation to the other. In some cases applicants are required to sign an affidavit that they are committed to tithing, and that they will not attend movies, smoke or consume alcohol etc. In other assemblies, the screening committee is simply interested in whether the applicant is willing to accept the aspirations of the church. In either case, Pentecostals were moving rapidly away from their high and lofty aspirations of maintaining a Fellowship based on the mutual acceptance of God’s Word and living in harmony with its principles.

In similar fashion, Bible colleges were evolving in a bid to keep up with the times. Increasingly they were taking on the flavor and demeanour of other professional academic institutions. Beginning with Western Pentecostal Bible College in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Bible colleges began offering degree programs to their students. The Bible still maintained a privileged status as a text book but students were also being exposed to the methods of historical criticism and the larger theological arena. In addition, colleges are becoming highly specialized. No longer content offering a “general practitioner” certificate in pastoral care, colleges began offering degrees in youth ministry, counseling and missions, and so forth.<sup>2</sup>

Such a move has not been made uncritically. As Bible colleges march toward degrees with a vengeance, the call is once again being sounded by those who fear the

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, Article VI, Membership,” *Local Church Constitution* (1990).

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Pentecostal Bible College, Canada’s largest Bible College, with a student population of over 450, is chartered by the government of Ontario to offer a programme of ministerial training and to grant appropriate undergraduate degrees. Presently it offers a Bth program which is accredited by the American Association of Bible Colleges. *Eastern Pentecostal Bible College: Catalogue 1992-94* (Peterborough, Ontario).

Item #31, in annexe A would suggest that while PAOC clergy may covet the importance of a sound college education, should they pursue a career as pastor, their calling must supersede their achievements.

encroachment of intellectualism.<sup>1</sup> Despite hard evidence to substantiate their suspicions,<sup>2</sup> the spirituality of Bible college is always suspect.<sup>3</sup> Bible college teachers, however, need rarely fear for their perpetuation. As veteran college teacher, Alvin Shindel implied, even men who criticize and have repudiated education practice a form of accommodational or expedient pragmatism when they are only too willing to “snatch at the prizes which they (the Colleges) confer.”<sup>4</sup>

Since the 1950s, the Institutional Word has been very congenial with technocracy — the alliance of democracy with technology. In such an alliance the worth of pastors is proportional to their achievement. Producers are valued over thinkers. Pastors are hired to perform. Reminiscent of sports figures or entertainers who must somehow surpass their latest accomplishment, Pentecostal pastors seldom escape the spotlight of performance. Without the benefits of a written or even unspoken liturgy, Pentecostals sometimes expect their ministers to lead them into greater experiences with God on a weekly level. On occasions if a highly charged charismatic service evoking many emotions is not followed by something that is at least its equal, the next week parishioners may feel let down. Pentecostals have always had a great theology for leading people up the mountainside, but have struggled in coping with the stuff of mundane daily life. Pressured by the public to outperform themselves, Pentecostal ministers at times fall victim to their own success using what may appear as manipulative gimmicks to induce a certain reaction from the crowd. While such practices are never

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<sup>1</sup> Lester PIPKIN, “Bible College Distinctives,” *PT* (May 1973)

<sup>2</sup> Today, when many theological seminaries are struggling to maintain their student quotas, Pentecostal Bible Colleges are filled to maximum. In fact, it could be argued that their growing respectability in the eyes of the larger academic community is in direct proportion to their ability to remain bastions of biblical teaching. Contrary to these suspicions the clergy surveyed for this thesis believe the impact of Bible college is positive (see appendix 1, item #49), they are not afraid of higher education (item #48), they repudiate the idea that Bible Colleges are out of step with the work of the Holy Spirit (item #14).

<sup>3</sup> See Garry MILLEY, “Is the Bible College Spiritual Enough?” *Resource* (March-April, 1990), p.6. Milley, a respected college teacher, makes the case that the question is spurious. Of course the Bible College is not spiritual enough, “the development of Christian character is a matter of being, becoming, and being made into the image of Christ...Spirituality is not a static condition that is easily measurable, and all ministers and Bible college teachers wrestle with how best to promote and nurture it.”

<sup>4</sup> Alvin SHINDEL, “The Role of Bible Colleges in our Pentecostal Fellowship,” *PT* (July 1964).

condoned, they have established themselves as an unwelcome icon to the Pentecostal parade.<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, however, while the move to modernize with technical precision has been the distinctive feature of the Institutional Word since 1950, many parts of the structure have remained surprisingly impervious to change. For example, with a constituency of 3,543 credential holders,<sup>2</sup> the PAOC continues to elect its senior officials bereft of any information to make an informed decision. While at one time, presumably the Fellowship was small enough to assume that conference members were relatively acquainted with each other, today members are often required to make a flip of the coin vote for a candidate they do not know. Officials retort that this is the only effective means of resisting human coercion that is so associated with political lobbying. Nevertheless, they raise questions of consistency when at a District level it has become an acceptable practice to submit a pre-selected name for the nomination of the ancillary offices of church ministries, youth director, etc. The voting constituency is left to nominate other persons, but it would be highly unusual if the District choice was not selected on the initial ballot. A voting procedure which began in all innocence as a spiritual vehicle of order has become a convenient political force capable of perpetuating, however innocently, a reigning oligarchy.

It is difficult to explain why Pentecostals can change so freely on some issues and remain so inflexible on others. Pentecostals do not have the ecclesiastical burden of respecting centuries of church tradition. In terms of church history, seventy-five years is a relatively short period. It would appear that the problem stems from an existential split between their spiritual claims and their verifiable goals. Suspicious of anything remotely

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<sup>1</sup> In one meeting where which I attended, a visiting evangelist was visibly frustrated at her inability to solicit some verbal comments by the congregation (Amen, etc.). She then proceeded to try and coach people into reacting by asking several rhetorical and rather inane questions. The congregation appeared to be in no mood to respond to this kind of badgering and reacted in opposition. In the measure, the evangelist tried to stimulate the people the congregation pulled back with some literally sitting on their hands.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the General Secretary to the General Conference 1992, p. 9.

institutional/bureaucratic, Pentecostals will often disguise the decision process in a spiritual garb and therein lies the problem. In the measure that Pentecostals spiritualize the language of bureaucracy, invariably they seem to succumb to the worst it (bureaucracy) has to offer. The moment a this-worldly structure is clothed in other-worldly attire, closure is enacted, accountability is denied and any future change or modification is handcuffed. For example a antiquated voting procedure which denies a transparent evaluation of potential candidates in an attempt to remain true to the will of God has rendered simple elections a breeding ground for underground murmuring, and coercion — the two characteristics they wish to avoid.

Likewise constitutional reform becomes a spiritual minefield where issues are often decided based on popular opinion, but guised in sumptuous spiritual rhetoric. In this way denominational officials can, if need be, side-step a process of checks and balances without invoking the suspicion of laity towards central ecclesiastical authority.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3.1. Conclusion

From the perspective of an outsider, the institutional dynamics of the PAOC appears highly fluid and adaptable. Perhaps more than any other Christian denomination, Pentecostals have been able to accommodate, and in some cases exploit, both the speed and demands of modern technology. Pentecostals now reside in suburbs. They display the most modern churches. Plexiglass pulpits adorn their altars. Powerful amplifiers fill the air with sound. Padded pews await the faithful. In the minds of white North American Pentecostals, success constitutes simultaneously both their proudest achievement and greatest dread. Pentecostals can finally point to their achievements, —the largest churches,<sup>2</sup> the greatest percentage growth—but at the same

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of this tendency, see chapters 6 and 7 dealing with “divorce and remarriage” and the ordination of women respectively.

<sup>2</sup> As an observer of religious trends, Richard Quebedeaux suggest that the icons of success with North American conservative churches are: 1) accessibility, 2) surplus parking, 3) inventory to satisfy the

time they have a gnawing feeling that wonders if they have become too respectable?

Reflecting this *angst*, Pentecostal theologians, the former president of the PAOC Central

Pentecostal College, Kenneth Birch writes:

Any serious observer of churches soon becomes aware of a process of change that occurs in these institutions over the years. Most churches, like our own, begin as small aggressive groups of deeply-committed, highly motivated people. There is a strong emphasis on evangelism and personal devotion to Christ. Often there are misunderstandings and persecution in the early years of growth.

But with growth and the passage of time inevitable changes occur. As the group gets bigger, it diversifies. People from different backgrounds are incorporated. The leaders become educated. The church acquires more wealth and property. It expands its influence in a number of areas. Second and third generations of believers take over control of the group as the founders retire or die.

In short the group becomes a denomination with status and influence in the larger society. It becomes respectable. At this point, Bible-believing Christians should recall the warning quoted by Jesus, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). There is a danger inherent with respectability.<sup>1</sup>

In the end, however, Birch answers his own rhetorical question: "Are Pentecostals getting too respectable?" by making it a matter of orthopraxy.

Are Pentecostals getting to respectable? I think that's the wrong question. We should be asking, "Are Pentecostals walking in full obedience to the Word of God? Are we being faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ. If this is our supreme concern, we can take in stride whatever reaction the world may have to our life and witness, whether acceptance or rejection."<sup>2</sup>

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needs of its clientele, 4) service, and 5) visibility and good cash flow. By these standards, classical whited Pentecostal churches are measuring well. Richard QUEBEDEAUX, *By what Authority* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 72-75.

<sup>1</sup> Ken BIRCH, "Are Pentecostals Getting too Respectable?" *PT* (June 1984), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9. Reflecting a similar concern within the American Assemblies of God, Pentecostal theologian Edith Blumhofer and AG pastor Paul Timlin addressed an AG National conference with the ominous warning: "Once it (The Assemblies of God) had seemed pure because it had been at odds with the culture; now its message had the ring of truth because so many believed it. Once adherents had been called to live in prophetic tension with their society; now they were typically conservative white working and middle-class people whose lifestyles resembled those of other Americans of similar social standing. Success, once measured in terms of uneasiness in this world, was, ...assigned numerical definition." Paul B. TINLIN and Edith BLUMHOFER, "Decade of Decline or Harvest? Dilemmas of the Assemblies of God," *The Christian Century* 108 (1991), p. 685.

### 3. Conclusion

To their credit, most Pentecostals are genuinely uncomfortable with the Institutional Word. It may be, that institutionalization is an inevitable fact of modern life but that does little to assuage the Pentecostal conscience that it is also antithetical to the spirit of Pentecost. From the beginning, rank and file Pentecostals have struggled with their status as a denomination versus a Fellowship. In Pentecostal parlance, the former tends to be exclusive in temperament and is interested in maintenance and protectionism, while the latter tends to be inclusive and is marked both by its vibrancy and creativity. Early Pentecostals refused to be categorized. Intuitively they feared the nominalizing pressure of organization. The Spirit was not something that could be tamed/spiritualized into predictable rhetoric. The pragmatic character of these Pentecostals was driven by an apocalyptic urge for the Kingdom. Decisions were made, and policies were implemented based on the immediacy of time.

However, a delayed parousia and a pragmatic need to care for the waiting flock compelled Pentecostal leaders to implement more permanent structures. Creeds were formulated, pastors were systematically trained and norms of conduct were agreed upon. Paradoxically, the goal was to both promote, and constrain the Pentecostal experience at one and the same time. Conformity to these minimal goals was interpreted as fidelity to the burgeoning Movement.

By 1950, a rapidly changing technocratic society began to place an enormous strain on Pentecostal standards of orthodoxy. Pentecostals were struggling to re-evaluate and adapt many of their core beliefs and practices to these changing times. As if on cue, an unrestrained praxis-orientated pragmatism was willing to step in and assist any unresolved predicament. The questions, "Are people being saved?" and "Is the church growing?" became two predominant adjudicating criteria. It was not a question of



the “end justifying the means” as if the means were otherwise questionable from the start. From a Pentecostal perspective, the end often divinized the means. For instance, if it was God’s will that churches grow numerically, *ipso facto* growth meant God’s favor and was the sign of a healthy church. Unfortunately in such situations, questions of impropriety were sometimes set aside. Conversely, if the church declined in size, or if the pastor and his family were overwhelmed with difficulty from day one, dark questions were inevitably raised concerning their calling, methods, or ability to govern a church.

Pentecostals are not above recognizing the inherent tension created by the process of institutionalization. In his written report to the 1992 General Conference, the general superintendent, James MacKnight observed:

Throughout its history, the Church has pushed for institutionalism in an effort to preserve the purity of the gospel. As a result, we’ve evolved into congregations that meet inside walls of a building — rather than vital communities that live among the lost.<sup>1</sup>

MacKnight’s comments reflect a growing uneasiness and tension among Pentecostals over the process of institutionalization. Rapid growth, an exploding technocratic society and the human predilection to control have frequently combined to undermine Pentecostal attempts to successfully synthesize orthopathy, orthodoxy and orthopraxy into a working missions statement. As a result, denominational officials struggle with the reductionist temptation to chisel ambiguities in stone, evanesce real life into party line, and reduce pastors to company men. Often by default the inquisitive and intuitive of yesteryear are discouraged while conformity is promoted as being synonymous with godliness. Threatened on the endangered species list within conservative Pentecostal circles, is the ragamuffin genius<sup>2</sup> which so characterized early Pentecostal history.

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<sup>1</sup> James MACKNIGHT, Report to the 1992 General Conference, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Based on William Whytes book *The Organization Man*, John MCKENZIE demonstrates that in churches the genius is “repellent to the organization bureaucrat” because he cannot control it, *Authority in the Church*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966).

The analogy could be used to suggest that many (white) Pentecostal ministers in North America resemble lost children in a large shopping mall. They appear partly thrilled by their new found freedom and the plethora of wealth that surrounds them and are in part frightened that they may somehow lose their way and become as sounding brass in a cacophony of sounds.

A praxis-orientated pragmatism divorced from orthopathy and orthodoxy is subconsciously engaged both as a symbol of legitimacy and as an expedient blueprint for success. As a symbol, pragmatism points to denominational growth at a time when many church groups are declining and deduces that they are uniquely blessed by God. As a blueprint, if the end goal is growth, a results-orientated pragmatism is willing to take any short-cut, declare all decisions hallowed, and live with any inconsistency if it achieves the desired end.

## Part Two

From a factual perspective

## Chapter 5

# Spirit Baptism

Pentecostals are most readily identified by their charismatic spirituality. Pentecostals speak in tongues. They do more than that but it is no mere hyperbolic affirmation to state, "The doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the single most distinctive teaching of Pentecostals."<sup>1</sup> It is their unequivocal *raison d'être*, their "pearl of great price,"<sup>2</sup> that "have-nots" zealously attack<sup>3</sup> and "haves" jealously protect. "It hereby is humbly claimed," says Donald Gee, "that the deposit (Spirit baptism) is unspeakably

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon ANDERSON, "Pentecostals Believe in More than Tongues," in Harold B. Smith, ed., *Pentecostals from the Inside Out* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1990), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Lederle identifies the "pearl of great price," as "life in the Spirit." "The pearl represents the living contact with our New Testament heritage, our bond with the faith of the apostle." Henry LEDERLE, "Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement," in Gary McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism* (Peabody: Hendrickson Pub., 1991), pp. 131-141. See also the testimony by Maggie Geddis, "Found the Pearl of Great Price." *Apostolic Faith*, 1:6 (Feb. - March, 1907). Reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> In his diatribe against charismatics, fundamentalist John MacArthur writes, "It almost seems that the Christian community is being separated into the spiritual 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' Although I have devoted my life to preaching sound biblical doctrine that centers on the work of the Holy Spirit in every believer's life, I must confess that I am among the 'have-nots.'" John MACARTHUR, *The Charismatics*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

It is this seemingly unavoidable triumphalism inherent within the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism that both defines Pentecostals and frustrates outside attempts to understand them.

precious. To surrender it would be to surrender a sacred trust from the Most High and renounce a testimony of great value even to those who reject it.”<sup>1</sup>

Pentecostals do not view the Holy Spirit as some silent partner who gently prods believers through their walk of faith. Talk of the “Spirit’s leading” is not simply an exercise in polite ecclesiastical discourse. Rather, Pentecostals envision an active Holy Spirit capable of permeating receptive believers in their totality. Unwilling to “time-share” the Spirit, Pentecostals equate being “baptized in the Holy Spirit” or “filled with the Holy Spirit,” with a total submergence or total pervasion of the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will begin by analyzing the essence and symbolic nuances undergirding this Pentecostal distinctive. Second, it will underline the theological sentiment which fuels both the intensity and fervency of the Pentecostal belief. Third it will trace any historical shifts pertaining to Spirit baptism. Finally it will weigh the theology of Spirit baptism against the pragmatic method.

## 1. Rhetorical Affirmation

Pentecostals have built a distinctive theological construct around the initiation and work of the Holy Spirit by weaving together two fundamental tenets. First, Pentecostals posit a significant distinction between the soteriological and vocational work of the Holy Spirit. Conversion fulfills the Holy Spirit’s soteriological mission as every seeker is adopted into the fellowship of Christ. However, when Pentecostals speak of being “filled with the Spirit,” they are making reference to an experience separate and subsequent to conversion as the Spirit unleashes power to accomplish its vocational

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<sup>1</sup> Donald GEE quoted in Gordon Atter, *The Third Force*, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> For a biblical justification for the use and meaning of these terms see, Joe WILMOTH, “The Infilling of the Spirit: Different truths presented by different words,” *Paraclete* (Spring 1991), pp. 13-19.

role. Second, Pentecostals posit an absolute cause/effect relationship between Spirit baptism and the Apostolic practice of speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*). Tongues is not only a manifestation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but it is described as the *initial* manifestation universally enjoined. How do believers know they are baptized in the Spirit? — They speak in tongues. The melding of these two tenets will hitherto be referred to as Pentecostal's "evidential construct."

### 1.1. Question of Subsequence

Although the noun construct "baptism in the Spirit," does not appear in New Testament literature,<sup>1</sup> Pentecostals have fondly adopted the expression as one implicitly understood as a second or in some cases a third work of grace.<sup>2</sup> For Pentecostals, the Spirit's soteriological function which initiates an individual through the conversion process is not analogous to the Spirit's vocational purpose in equipping disciples for service.<sup>3</sup> In popular parlance,

We do not need the baptism with the Holy Spirit to get to heaven. The new birth will give us our passport to heaven. But the baptism with the Holy Spirit is necessary because it is God's provision to equip us for

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the various approximate phrases that do occur are: in active voice, present tense, "baptizes with Holy Spirit" (John 1:33), or future tense, "will baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk. 3:16), or the passive future tense, "will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5; 11:16), or past tense, "have been baptized in one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

<sup>2</sup> Before 1908, Pentecostals had developed a quasi three tier approach to "entire" salvation, namely, justification, sanctification and Spirit baptism. Beginning in 1908, William Durham, pastor of North Avenue Mission in Chicago began to challenge this assumption. Not schooled in Wesleyan-holiness theology, Durham negated the doctrine of sanctification as a second definite work of grace and spoke of the "Finished Work" of Christ on Calvary. For Durham perfect sanctification occurs simultaneously with conversion. The only second work of grace that occurs is Spirit baptism. Today most Pentecostal churches fall into one of these two persuasions; those that maintain three separate works of grace and those that acknowledge only two. The PAOC, like their sister work the AG fall into the latter of these two groups. ANDERSON *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167; SYNAN, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163

<sup>3</sup> Recently Pentecostals have spent a considerable amount of energy in distinguishing between Paul's treatment of the Holy Spirit and that of the apostle Luke. Pentecostals have argued that while Paul concentrated on the Spirit's soteriological significance, Luke promoted the vocational purpose of the Spirit as the source of prophetic imagination, thereby equipping believers for effective evangelism. For a contemporary scholarly treatment of these views see. Roger STRONSTAD, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, *op. cit.*; J.B. SHELTON, *Mighty in Word and Deed. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991). and R.P. MENZIES, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup, 54; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

Christian service. It gives us power to witness, power in prayer and power to live victoriously in Him.<sup>1</sup>

Concomitantly, if the Holy Spirit initiates and completes the conversion process by residing in a believer then what is missing to justify this second level of activity? Is the Spirit on sabbatical until such time He has been summoned by faith for action?

One simplistic solution has been to create some sort of artificial distinction between the noun phrases, "baptism in the Spirit," and "baptism by the Spirit." Explains Pentecostalist Thomas Holdcroft:

At conversion, the convert is taken by the Spirit and placed into the body of Christ. It is "baptism by the Spirit" in the sense that the Spirit is the personal agent who does the baptizing. In the Pentecostal experience, the surrendered believer is taken by Christ and placed into the all-pervading and saturating Holy Spirit; it is indeed, "baptism in the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

Others have attempted to explain the dual function of the Spirit as a question of ownership. In conversion, non-believers through ownership come into possession of the Spirit. In Spirit baptism, believers relinquish their ownership by yielding their entire being to God and are thereby possessed by the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> This would suggest that Spirit baptism is contingent upon the faith and actions of a believer.<sup>4</sup> While to an extent this is true, as Pentecostals feel something is required from them, they are careful to declare that ultimately, the decision to baptize a believer is God's and God's alone. Says Donald Gee:

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<sup>1</sup> W.E. MCALISTER, "Purpose of Baptism in the Holy Spirit," reprinted in *PT* (May 1983).

<sup>2</sup> L. Thomas HOLDCROFT, *The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Interpretation*, (Clayburn, British Columbia: Western Pentecostal Bible College, 1962), p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> *Pentecostal Experience: The Writings of Donald Gee*, *op. cit.*, p. 51. See also L. Thomas HOLDCROFT, *The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Interpretation*, *op. cit.* Writes Holdcroft, "As a believer, he is already indwelt by the Spirit, now in Spirit baptism he allows the Spirit to take complete control....This experience is meant to be the beginning of the believer's deeper spiritual life, and it marks the occasion when he is 'possessed by a master passion.'" pp. 117, 124.

<sup>4</sup> The human conditions for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit have fluctuated over the course of time. Among some of the prerequisites that have been admonished are: regeneration, water baptism, intense desire and faith, laying on of hands, obedience to God's will, tarrying, personal purity and a Spirit of praise see. HOLDCROFT, *The Holy Spirit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-132 and "What is the Baptism in the Holy Ghost?" *PT* (April 1925), p. 9.

We cannot baptize ourselves neither can we do more than lead one another to the place of blessing. It is Jesus' glorious work to immerse us in the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a real, definite, vivid experience. Do not be satisfied until you are satisfied!

While seeking the promise of the Father, maintain an attitude of continual, expectant faith. We would recommend praising the Lord, but always with sincerity and never merely repeating any formula of praise....Let your face catch the attitude of your soul and look upward to the glory. Then, "let go and let God." Let every door of your being be open wide, your whole soul occupied with Jesus, and soon the King of glory shall find an abundant entrance.<sup>1</sup>

Gee's comments reflect the tension Pentecostals have come to feel between the role of the Spirit and their own responsibility. While the final stamp belongs to God, the cry, "Let go and let God," has become a Pentecostal anthem. Believers are admonished to get out of the way and let God inundate His servants with power through the Holy Ghost.

## 1.2. Question of Evidence

Pentecostals, however, were not alone in recognizing a second work of grace under the auspices of the Holy Spirit. It was not uncommon to hear prominent Christian leaders of many persuasions (i.e., R.A. Torrey, A.B. Simpson etc.,) promote an event called Spirit baptism. Generally, however, they stopped short of preaching any *normative* witness. Proofs of Spirit baptism were varied and tended to be affective in nature. It could be witnessed by a demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit, and/or a supernatural power to evangelize, and/or love for the Bible, and/or a desire to know more about Christ.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Writings of Donald Gee, op. cit.*, p.52.

<sup>2</sup> DAYTON, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism, op. cit.*, p. 103. The idea that Spirit baptism is an event sequential to conversion is not distinctly Pentecostal. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was often linked with a demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit or an increased desire for testimony and service. See R.A. TORREY, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit* (New York: Revell, 1897) and A.J. GORDON, *The Ministry of the Spirit* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894).

Ironically, although Torrey, himself, became an outspoken critic of the Pentecostal movement for equating *glossolalia* with Spirit baptism in a cause\effect rubric, that did not prevent Pentecostals from



Classical Pentecostals on the other hand, have consistently maintained a single universal scriptural sign which serves as conclusive evidence that an individual has received Spirit baptism. "What is the Scriptural evidence? There is only one answer. At Pentecost when they were filled they spake with tongues and prophesied."<sup>1</sup> Proof of Spirit baptism "was something to which God gave witness instantly and convincingly....The final choice of the Holy Spirit both then and now rests on speaking in a new tongue."<sup>2</sup> By this it was understood that God had chosen a sign that was definitive and recognizable.<sup>3</sup> Pentecostals had no doubt that detractors were guilty of ignorance more than anything else. According to P.S. Jones, "Possession (is) fully nine points of spiritual law."<sup>4</sup> To experience was to know. Justification was resolved by possession. Consequently Pentecostal editorialists found no shortage of individuals willing to testify that they too doubted the veracity of Pentecostal claims until they began speaking in other tongues.<sup>5</sup>

Recently theologians have questioned the logic of this construct from an epistemological perspective. Phillip Wiebe questions what Pentecostals are asserting when they speak of initial evidence. "Is 'initial evidence' the first that is encountered in the investigation of a reasonable hypothesis or is it something that happens to be the first that an investigator considers when assessing the reasonableness of a

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using Torrey's writings to legitimize their doctrine of "subsequence." See R.A. Torrey "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit," *PT* (May 1, 1947), p. 17.

<sup>1</sup> Harold HORTON, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *PT* (Jan 1, 1943). p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *The Writings of Donald Gee, op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the fruits of the Spirit, *glossolalia* can be objectively discerned. One either has it or one doesn't. As the rainbow was considered a visible sign of God's grace, so tongues serves as an audible sign of God's presence and power.

<sup>4</sup> JONES, "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost." *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Writing in the Pentecostal Testimony, R.J. White claims to have "encountered many devout people who have claimed to have received the baptism in the Spirit without speaking in tongues. Yet when at some later time they actually prayed in other tongues, they then claimed to be really baptized in the Spirit. Previously, they claimed they had received a great blessing, but later knew that that blessing was not the fullness of the Spirit. R.J. WHITE, *PT*, (Nov. 1982), p. 13.

hypothesis.”<sup>1</sup> From the perspective of Pentecostals, the first possibility seems truer to their intent. Pentecostals tend to view *glossolalia* “as the first verifiable evidence occurring at the time one is experiencing Spirit baptism.”<sup>2</sup>

The importance of this inseparable alliance between *glossolalia* and Spirit baptism is chiseled deeply into the psyche of classical Pentecostals. While editorialists and college teachers fondly elucidate the theological significance of *glossolalia*, they cannot escape the burden of maintaining an indelible link between the reception of the gift and its outward manifestation. “Pentecostals,” says R.J. White, “must stand firmly for that revelation of truth which sets them apart and forms their doctrinal distinctive....The Pentecostal ethos is a blessing to us and to the world. It deserves our jealous protection. Like any other truth or experience, it can be lost through careless indifference.”<sup>3</sup>

As keepers of the gate, Pentecostal leaders spend a considerable amount of energy securing the transmission of this doctrinal particularity. The *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* of the PAOC reads:

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit. Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way, and receives power to witness and grow spiritually. Believers should earnestly seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth.<sup>4</sup>

Potential ministers are required to assent experientially and intellectually to the reality of this construct. Any serious disagreement would mean the loss of one's

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip H. Wiebe “The Pentecostal Initial Evidence Doctrine,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, JETS*, 27:4 (1984), pp.467,468.

<sup>2</sup> Larry Vern NEWMAN, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Suggesting a Model, Exploring the Problems,” paper presented at The Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (1991). p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> R.J. WHITE, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> “Article V, Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths,” *General Constitution, By-Laws and Essential Resolutions*, (1990), p. 10.

ministerial credentials.<sup>1</sup> Again, it would appear that if all of the items comprising the PAOC doctrinal statement are, at some level, inspired, then article 5, item 6, number 3 — *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, is slightly more inspired than the rest. At stake, in the eyes of some classical Pentecostals is the perpetuation of their movement. Traditionally, Pentecostals felt that if they flinched on this issue the whole would be placed in serious jeopardy.

Theologian Henry Lederle has suggested that Pentecostals rely on an evidential construct as a means of guaranteeing the action of the Spirit through some kind of human/institutional means not unlike the Roman Catholic reliance on the hierarchical institution of the church.<sup>2</sup> While the extent to which this is true is debatable, since Pentecostals also affirm the sovereignty of God's Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11), Pentecostals could be accused of attempting to guarantee the survival of their movement by relying on divine/institutional means.

### 1.3. Theological Significance.

While Pentecostals maintain that *glossolalia* serves as a witness to Spirit baptism, they are admonished not to wear it as an eccentric badge of showmanship. If the sign of Spirit baptism is tongues, it is not the end of the story. Donald Gee cautions that some baptisms are disappointing because seekers have been urged to speak in

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<sup>1</sup> Previous editions of the PAOC doctrinal statement also included this warning, "We consider it a serious disagreement with the Fundamentals for any minister among us to teach contrary to our Distinctive Testimony that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is regularly accompanied by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit of God gives the utterance, and we consider it inconsistent and unscriptural for any minister to hold credentials with us who thus attacks as error our Distinctive Testimony." See "Statements of Fundamental and Essential Truths Approved by the PAOC," PT (May 15, 1947), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Henry LEDERLE, "Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement," in *Initial Evidence*, ed. Gary McGee (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991). For a Pentecostal response to Lederle see Frank MACCHIA, "The question of Tongues as Initial Evidence: A Review of *Initial Evidence*," Edited by Gary B. McGee," *JPT* 2 (1993) pp. 117-127.

what seemed to be tongues without really receiving the Baptism at all. "I say frankly that one of the curses that has marred this Pentecostal movement has been forcing seekers to speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit has not been acting. Speaking in tongues does not bring the Spirit; it is the Spirit who brings the tongues."<sup>1</sup>

To the cry, "let go and let God," Pentecostals also add, "seek the Giver and not the gift." As believers earnestly seek the Giver, tongues become the doorway to greater Spirit led experiences and knowledge of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> The reception of the Spirit — not tongues is the ultimate prize sought after.

Having sought and received Spirit baptism, believers enter a whole new dimension of power in their life. They are endued with power to witness, power to pray, and power to serve. "It (Spirit baptism) is not the magnification of natural gifts, or the electrification of human personality," says Percy Jones. "It is an impartation of spiritual vigor by the vivid illumination of supernatural phenomena."<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, under the influence of the Spirit, Pastors are said to preach with greater conviction, interpret Scripture with greater accuracy,<sup>4</sup> and counsel with greater insight. Spirit baptism creates a freedom in utterance hitherto unsurpassed.<sup>5</sup>

Frequently Spiritual baptism manifests itself with unbridled exuberance. Pentecostals do not apologize for such behavior. While Pentecostals would maintain that the Spirit respects our human faculties, ultimately leaving us in control of our actions, the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Writings of Donald Gee, op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> HOLDCROFT, *The Holy Spirit, op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> JONES, "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> "The Epistles are reserved for the baptized Church....people who handle these sacred truths apart from the baptism in the Holy Spirit are limited in their revelation, as the Holy Ghost is the one who reveals them..." Sermon of Smith WIGGLESWORTH, given at Sixth Avenue Pentecostal Tabernacle, Vancouver, April 29th, 1924, Printed in *PT*, 3:6 (June 1924).

<sup>5</sup> Rodman WILLIAMS, *Renewal Theology: Salvation, The Holy Spirit, and Christian Living* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), pp. 225-236.

fact that the Spirit is said to “fall upon” recipients suggests the possibility of being forcefully seized.<sup>1</sup> “All Emotionalism is not spiritual,” reiterates Gordon Atter, “but all spiritual experiences, if they are worth while, must move on man’s emotional life.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to this endowment of power, there is an inescapable sacramental dimension to the Pentecostal experience of *glossolalia*. While to many Pentecostals equating glossolalia with a sacrament is either foreign or anathema — resembling too closely a Roman bugbear,<sup>3</sup> Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia makes a compelling argument by suggesting that *glossolalia* transforms human speech into a manifestation of the presence of God.<sup>4</sup> To the degree that a gothic cathedral declares that “God is majestic,” Macchia hears tongues saying “God is here.”<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Macchia prefers the definitive label “sacramental” than “evidential” for describing this manifestation of God’s Spirit.<sup>6</sup> In harmony with Walter Hollenweger and William Samarin, Macchia describes tongues as an “acoustic sacrament” which “stresses both the radical freedom of the Spirit and the visible, even sacramental, quality of our experience of the Spirit.”<sup>7</sup>

As an acoustic sacramental sign, tongues is in a unique position to go beyond other traditional sacramental symbols by expressing the inexpressible in an audible fashion. Described alternately as an irrepressible “bubbling forth,”<sup>8</sup> or as “an avenue of prayerful expression too deep to explain,”<sup>9</sup> tongues shatter the profane world of the

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<sup>1</sup> HOLDCROFT, *The Holy Spirit*, *op. cit.*, p.118.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon ATTER, *Who and what we are and What we Believe*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Like the word, “tradition,” rank-and-file Pentecostals are often quick to vilify the word “sacrament” as they accuse it of making God contingent on mechanical means.

<sup>4</sup> Frank MACCHIA, “Sighs too deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia,” *JPT* 1 (1992), pp. 47-73.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Says Macchia, “the term, ‘evidence,’ seems too scientific, simplistic, and one-dimensional to capture all of the theological nuances implied by the connections Pentecostals make between tongues and Spirit baptism. The term “sacrament” does imply some kind of integral connection between the sign and the divine action signified therein. Frank Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign: Toward a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,” *PNEUMA* 15:1 (1993), p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> MACCHIA, “Question of Tongues as Initial Evidence,” *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> *The Writings of Donald Gee*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> JONES, “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,” *loc. cit.*

ordinary by carrying worshipers into the presence of the *mysterium tremendum*.<sup>1</sup>

Tongues is a mystery that potentially can swallow individuals whole, granting them "insights beyond words."<sup>2</sup> Explains Macchia:

The closer one draws to the divine mystery, the more urgent it becomes to express oneself and, concomitantly, the less able one is to find adequate expressions. This is the crisis out of which tongues breaks forth....Tongues is a way of expressing the experience without ending it. The experience and the expression become one.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Historical Assessment

As a sign to the church, *glossolalia* was the harbinger of a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It provided both the impetus and the framework for the birth of a new spiritual movement. Inspired by its eschatological promise, adherents were being equipped with supernatural power to carry out unprecedented evangelism before God foreclosed on His plan of redemption.

Experientially, Pentecostals appropriated their own personal "Pentecost" by practicing *glossolalia*. There was little talk of canonizing this experience by making it into a doctrine, rather it was experientially enjoined as a gift of God's grace. However, such innocence was to change very quickly as *glossolalia* was soon metamorphosed into propositional doctrine. Again as in previous chapters, we will examine this process in three movements: 1906-1925, 1925-1950, 1950-.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert N. BELLAH, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 209,210.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth LEECH, *True Prayer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 61-62.

<sup>3</sup> MACCHIA "Sighs too deep for Words," *op. cit.*, p. 62.

## 2.1.1906-1925

To appreciate the dynamics of change that occurred before the recent institutionalization of modern Pentecost, it is helpful to review the literature that emanated from some key Pentecostal pioneers. From the United States, we present Charles Parham and William Seymour and from Canada we present Andrew Argue and Ellen Hebden.

### 2.1.1 Charles Parham

Without a doubt Charles Parham owns the distinction for making the most serious doctrinal contribution to contemporary (white) North American Pentecostalism. While William Seymour was responsible for fanning the flames of Pentecostalism, it was Parham who established its theological foundation by marrying tongue-speaking with Spirit baptism. Schooled in Reformed Holiness systematic theology, Parham assumed that any worth-while experience demanded a clear theological construction.<sup>1</sup> Based on a historical pattern recorded in the book of Acts and his own personal experience as he prayed for Sister Agnes Ozman that she receive the Holy Spirit, Parham concluded that the reception of Spirit baptism was linked with speaking in a foreign language. In other words, when one was baptized in the Holy Spirit, one spoke in other tongues.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James G. King, "Primitive Pentecostal Charismology," Paper presented at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (1991), p. 18. King goes on to compare the assumptions of Reformed Holiness theologians with those schooled in Methodism which was expressed in terms of experience rather than abstractions. King makes the claim that "Parham would never have articulated the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism if not for several generations of higher life advocates who insisted that spiritual experience must have formal theology. If Parham had been an associate of Wesley he might have sought for tongues and might have experienced a variety of charismatic phenomena — as did the followers of Wesley — but he would not have felt constrained to demand a precise theological explanation and he would not have insisted that all others conform to that theological structure." p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Charles F. PARHAM, *A voice Crying in the Wilderness*, reprinted in *The Sermons of Charles Parham*, ed., Donald Dayton ( New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), pp. 29-38 (page references are to original edition).

As the incontrovertible proof of Spirit baptism, Parham went one step further and taught that only card-carrying tongue speakers, filled with the Holy Spirit would be sealed for future glory with Christ. Based on such texts as Ephesians 1:13,14, Parham believed that only Spirit-filled believers were the Bride of Christ. Consequently, they are the only ones who will "escape the plagues and wraths that are coming in the great tribulation. The Pentecostal endowment is the life insurance of the universe."<sup>1</sup>

Parham, however, did not limit the significance of tongues to either evidential or other-worldly value. Parham believed that Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues gave believers a practical new edge in their quest to evangelize the world. Distinguishing *glossolalia* (the ability to speak in unknown tongues or a heavenly language) from *xenoglossa* (the ability to speak in a known foreign language without having gained prior knowledge of that tongue), Parham believed that God was restoring the gift of *known* tongues (*xenoglossa*) in these last days in order to hasten the spread of the gospel into foreign lands.<sup>2</sup> According to Parham, present mission efforts were a waste of valuable time and money in the "vain attempt to become conversant in almost impossible tongues which the Holy Ghost could so freely speak."<sup>3</sup>

Parham himself claimed to have the gift of Yiddish, undoubtedly given to help him with his travels to Palestine. So emphatic was Parham on this point that, when he was invited by William Seymour to speak at the Azusa Street Mission, he was shocked at the amount of counterfeit "chattering, jabbering and sputtering" that was being practiced in

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<sup>1</sup> Charles F. PARHAM, *Everlasting Gospel*, reprinted in *The Sermons of Charles Parham*, ed., Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), p. 66 (page reference is to original edition).

<sup>2</sup> The early editions of Seymour's periodical *The Apostolic Faith* reflected this orientation. "The gift of languages is given with the commission, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' The Lord has given languages to the unlearned. Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Zulu and languages of Africa, Hindu and Bengali and dialects of India, Chippewa and other languages of the Indians, Esquimaux, the deaf mute language and, in fact the Holy Ghost speaks all the languages of the world through His children. *The Apostolic Faith*, 1st edition (September 1906), reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, ed., Fred T. Corum (Washington: Middle Atlantic Regional Press, 1980).

<sup>3</sup> PARHAM, *A voice Crying in the Wilderness*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.



the name of tongues. He even accused workers of coercing individuals into this babbling through the “suggestion of certain words and sounds, the working of the chin or the massage of the throat.”<sup>1</sup> Parham wanted no part of what he deemed was unbridled emotionalism, mediated through unintelligible gibberish.

Unfortunately the veracity of Parham’s idyllic vision of missions through *xenoglossa* cannot be properly substantiated. Evidently his claim was never taken seriously enough to warrant outside corroboration or documentation. By and large it was far more common to hear *glossolalia* which was generally thought to be the language of angels — not people. However, as the young Pentecostal movement began to mature, Pentecostal leaders began distancing themselves from Parham’s Promethean *xenoglossa*. To that latter end, E.N. Bell (who later became the first General Superintendent of the AG) indirectly criticized Parham in October of 1912, saying:

Our people are tired, sick and ashamed of traveling, sightseeing experimenting missionaries, who expect to make a trip around the world and come home....We want men to settle down to learn the language, to establish assemblies of saved people, to stay with these, teaching them and using them to reach their own people.”<sup>2</sup>

However, despite such vituperations, Bell still maintained that Spirit baptism as evidenced by tongues, is the endowment of power for the purpose of evangelizing the world.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1.2. William Seymour

Initially influenced by Parham, William Seymour, the leader of the Azusa Street Mission, followed Parham’s precedent by coupling Spirit baptism with tongues in a

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<sup>1</sup> PARHAM, *The life of Charles Parham*, *op. cit.*, in pp. 168-169.

<sup>2</sup> E.N. BELL quoted in Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

cause/effect construct. In the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith*,<sup>1</sup> Seymour goes on the offensive and prints, "The power of God now has this city (Los Angeles) agitated as never before. Pentecost has surely come and with it the Bible evidences are following, many being converted and sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues as they did on the day of Pentecost."<sup>2</sup> While it seems fairly certain that Seymour had in mind tongues when he spoke of Bible evidence, nonetheless, one can detect an underlying ambiguity. Was tongues the *only* evidence of Spirit baptism? Or, was Seymour entertaining other possibilities? Commenting on the disputed passage in Mark 16:16,17, Seymour writes:

In my name shall they cast our devils; they shall speak with new tongues." Here a belief and baptism are spoken of, and the sign or evidence given to prove that you possess that belief and baptism. This scripture plainly declares that these *signs* SHALL follow them that believe<sup>3</sup> (*italics mine*).

Whether it was coincidental or not, any reticence Seymour may have had over tongues as the exclusive evidence of Spirit baptism was accelerated after Parham's visit in October 1906. Rebuked by Parham for encouraging "religious orgies outrivaling scenes in devil or fetish worship...by barking like dogs, crowing like roosters...trances, shakes, fits and all kinds of fleshy contortions with wind sucking and jabbering,"<sup>4</sup> Seymour began cooling to Parham and perhaps consequently his evidential construct. In September 1907, Seymour published an article in *The Apostolic Faith* claiming that tongues are one of the signs that go with every (Spirit)-baptized person but they are not the *real* evidence of the baptism in the every day life. The real evidence was a

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<sup>1</sup> Borrowing the title *The Apostolic Faith* from a newsletter published by Parham, Seymour along with his chief editor, Florence Crawford, published thirteen editions of their own tabloid-size newsletter between September 1906 and May 1908. While the initial press ran about 5,000 copies later editions ran as many as 40,000 copies. The newsletter abruptly stopped when a rift occurred between Crawford and Seymour with the result that Crawford moved to Portland Oregon with the mailing list.

<sup>2</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 1st edition (September 1906) *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> PARHAM, *Life of Charles Parham*, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit as outlined in Galatians 5:22. "This is the real Bible evidence in their daily walk and conversation,"<sup>1</sup> said Seymour.

By 1912 tongues had become not only one sign among many but it had become a potentially pejorative sign. According to Seymour, tongues had the habit of marring the action of the Holy Spirit by usurping Scriptures and deflecting the proper priority given to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Many people have made shipwreck of their faith by setting up a standard for God to respect or come to. When we set up tongues to be, the Bible evidence of Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fore only (sic). We have left the divine word of God and have instituted our own teaching.<sup>2</sup>

The doctrinal schism over Spirit baptism between Seymour and Parham did not abate when the Assemblies of God came into formulation in 1914. On the one side, advocating an exclusive approach in the spirit of Parham, Daniel W. Kerr (AG) forcefully argued, "whenever we...begin to let down on this particular point, the fire dies out, the ardor and fervor begin to wane, and the glory departs."<sup>3</sup> On the other side, advocating a more inclusive position in the spirit of Seymour, Fred F. Bosworth, (AG) argued that "not one of the inspired apostles or prophets ever taught it, and not one of the world's great soul winners ever taught it." He concluded:

When we, as a movement, will confine ourselves to what the Scriptures plainly teach upon this important subject of the baptism and ALL the manifestations of the Spirit, and preach to the world the great things about the baptism in the Holy Ghost our usefulness will be enhanced many fold (Bosworth's emphasis).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Questions Answered," *The Apostolic Faith* (October-January 1908), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*. (Los Angeles: W. J. Seymour, 1915) p. 12. quoted in Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "William J. Seymour and 'the Bible Evidence,'" *Initial Evidence, op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> D.W. KERR, "The Bible Evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost," *Pentecostal Evangel* (11 August 1923) p. 2, quoted in Gary B. MCGEE, ed., "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Initial Evidence, op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Bosworth, "Do all Speak with Tongues?" (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., n.d.) p. 9. quoted in McGee ed., "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Initial Evidence, op. cit.*, p. 110.

By 1918, however, all debate over “evidence” had ostensibly ended. The evidential construct had won the day, signaled in the AG by the resignation of Bosworth. Tongues were now the undisputed “initial physical sign of Baptism in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1.3. Andrew Harvey Argue

Posthumously, A.H. Argue has been dubbed “the greatest Pentecostal evangelist Canada produced.”<sup>2</sup> At the age of 40, Argue received the baptism in the Holy Spirit while visiting William Durham’s North Avenue Mission in Chicago.<sup>3</sup> Argue describes the transformation that took place while in Chicago:

Here I saw numbers being filled with the Spirit, which continued to deepen my hunger. I waited on God for twenty-one days....During this time I had a wonderful vision of Jesus. His countenance was so radiant that as I lifted my hand before Him, it became transparent. At the end of twenty-one days I was filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance.<sup>4</sup>

After twenty-one days, how did Argue know he had received what he was seeking — he spoke with other tongues. Armed with this his own personal “Pentecost,” Argue returned home to Winnipeg, Canada, and began his own home cottage meetings. As word began to spread of the unusual happenings, it became imperative that the new mission acquire a larger home. To this end, an old Wesleyan church was eventually purchased and renovated. Called Calvary Temple, the church soon became the Mecca of Pentecostal activity in Western Canada before the inauguration of the PAOC in 1919.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> When the term “initial evidence” first occurred is unclear. It appeared for the first time in the official publication of the AG Statement of Fundamental Truths in 1916. Two years later it was amended to read, “the initial physical sign.”

<sup>2</sup> Gordon ATTER, Taped interview by Thomas Miller (Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, April 30, 1984) in Thomas MILLER, “The Significance of A.H. Argue for Pentecostal Historiography,” *PNEUMA*, 8 (1986) p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Durham himself, had received his Pentecostal experience earlier that year under the ministry of William Seymour. When he returned to his native Chicago, a revival, not unlike what was happening at Azusa Street, broke out attracting men and women from all parts of Canada and the United States.

<sup>4</sup> A. H. ARGUE, “Azusa Street Revival Reaches Winnipeg,” *PT* (May, 1956), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> MILLER, “The Significance of A.H. Argue,” *op. cit.*, pp. 126,127.

Given his experience, Argue had no reason to question the evidential linkage between tongues and Spirit baptism. His experience and the experience of his followers was undoubtedly ample proof to conclude dogmatically that not only were these two events linked but they were absolutely necessary for every believer especially for those considering public ministry. Jestingly, Argue's contemporaries would comment "no matter where A.H. Argue began in the Bible, he always finished up in Acts 2:4."<sup>1</sup>

A consummate evangelist, Argue, however, resisted the pull to that of a denominational official when the PAOC was later established in 1919. But it is clear that his influence on those who did charter the young fledging movement was considerable.

#### 2.1.4. Mrs. Ellen Hebden

Reported to be the first Canadian to have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Mrs. Hebden's Mission on Queen Street East, Toronto, did for Eastern Canada what Argue's Calvary Temple did for Western Canada. Reportedly having been ignorant of any other Pentecostal activity,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Hebden on November 17, 1906, while praying for greater faith, reported:

Suddenly, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I exclaimed aloud, "Oh Jesus! Thou art a real, living person! Thou art lovely beyond description!" My whole being seemed to be filled with praise and adoration such as I had never realized before....I was praising Jesus all the time, and yet it did not appear to be me, but the power within that was praising Him...my hands were raised by the power of God and pressed tightly into my right cheek...I said to the Lord, "What does this mean?", and a very quiet, yet distinct, voice said "Tongues." I said "No, Lord, not Tongues." Then followed a moment of deathlike stillness, when the voice again uttered the word "Tongues." This time I felt afraid of grieving the Lord and I said "Tongues, or anything that will please Thee and bring glory to Thy name!" One unknown word was repeated several times and I thought that must be Tongues....On Monday morning (Nov. 19th) I arose again to spend the day with the Lord. I waited patiently for Him. At noon I took the Word of God, read a portion of it and spread it upon the floor. I then knelt upon it and cried to the Lord to give me nothing only what corresponded with His word. Great

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley FRODSHAM, *With Signs Following* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1946), p. 53.

peace filled my soul and I began to sing very quietly but to my amazement I was singing in another language. I said eagerly, "Is this tongues?", and then another verse burst from my lips, and for two or three hours I sang in an unknown language: it was marvelous...later on the Lord gave me twenty-two languages one night in a public meeting; and hundreds of verses of poetry have been given by the Spirit, also the interpretation of many. Sometimes the Lord gives me the interpretation of what others are saying; also I have been able to write all the languages that God has spoken through me...<sup>1</sup>

As with A.H. Argue, Mrs. Hebden's influence was substantial within the PAOC. Although she herself refused to become involved with any organizational structure, many of the pioneer leaders of the yet non-existent PAOC were initiated in the Pentecostal experience while attending her Mission. Among those individuals was George A. Chambers who went on to become the first general superintendent of the PAOC.

Based on her own experience, and perhaps strengthened through correspondence with William Seymour in Los Angeles,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Hebden came to expect that tongue speaking was an evidential sign of Spirit baptism. However, whether the sign was inclusive (as one of many) or exclusive (as the only one) or whether the link was casual or absolute remains uncertain as she warns against the dangers of "seeking to speak with Tongues rather than seek the Baptism, and the Baptism rather than the Baptizer."<sup>3</sup>

#### 2.1.5. Conclusion

In spite of a shaky start, by 1920, a doctrinal commitment to the evidential construct began emerging which would energize Pentecostal assemblies/denominations in the years to come. The commitment could be summarized as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1:6 (Feb.-March 1907) p. 4 reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas MILLER, "The Canadian 'Azusa': The Hebden Mission in Toronto, *PNEUMA*, 8:1 (1986), p. 7,8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

1. Tongues may have attracted most of the attention, but Spirit baptism was not just about tongues — rather it was God's answer to a powerless Christian life. Believers filled with God's Spirit were empowered with a divine anointing to witness and live the Christian faith. It was imperative, but not absolutely essential for salvation that believer's be filled. Tongues was simply evidence of that infilling. Beyond its role as evidence, tongues had marginal symbolic or sacramental value.

2. Whereas, salvation was a free gift of grace, there was a general sense that Spirit baptism cost something in terms of consecration. Given that Spirit baptism did not occur simultaneously with the act of conversion, it was assumed that believers were required to contribute something to justify this second state. It was, therefore, not uncommon to expect believers to seek some sort of existential state of abandonment by spending lengthy periods of time "tarrying" for God's spiritual manifestation. In proud Pentecostal fashion, G.F. Taylor describes a typical Pentecostal meeting at Azusa street:

The meetings begin at 10 o'clock every morning and are continued until near midnight. There are three altar services daily. The altar is a plank on two chairs in the center of the room, and here the Holy Ghost falls on men and women and children in old Pentecostal fashion as soon as they have a clear experience of heart purity. Proud preachers and laymen with great heads, filled and inflated with all kinds of theories and beliefs, have come here from all parts, have humbled themselves and got down...and have thrown away their notions, and have wept in conscious emptiness before God and begged to be endued with power from on high."<sup>1</sup>

More times than not, purity in heart could not be achieved without tarrying in prayer. A.H. Argue tarried for 21 days before he was filled. Another man testifies:

At that time, people thought they had to tarry. And people tarried for hours-days. We would go to a farm some miles away — we'd go early in the morning and we would be there all day. They would have food on

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<sup>1</sup> G.F. TAYLOR, *The Spirit and Bride*, reprinted in *Three Early Pentecostal Tracts*, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), p. 94. (page references are to original edition). For Charles Parham, one could not be filled with the Spirit unless "you are clean. Catarrh, consumption, all diseases are offensive in the sight of God." PARHAM, "The Life of Charles F. Parham, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-38.

the table in case we got hungry, and we just tarried. I think we must have tarried three months.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, Spirit baptism was not something that came easily. It required a great deal of desire and was often wrought through the sweat of one's brow.

3. In its earliest stages, Spirit baptism was not only essential for Christian ministry, it was the credential from heaven. "It is the last touch on earth by God. The next touch will be heaven itself. It is the Holy Spirit sweeping through the human bodies."<sup>2</sup>

Presumably, recipients of Spirit baptism had already achieved through tarrying and other acts of consecration a significant level of sanctification which in itself would set them apart for church ministry. A card-carrying tongues speaker was now supernaturally equipped by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel. As in the case of A.H. Argue, frequently this resulted in the subsequent establishment of home cottage meetings. Devoid of any formal theological training, "Spirit-filled" believers often felt that they now possessed the only real endorsement necessary to launch themselves into full-time ministry as either a pastor, missionary or evangelist.

4. From a contemporary Pentecostal perspective, perhaps the most startling observation concerning the formulation of an evidential construct is the awareness of any debate at all. It was startling because, by the time the PAOC was inaugurated in 1919 any significant debate over "evidence" had already ended. The PAOC felt no inclination to further test the orthodoxy of the evidential theory — as the work had already been accomplished.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by POLOMA, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Smith WIGGLESWORTH, Pentecostal Testimony 3:6 (June 1924).

<sup>3</sup> On May 17, 1919 during their first General Council meeting, the PAOC ratified *the Statement of Fundamental Truths* approved by the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Item 8 read, "The full consummation of the baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is indicated by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of new birth (Acts 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9).



## 2.2. 1925-1950

When the PAOC began its operations in 1919, tongues was championed as the normative qualifier of Spirit baptism. The task for Pentecostals during this crucial developmental period lay not in exploring the doctrinal ramifications of their Distinctive (ie. the relationship between the Spirit and the Written Word). Rather, the PAOC would spend the next twenty-five years apologetically defending the legitimacy of their evidential construct.<sup>1</sup>

Experientially, as has already been noted, Pentecostals clung to the reality of their experience over and against any theoretical arguments from their detractors. Typically, Percy Jones spoke for Pentecostals when he declared that his position (*Glossolalia*=Spirit baptism) was so secure that a whole college full of professors couldn't take from him what he had received from God Himself.<sup>2</sup> I speak in tongues, therefore, I am, was the prevailing argument.

If that wasn't enough, Pentecostals deductively justified their position based on the success of their peers world-wide. "It is doubtful," argued A.H. Argue, "if any Movement in the world, that believes in the blood of Jesus Christ...has grown in this present generation like the Pentecostal Movement."<sup>3</sup> In the spirit of pragmatics, Pentecostals adamantly argued, "if our doctrinal distinctive is so wrong, then how does one explain our tremendous growth around the world."

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<sup>1</sup> Reflective of this time, *The Pentecostal Testimony* was inundated with articles which defended their position chiefly from exegetical and experiential grounds.

<sup>2</sup> JONES, "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> A.H. ARGUE, Why We Believe in Speaking with "Other Tongues," *PT* (May , 1947), p. 7.

Experience may have been the strongest evidence used to justify evidential tongues, but Pentecostals also assumed that an experience so vivid and real must have a biblical foundation. Having no theological tradition of their own, Pentecostals again accommodated themselves to conservative scholarship by adjoining their experience to propositional methodology. In essence, they were able to assign the narrative content of the book of Acts propositional value. Pentecostals reasoned that, if conclusive precedent for Spirit baptism as evidenced by speaking in tongues, was present, then they had a propositional blue print that is every bit as eternal, and immutable as any other propositional dogma. What constituted “conclusive precedent” remained the subjective property of Pentecostals to interpret.

Relying heavily on a precedent hermeneutic, Pentecostals noted that on three occasions tongues were specifically linked with Spirit baptism (Acts 2:4; 10:45-46; 19:6). In particular, Pentecostals single out Peter’s visit to the house of Cornelius as being the precedent *par excellence* for their doctrinal distinctive. “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, *for* they heard them speaking in tongues” (Acts 10:45,46).

In addition to the three passages already mentioned, Pentecostals cite two other cases where they believe tongues are at least inferred. At Samaria (Acts 8:18-24), Simon is eager to buy the gift of imposition, presumably used to initiate Spirit baptism. And in Acts 9:17, Ananias is sent to Paul so that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Although the text does not record what happened, Paul later testifies, “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you” (1 Cor. 14:18). In each of these cases, the argument continues, it is either implied or explicit that tongues was the only universal external or outward evidence of having been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals did not begin with the text and exegete their experience, rather they began with their experience and exegeted the text.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, using this method, Pentecostals occasionally find some amusing precedents. In particular, Pentecostalist Winston Nunes is quoted as claiming that Jesus himself, was filled with the Spirit and spoke in other tongues. Quoting Acts 10:38, Nunes noted “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” The power of Jesus laid not in the fact that he was the son of God but it originated in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. To the query did Jesus speak in tongues? Nunes cited Mark 5:41. While at the house of Jarius whose daughter had just died, Jesus “took her by the hand and said to her, ‘Talitha kum!’ (which means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’). Explaining these words Winston Nunes writes:

Now Jesus talked long and He said many things to many people. To the woman who was bound by that spirit of infirmity He said, “Woman, you are set free.” But when He spoke to this dead little girl He spoke in a language that is given to us, the very words as He gave it and spake it. “Talitha cum.” And they don’t translate it. All the other words of the Lord Jesus are translated for us from the language in which He spoke into the language we understand, into English. But these words were not translated. They are given to us as Jesus spoke them and the Spirit does not give us a translation of the words. He gives us an “interpretation” of the words.<sup>2</sup>

Who is the “they” who does the translating? And why do “they” only translate into English? And does Nunes mean to suggest that *Talitha kum* is not Aramaic but some unknown language? are all questions which escape any easy explanation. The printing of such amateurish exegesis would suggest that Pentecostals were writing first and foremost to the converted. Using the Bible as their support, Pentecostals could then soothingly reassure those who had already experienced Spirit baptism with the evidence of tongues, that they were entirely orthodox/scriptural in their belief. When Pentecostals

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<sup>1</sup> Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Winston NUNES, “Why Speak with Tongues, *PT* (October 1, 1947), p. 7.

were forced to respond to the wider ecclesiastical community, experience remained the preferential apologetic.

As has been previously noted, in the eyes of many Pentecostals their survival depended on maintaining their distinctive doctrine. Understandably the urgency of this need required more than apologetics. To ensure the perpetuity of Spirit baptism as evidenced by tongues, the PAOC in 1938 at a General conference in Calgary, passed a formal resolution that endorsed what was already being practiced namely, that no workers receive credentials who have not experienced their personal baptism evidenced by tongues. Although no such requirement was mandatory for entrance or graduation from Bible College, any "have-nots" certainly felt the pressure to "receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit" before graduation if they wanted to continue on in Pentecostal ministry.

Concomitantly, because of the expedient nature of this requirement, or perhaps simply because further experience deemed it was redundant, the preconceived idea of tarrying began to wane. Increasingly, Pentecostals were being taught that while Spirit baptism is subsequent to salvation, it is also a gift of God requiring no further prerequisites other than regeneration. As potential roadblocks to obtaining this gift of Spirit baptism, tarrying and many individual gestures of pre-sanctification were removed, resulting in immediate access to this divine potential.<sup>1</sup> It was assumed that a genuine "filling" would spur Christians to a deeper spirituality and greater works, and not the other way around.

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<sup>1</sup> "We never read in the New Testament that they put Cornelius or others on probation for a time to see by their lives whether they had received the Holy Spirit." *The Writings of Donald Gee, op. cit.*, p. 52. Gee, however, was not ready to throw away tarrying altogether. He wrote: "It is infinitely better to wait for the real experience, if need be, then to be hastily defrauded with a worthless imitation. We seem to have become almost ashamed of the good old-fashioned "tarrying meetings" for those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We appreciate the good desire to avoid a suggestion that long waiting is essential, but the once almost universal "tarrying meetings" did carry a concept of deep spiritual value. Our true help to seekers consists in raising their faith for an immediate fulfilment in themselves of the promise of the Father." *Ibid.*, p. 234.

### 2.2.1. Conclusion

1. By the time the PAOC was born, their charter doctrine was already established. By aligning themselves with the AG, they were in effect accepting their distinctive testimony. The task for Pentecostals now laid in promoting and defending the legitimacy of their evidential construct.

Given the negative reaction conservative evangelicals expressed<sup>1</sup> in regards to Pentecostal teachings on Spirit Baptism, it would appear that on this doctrinal issue, Pentecostals resisted any accommodating trend. Conservatives accused Pentecostals of extrapolating doctrine from historical narratives. Timeless, didactic, non-culture bound, theological propositions — not historical narratives — were considered the stuff of doctrine. Pentecostals seemed to be blatantly breaking the rules to justify their uniqueness.

Ironically, the only rule Pentecostals committed was in including the book of Acts as part of propositional canon. Pentecostals (at least in their own minds) were as bent on propositional theology as their conservative cousins.<sup>2</sup> As a theological construct, Pentecostals considered Spirit baptism with speaking in tongues as propositional and orthodox as any other Pauline doctrine. Any nuance that hinted at perhaps a narrative or experiential-orientated theology was largely lost on Pentecostals. Entering the second and third generation of their history, Pentecostals had no intention of constructing a new theological route, they only wanted the right to place one more sign on the existing propositional highway.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter one, pages 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Cargal has argued that Pentecostals and fundamentalists share a philosophical presupposition that only what is historically and objectively true is meaningful. He concludes that it was, therefore, not surprising for Pentecostals to canonize their evidential construct for time and eternity. Timothy CARGAL, "Beyond the Fundamentalist -Modernist Controversy," *PNEUMA*, 15:2 (1993), p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Daniel Pluss writes, "naturally, a theologizing of *glossolalia* and the notion of Spirit baptism took place. They wanted to prove spiritual filiation with the Evangelicals....The price that Pentecostals had to

2. In the minds of Pentecostals, they had been entrusted a sacred yet fragile treasure which deserved protection at all costs. To accomplish this, Pentecostals began with an *a priori* experiential presupposition that married Spirit baptism with speaking in tongues and proceeded to find proofs based on this reality. Mathematically they concluded, if A (Spirit baptism = *glossolalia*) is true then B (The Bible) must support A.

Addressing the twenty-first annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Larry Vern Newman summates,

My suspicion is that our insistence on 'distinctives' borders more on apologetics than hermeneutics. This may be true, since much of our Pentecostal theology was formulated from a need to defend our experience of the Spirit rather than explain it. The attacks of the entrenched churches upon the Pentecostal way evoked much of the theological work in those early days. It is true that initially our progenitors in the movement were busy seeking to understand, biblically, what had happened to them. However, a perusal of our history reveals to us that much labor was invested in apologetics designed to defend the Pentecostal way from the concerted attacks of those who deny its reality. I believe that if viewed perceptible, we should see that the initial evidence doctrine, when it became an official Pentecostal distinctive, is one of those doctrines which grew out of such apologetical endeavors.<sup>1</sup>

3. Given the strong apologetic stance of Pentecostals, it is understandable that they were especially anxious about any internal tampering with their evidential construct. If the construct was questioned, it was greeted more often than not with a terse response intended to activate closure on any further deliberation.<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals could not fathom why anyone would want to question a proven formula for success.<sup>3</sup>

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pay, however, was, in my opinion, the loss of an essential aspect of their spirituality; namely, the disassociation of speaking in tongues and Spirit baptism from its original setting. Or, to put it hermeneutically, they demythologized the 'outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh' as it happened, for instance, at Azusa Street for the sake of a propositional claim." Jean-Daniel Pluss, "Azusa and Other Myths: The long and Winding Road from Experience to Stated Belief and Back Again, *PNEUMA*, 15:2 (1993), pp. 189-201.

<sup>1</sup> NEWMAN, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *op. cit.*, pp. 8,9.

<sup>2</sup> In discussing this thesis with a prominent leader within the PAOC, I jestingly mentioned that a chapter would be dealing with the Pentecostal "sacred-cow," Initial evidence. He quickly responded, "Truth is always sacred!"

<sup>3</sup> Pentecostalist Vinson Synan writes, "The burgeoning Pentecostal denominations of the world are not likely to change a formula that has served them so well over the years and is gaining increasing support among both evangelicals and charismatics. Vinson SYNAN, "The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence,"

While such an argument has altruistic value in and of itself to warrant self-censorship, Pentecostals would likely insist that ultimately their dogmatic claim to evidential tongues was founded on the Word of God. Steeped in a conservative evangelical heritage that elevated propositional theological claims to truth statements, Pentecostals allowed their evidential construct to receive such an accolade. Evidential tongues was no longer a theological claim subject to the winds of relativity, but it now stood as a pillar of truth protected by the propositional guards of immutability. To question the legitimacy of the construct was not to question the relativity of a human interpretation but it was to challenge the Bible itself.

4. In the end, Pentecostals succeeded in dispelling any fear of new adherents may have had concerning the orthodoxy of their spiritual experience. Rank and file adherents were secure in the legitimacy of their experience based on the timeless Word of God. Pentecostals were in possession of the full gospel. In difference to Paul's reference to tongues as an *arrabon*, — a down payment (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Ephesians 1:14) of what is to come — tongues were granted limited judicial value.<sup>1</sup>

5. While the PAOC, like other classical Pentecostals, accepted Parham's evidential construct, they rejected his doctrine of sealed believers. The conversion event was substantially separated from Spirit baptism so that the former in no way hinged on the latter. While Spirit baptism as evidenced by speaking in tongues was considered vital, it was not deemed life and death essential for eternal life. This, however, did not prevent Pentecostals from developing a sense of triumphalism where tongues served as a rite of passage into the Christian Kingdom.

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Paper presented to the 23rd Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Guadalajara, Mexico (1993), p. 17.

<sup>1</sup> Russell SPITTLER, "The Pentecostal Tradition: Reflections of an "Ichthus-ist," 1:2 *Agora* , (1977) p. 17.

The question, "Have you got your baptism?" was either answered eagerly in the affirmative with a sense of youthful pride or it was answered in the negative with a sense of frustrated exclusion. For those familiar with the tradition, the legitimacy of the traditional evidential construct was never seriously questioned.<sup>1</sup> Neither was there any impetus to move beyond the rhetoric and explore any further theological ramifications of speaking in other tongues.

### 2.3. 1950-

By 1950 Pentecostals were locked into a predictable rhetoric concerning Spirit baptism. In Pentecostal parlance, individuals were saved and then encouraged to seek "the baptism" to receive divine power for witness. By now Pentecostals had compiled a rag bag list of heuristic reasons why God chose tongues as His "initial evidence": 1) They (tongues) constitute a visible symbol of spiritual reality. 2) They are uniformly recognizable by all cultures. 3) They reflect the personality of the Spirit. 4) They symbolize the Spirit's complete control of the believer. 5) They reveal the Holy Spirit as the believer's source of truth and utterance. 6) They signify the honor that God has placed upon human speech. 7) They are a foretaste of heavenly speech.<sup>2</sup>

Evidential tongues had at the very least succeeded in securing its place in the larger ecclesiastical community as tolerated unorthodoxy. Should conservative evangelicals persist in questioning both the reality and necessity of spiritual gifts, Pentecostals would casually brush aside their criticism claiming that critics were incapable of understanding what they have not experienced. At best, both groups learned to tolerate each other.

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<sup>1</sup> For their part, conservative evangelical groups still questioned the legitimacy of modern tongues — period. Subsequently, any question of tongues serving as "initial evidence" was completely redundant.

<sup>2</sup> Carl BRUMBACK, *What meaneth this?* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1947), p. 235.



Pentecostals, however, could ill afford to relax as they entered the 1950s. Technology, a burgeoning charismatic movement and a gradual move towards higher education among Pentecostals began to make their presence known. In addition, renewed ethical and juridical questions begged solution. The status quo was becoming increasingly problematic. It was only a matter of time that even the Pentecostal *sine qua non* doctrine of initial evidence would come under increasing pressure — both theological and experiential.

In 1970, the publication of James Dunn's thesis, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, significantly challenged the evidential construct of classical Pentecostals. Essentially, Dunn did what no one else had done to date. As a New Testament Scholar, he affirmed the legitimacy of spiritual gifts; but then he struck Pentecostals at their weakest point. He questioned exegetically the composition and justification of the Pentecostal evidential construct. Dunn concluded that the New Testament does not teach a distinctly second experience of the Spirit but that:

The gift of the Spirit is the most fundamental aspect of the event or process of becoming a Christian, the climax of conversion-initiation. The Spirit itself is the breath of divine life within the believer, the divine action within the human which links and bonds the human to the divine, the dynamic reality of spiritual sonship, without which no one can be said to belong to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Although Dunn did not address the evidential construct as such, Pentecostals knew that if Spirit baptism was not subsequent to conversion, any talk of initial evidence would seemingly be redundant. Without one, could Pentecostals have the other?

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<sup>1</sup> James DUNN, "Baptism in the Spirit: A Response to Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts," *JPT*, 3 (1993) pp. 3-27.

Realizing the pitfall of Dunn's qualified endorsement, Pentecostals reacted quickly. Pentecostalist Howard Ervin,<sup>1</sup> Roger Stronstad,<sup>2</sup> Harold Hunter,<sup>3</sup> Robert Menzies,<sup>4</sup> French Arrington<sup>5</sup> and others have all recently responded in some way to Dunn's allegations. The consensus that emerged was that Dunn was guilty of reading Luke-Acts with Pauline spectacles. The conceded argument went something like this: First, while Paul had in mind a soteriological theology of the Holy Spirit, Luke intended to capture the vocational purpose of the Holy Spirit in equipping and empowering people for missions. Second, when Luke-Acts is read properly with Lukan spectacles, one discovers a wide range of didactic material. From the teaching of Jesus to the sermons and teaching of the apostles to Luke's selection of septuagintal theological terms, Luke addresses doctrinal issues from which Pentecostal theology has been largely derived.

Outsiders to this engaging debate may look on amusingly, wondering why Pentecostals insist on keeping their categories so mutually exclusive. Insiders, however, understood the repercussions from attaching any soteriological function to Lukan intentionality concerning Spirit baptism. Pentecostals feared that, should an alliance be found, the twin distinctive Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence and evidence would fall like dominoes.

However, not all reaction to Dunn's thesis has been critical. Other scholars, who are also schooled in the tradition of classical Pentecostalism, have given Dunn some qualified endorsement. Russell Spittler, a Harvard graduate and ordained with the AG,

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<sup>1</sup> Howard ERVIN, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Engaging Critique of James D.G. Dunn's Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Roger STRONSTAD, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Harold HUNTER, *Spirit-Baptism: A Pentecostal Alternative* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> Robert MENZIES, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup, 54; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> French ARRINGTON, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).

has argued that agreeing that the Spirit is the evidence of being a Christian should not preclude a subsequent and glossolalic experience. Says Spittler:

Here we should perhaps distinguish a species of Pentecostalism like the AG, where sanctification is understood along Reformed lines as coincident with conversion, from those species closer to Wesleyan and Holiness antecedents of Pentecostalism — such as the Pentecostal Holiness Church. “Subsequence” will be a natural feature of Wesleyan forms of Pentecostalism,

Consummation and not subsequence, strikes me as a better category by which to understand the arrival of the Spirit in Acts.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, classical Pentecostal, Jack Hayford has postulated that tongues are “not proof (of Spirit baptism) but provision and privilege open to all Christians.” Hayford prefers to talk in terms of birthright privilege rather than legal requirement.

Still another influential New Testament scholar, Gordon Fee (credentialed with the AG), maintains Dunn’s basic premise that all believers in Christ are Spirit-filled.<sup>2</sup> Tongues, to which Pentecostals attach evidential value, was a *normal* not *normative* manifestation of the coming of the Spirit. “If the Pentecostal may not say ‘one *must* speak in tongues,’” says Fee, “the Pentecostal may surely say, why *not* speak in tongues?”<sup>3</sup>

It should come as no surprise that such qualified endorsements of Dunn’s central thesis on the part of some Pentecostal scholars has intensified the debate over evidential tongues in Pentecostal circles. In particular, Pentecostal theologians Roger Stonstad and Gordon Fee have been locked into an ongoing debate that sees no end in the near future.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Russell SPITTLER, “The Pentecostal Tradition: Reflections of an “Ichthus-ist,” 1:2 *Agora* (1977), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Gordon FEE, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991) p. 115.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup>Roger STRONSTAD, “A Review of Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*,” *PNEUMA* 15:2 (1993), pp. 215-222; Roger STRONSTAD, “The Biblical Precedent for Historical Precedent,” *Paraclete* 27 (1993), pp. 1-10; Gordon FEE, Response to Roger Stronstad’s,

If the Pentecostal distinctive has taken a punch exegetically, it has similarly been stung experientially by the rise and eminence of the charismatic movement. Charismatics have seemed singularly unconcerned with the Pentecostal evidential construct, choosing instead to focus attention on the experiential significance of Spirit baptism. Writes charismatic Kilian McDonnell, "neo-Pentecostals do not come together specifically to pray in tongues. They are disturbed by neither the presence nor absence of tongues in a given prayer meeting. The issue in Pentecostalism is not tongues, but fullness of life in the Holy Spirit, openness to the power of the Spirit, and the exercise of all gifts of the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Of the charismatic theologians, perhaps J. Rodman Williams has come the closest to representing the traditional classical Pentecostal evidential construct. In his monumental systematic theology from a charismatic perspective, J. Rodman Williams describes *glossolalia* as a sign of a new and mighty act of God both at Pentecost and later.<sup>2</sup> Says Williams:

A sign, however, is not identical with the reality to which it points. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the primary reality, and speaking in tongues is the sign that the gift has been received. So tongues are not *constitutive* of the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is, comprising the gift, but *declarative*, namely, that the gift has been received.<sup>3</sup>

Williams, however, seems to distance himself from the exclusive cause/effect rubric of classical Pentecostalism. By all means Williams would encourage believers to objectify their experience of Spirit baptism by consummating it with speaking in tongues, but he ambiguously side-steps the claim that the one depends on the other.<sup>4</sup>

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'The Biblical Precedent for Historical Precedent', " *Paraclete* 27 (1993); Gordon FEE, *Gospel and Spirit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-104.

<sup>1</sup> Kilian MCDONNELL, ed., *Presence, Power, Praise*, 1 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1980), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> WILLIAMS, *Renewal Theology: Salvation the Holy Spirit and Christian Living*, *op cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223 note 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225 note 70.

While charismatics have given, at best, only qualified support of evidential tongues, they have been responsible for enhancing the utilitarian profile of tongues. Charismatics value tongues as a devotional “prayer language” that goes beyond ordinary capacity and experience.<sup>1</sup> Too deep or jubilant for words, tongues are reported to offer praise to God and fulfil a reflexive self-edifying role. As one prays in tongues, one is edified spiritually (1 Cor. 14:2).<sup>2</sup> Finally, “Tongues,” says Rodman Williams, “serves an important eschatological role. As a harbinger of the coming Kingdom, tongues are “a sign of a divine-human immediacy, (that) could represent the transitional phase into the future world where this immediacy will be wholly and completely realized.”<sup>3</sup>

However inadvertently, the popularity of the charismatic renewal has called into question the traditional Pentecostal reciprocal relationship between their *raison d'être* and their evidential tongues. The charismatic movement shows no sign of waning despite a *laissez-faire* attitude concerning the Pentecostal evidential construct. Pragmatically, the growth of charismatics raises the question: “Is it still legitimate to contend that the Pentecostal identity is indissoluble from evidential tongues?”

Culturally, the 1960s also represented a new technological frontier. The axiom of modernity, “control through knowledge,” took on exaggerated proportions. Together atomic power, computer technology, lasers, space technology and genetic engineering have mounted a remarkable campaign to promote the hierarchs of efficiency, productivity and power. The past was not abandoned but continually absorbed by the present in the name of progress. What was complicated or hitherto mysterious yesterday could today

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

be simplified or rationalized. And what is simplified today will be made clearer tomorrow.<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, given the affective nature of spirituality, this wave of technology has had a profound effect on Spirit baptism as evidenced by speaking in tongues. Both on the part of charismatics and classical Pentecostals, it would seem that the proliferation of speaking in tongues during this latter part of the twentieth century is in direct proportion to the increase in technology. The reason for this is not readily obvious. Two hypothesis, which more often than not work against each other, seem to be in operation.

First, it could be argued that this later resurgence of tongues and other supernatural gifts is in reaction to the erosion of mystery at the hands of technology. For individuals motivated both by curiosity and hunger for the *tremendum mysterium*, tongues present an interesting reward. Pentecostals have capitalized on this urge. As a political statement, tongues says no to evolutionists, humanists, and the secularization of contemporary society that denies the other-worldliness of Christianity.

Ironically, however, Pentecostals are also beset by the very process (secularism) they long to escape. Since it appears that Spirit baptism and tongues are contingently linked, if one could find a simple formula for inducing tongues speaking, then technically speaking it would seem possible to mass produce both the phenomenon and the spiritual ethos that accompanies it. To this end, successful pastors are often pressured into the role of spiritual technicians — masters of tongues prompting.<sup>2</sup> Traditional conduits of

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques ELLUL, *The Technological Bluff*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Linguist William Samarin claims nobody would give tongues much attention if they knew how easy it is to perform. While Pentecostals would distance themselves from such a claim, the pressure to produce has led some to employ tactics which lend credence to Samarin's claims. Accordingly, seekers may be encouraged to repeat inane syllables after the prompter.

To this end, Donald Gee cautions, "A besetting weakness that has dogged the Pentecostal revival from its beginning has been misguided attempts to produce apparent evidences of the Pentecostal experience without its reality. This temptation has been an inevitable consequence of our doctrine that speaking with tongues is the scriptural initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I hold that

"tarrying prayer" and spiritual sweat further abated as technique gave Spirit baptism a heightened sense of immediacy.

As a caveat, however, denominational officials such as the PAOC would never endorse such behavior. They would not condone manipulative techniques nor would rank and file pastors or laymen feel that they are participating in a charade by encouraging such activities. Nonetheless, it is inevitable that the classical Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism has suffered from the seducing power of technique.

### 2.3.1. Conclusion

Between the years 1920s-1950 there was a general consensus among Pentecostals over the meaning and importance of evidential tongues. Since then a significant diffraction has occurred. Diverse yet reflective of a technocratic society, these alternative visions can be summarized as follows:

1. From an academic perspective, Pentecostal scholars are now willing to open the question of evidential tongues to theological scrutiny. While the result has not always been irenic nor uniform, the willingness to debate the issue has kept both sides of the question fresh and razor sharp. It remains unclear, however, how long this debate can last before the proverbial line in the sand is drawn and individuals are forced to either concede to perceived orthodoxy or risk expulsion from Pentecostal ranks. It appears likely that such debate will be allowed to flourish, providing it does not filter down to the common adherent.

2. From a grass roots perspective, Pentecostals seem to be of two persuasions. On the one hand, now that Pentecostals have achieved cultural acceptance, many

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doctrine to be right. But the results of a supposed Pentecostal experience that lacks its reality are nothing and worse than nothing. Donald GEE, "The Pentecostal Experience," *PT* (March 1960), p. 7.

Pentecostals are unwilling to embrace anything that would upset their personal comfort. If that means they must sacrifice a piece of their Pentecostal identity—then so be it. On the other hand, many younger Pentecostals have been influenced by ecstatic expressions of worship emulating from the charismatics. Seemingly unconcerned with the old polemics surrounding evidential tongues, these Pentecostals are identified with a renewed willingness to experiment with a variety of utterances from “holy laughter” to “singing in the spirit.”

3. In the middle of this cauldron remains the pastor. Pastors are in the position to at least sense the academic tensions and feel the spiritual restlessness of the Pentecostal people. Often unsure of themselves, pastors sometimes wield the word “balance” as a saviour designed to keep people from getting involved in extremes. Of course pastors are at the same time the ones who generally control the parameters of what is deemed undesirable.

Pentecostal pastors are as fearful of the unknown as anybody else. The evidential construct allows Pentecostal pastors a measure to continue to control any acceptable outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By equating tongues with Spirit baptism, pastors schooled in praxis theology, are in a position to induce initiation into Spirit baptism and manage any subsequent consequences, thereby minimizing the risk of spiritual anarchy.

### **3. A Sociological Profile of Current Attitudes**

Table 5.1 highlights the four statements to which PAOC ministers were asked to respond concerning Spirit baptism, tongues and their utilitarian purposes.



**Table 5.1 Spirit Baptism**

16. All Christians are instilled with latent ability to manifest the "Gifts of the Spirit."	31% 34% 5% 17% 13%	SA A U D SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> = 3.539 <i>sd</i> =1.408 missing — 6			
22. The survival of the PAOC is integrally linked with adherence to the doctrine of "initial evidence."	17% 19% 2% 40% 21%	SA A U D SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =2.712 <i>sd</i> =1.438 missing — 2			
30. Speaking in other tongues is the indisputable initial evidence of the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit."	62% 21% 5% 9% 3%	SA A U D SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =4.308 <i>sd</i> =1.099 missing — 4			
46. Christians need the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to successfully resist temptation.	22% 33% 5% 29% 10%	SA A U D SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =3.263 <i>sd</i> =1.365 missing — 1			

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Source: Project Exousia

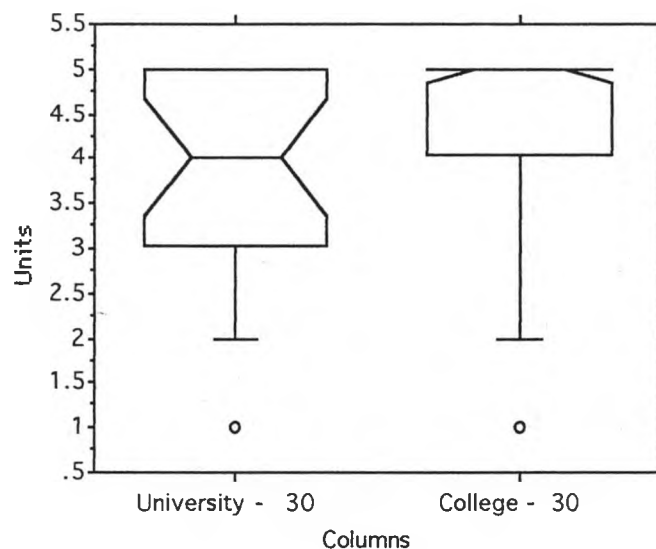
Based on these findings, the leadership of the PAOC need not overly fear that the evidential construct is in any serious jeopardy. On the surface, the idea that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence continues to be strongly supported by its clergy (see table 5.1, #30). Even the inclusion of the normative word "indisputable" did not seem to deter clergy from endorsing their doctrinal distinctive. Yet while they show little hesitation in accepting this doctrine, they are less inclined to link it with their *raison d'être* (see table 5.1, #22). As Pentecostals enter the fourth generation of their contemporary existence, they no longer envision themselves as a one issue party. Coming of Age Pentecostals appear more at ease with themselves and their subsequent contribution to the larger ecclesiastical community.

Coming of Age, however, has its price. Increasingly Pentecostal ministers are educating themselves beyond the parameters of a Bible College education. Many ministers are pursuing advanced education degrees at the University level. In his study comparing the doctrinal beliefs of PAOC clergy who are college trained with those who have gone on to pursue a Masters degree, Carl Verge noted a significant difference between these two groups on the question of evidential tongues. While the majority of ministers holding a degree in higher education still maintained the validity of the construct, the strength of that affirmation was significantly different from their college counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Graduate students were more likely to speak of initiation into Spirit baptism in less exclusive terms. Similarly the results of Project Exousia demonstrated the same tendency. Table 5.2 compares the responses of item 30 between those who are university educated and those who are trained only at the college level. In both cases, the *t* scores show a significant difference in the intensity of the conviction.

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<sup>1</sup> Carl VERGE, *Comparison of the beliefs and practices of 2 Groups of PAOC Ministers* (Ph. D. diss., University of New York, 1988), p. 85, n.5; 88, n.19.

**Table 5.2 — Box Plot comparison between university and college educated clergy on the question of initial evidence.**  
 (Item #30)<sup>1</sup>



Unpaired t-Test X<sub>1</sub>: Education Y<sub>2</sub>: 30

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
118	-2.293	.0236

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
University	23	3.783	1.204	.251
College	97	4.371	1.083	.11

Source: Project Exousia

<sup>1</sup> Item #30 reads "Speaking in other tongues is the indisputable initial evidence of the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit." With this graph a score of 5 indicates a strong favorable response while a score of 1 indicates a strongly negative response. The mode for the college response is 5 and is negatively skewed while the mode for the university response is 4 and is symmetrical.

As accepted members within the ecclesiastical community, this survey would further seem to indicate that Pentecostals are uneasy about the triumphalism that traditionally went hand in hand with their theology of Spirit baptism. If baptism as evidenced by tongues gave believers privileged access to power, then what were they saying to their “have-not” conservative contemporaries? It was probably inevitable that as Pentecostals gained acceptance, they had to temper the utilitarian value of Spirit baptism accordingly. Is Spirit baptism essential to resist temptation? (see table 5.1, #46). — the clergy who responded to this survey suddenly seem unsure of themselves. Were they to respond zealously positive, what would they be saying to their evangelical brethren who do not speak in tongues? Concomitantly, PAOC clergy responded positively to the suggestion that all Christians are instilled with latent ability to manifest the “Gifts of the Spirit,” (see table 5.1, #16) thereby suggesting that perhaps Pentecostals are not any more blessed than other believers — they have simply taken advantage of a privilege open to all who wish to avail themselves.

The portrait that seems to emerge from these statements is a people who desire to remain faithful to the doctrinal swath cut out by their forefathers, yet wish to distance themselves from the politics of triumphalism that for so many years was part of the package. If such a feat can be accomplished without inadvertently nominalizing evidential tongues remains to be seen.

#### **4. Spirit Baptism and Pragmatism**

Intuitively, early Pentecostals used a pragmatic hermeneutic to develop their evidential construct.<sup>1</sup> Experience, facts and fruits seemed more than sufficient in

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<sup>1</sup> See GAEDE, “Glossolalia at Azusa Street,” *loc. cit.* and Roger STRONSTAD, “Trends in Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Part 1,” *Paraclete* 22 (1988), pp. 1-12.

validating the veracity of the Pentecostal claim. In pragmatic parlance, the Pentecostal evidential construct was *made true* by events. Donald Gee, himself, inferred as much when he wrote,

‘It was the linking together of speaking with tongues and the baptism in the Holy Spirit that sparked off the Pentecostal Revival’. There emerged, *born out of the experience* of thousands, the distinctive doctrine of the Pentecostal churches that speaking with tongues is the ‘Initial evidence’ of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.... *The doctrine is born of experience*, but it is an experience anchored in scriptural precedent.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Donald Gee or other early Pentecostals wasted much time theorizing over abstract possibilities for the sake of argument. Abstractions were deemed useful in so far as they could lead the researcher somewhere. As far as Pentecostals were concerned, not only was Spirit baptism evidenced by tongues verifiable, it had been verified in the experience of thousands.

Early Pentecostals shunned modern theological discourse in favor of a philosophical primitivism at a preconceptual level. Thrown into a melting pot, Pentecostals believed that their reading of the Bible, their experience, and their theology escaped faulty modern presuppositions as it was ordained from a tribunal above. Instinctively, Pentecostals lay claim to the absolute truth of their evidential construct.

While early Pentecostals were very reluctant to acknowledge any solidarity with historical Christianity, their eagerness to embrace this new doctrine lay in part to historical progression. From John Wesley to Charles Finney to Phoebe Palmer, the idea of a separate work of grace under the auspices of the Holy Spirit had been carefully laid down. The only distinctive contribution that Pentecostals would make was in claiming that tongues was the evidence of such a work. In pragmatic terms, “a new idea counts as ‘true’ suggests in proportion as it gratifies the individual’s desire to assimilate the novel in

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<sup>1</sup> Donald GEE as quoted by Gordon Atter, *The Third Force*, op cit., p. 127.

his experience to his beliefs in stock....It makes itself true, gets itself classed as true, by the way it works; grafting itself then upon the ancient body of truth.”<sup>1</sup> Whether it was a conscious or subconscious decision, Pentecostals grafted their evidential construct onto a firmly established conservative/holiness platform. And it was working. People were soon speaking in tongues as never before. Revival fires started sweeping throughout the world on the back of this message. The results amply confirmed the truthfulness of the evidential construct. Testifies Pentecostal pioneer, G.F. Taylor:

1. Many sanctified Christians are becoming hungry, seeking and obtaining the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and speaking with other tongues.

2. Many who have been claiming sanctification for years are becoming hungry, seeking for Him, but, finding that either they never were sanctified or have backslidden, going down before God and getting pure in His sight, and then receiving the Holy Ghost, and speaking with other tongues.

3. A few sinners are being converted, a few more sanctified; and most all of those who are being converted or sanctified are receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking with other tongues.

4. The world is amazed, and wondering saith, “What meanith this?”<sup>2</sup>

More recently at a conference for Pentecostal scholars, Vinson Synan, an elder statesman for Pentecostalism affirmed,

The Pentecostal churches that have held strongly to this teaching have surpassed all others in church growth and missionary success in the period since World War II; i.e. Church of God in Christ which separated from Church of Christ (holiness) in 1908 over tongues. Today the COGOC has 3.7 million members while the other has only 15,000.<sup>3</sup>

He concludes, “it is unthinkable that the Pentecostal movement could have developed as it did without the initial evidence position.”<sup>4</sup> Pragmatically, the perpetuity of Spirit baptism

<sup>1</sup> JAMES, *Pragmatism*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> G.F. TAYLOR, *Spirit and the Bride*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> SYNAN, “The Role of Tongues,” *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19. In a similar vein, Gordon Atter quotes Donald Gee, “Experience has proved that wherever there has been a weakening on this point (initial evidence) fewer and fewer believers have in actual fact been baptized in the Holy Spirit and the Testimony has tended to lose the Fire that gave it birth and keeps it living,” in ATTER, *The Third Force*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

as evidenced by tongues and the growth of the Pentecostal movement are so closely associated that any relinquishing sends jitters throughout Pentecostal ranks.

Partly for that reason and partly because of their Holiness background, Pentecostals knew that experience by itself could not justify their doctrinal claim. An appeal would have to be made to scriptural precedent. To this end, Pentecostals have applied a variety of historical tools to limn a biblical apologetic. While the sophistication of such exegesis continues to improve, the pragmatic pilot light has never relinquished its presence. Noting that the writer Luke linked Spirit baptism and tongues in 3 out of 5 instances, Pentecostals assert that Luke *intended* to convey a normative cause/effect relationship between them in the book of Acts. The fact is, remind Pentecostals, Peter knew that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, *for* they heard them speaking in tongues (Acts 10:45,46). In the tradition of William James, it could be said that Pentecostals have come to believe that their evidential construct is useful because it rings true scripturally and it is true scripturally because it has proven to be very useful (experience).<sup>1</sup> In this connection, many Pentecostals believe that to water down the intentionality of Luke by suggesting that he intended to establish a normal rather than a normative pattern is tantamount to suicide. "The use of *normal* in this connection," says William Menzies, "is indeed compatible with the views of some contemporary evangelicals, but it is too weak to be made into a doctrine. Repeatability is hardly a preachable item."<sup>2</sup> Consider the alternative, say Pentecostals, "Were the negative to be preached, the revival would cease."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> William MENZIES, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology: an Essay on Hermeneutics," *Essays on Apostolic Themes: Studies in Honor of Howard Ervin*, Paul Elbert ed. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1985), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> TAYLOR, *op. cit.*, p. 45. The question is then begged, "is the evidential construct true because the alternative cannot sustain itself?"

Anchored in scriptural precedent, and verified in present reality, the results amply confirmed and reciprocally justified the presupposition. In circular fashion, experience birthed the doctrine, experience justified its orthodoxy and experience closed the door on detractors. Ironically, however, once the circle was in place, Pentecostals then took the construct and placed it in a propositional habitation all of its own, where it could be canonized and protected from further possible intrusions of experience. When someone pointed out to G.F. Taylor that some deaf mutes had recently claimed to have received the Pentecostal baptism without speaking in tongues, Taylor responded:

These people, no doubt, received a measure of the Spirit, but there is nothing to prove that they received the Baptism. I believe that when any mute receives the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit will manifest Himself with the tongue. Someone says, "Do you dare to discount the experience of these poor mute creatures?" I reply, I had rather discount anyone's experience than to discount the Holy Ghost by saying He came to a heart and failed to do what Jesus said He would do, viz., testify.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, as soon as the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism was experientially established, it quickly moved out of the experiential arena and took up residence with the best of immutable propositional statements that conservative evangelicals could muster. How and when Pentecostals chose between the experiential and propositional apparently became the expedient choice of the individual.<sup>2</sup>

What had started out as a bold experiment in melding Scripture with experience into a lively pragmatic hermeneutic, was slowly being betrayed in an effort to protect their evidential construct — their one unique asset. This is not to suggest that Pentecostals abandoned their pragmatic impulse. Pragmatism was still alive and well but it was now employed to perform a feat of theological gymnastics as it attempted to protect the evidential construct using the tools of propositional theology. When Pentecostals were

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> GAEDE, *op. cit.*, p. 91.



questioned for formulating doctrine based on historical precedent from a propositional perspective — with only three out of five instances demonstrating clear evidence in Pentecostals' favor — pragmatically Harold Horton responded:

Of course you will say, as everybody says, that at Samaria it is not recorded that they spake with tongues....We reply, there is no need in every record of a repeated experience that there should be a circumstantial and detailed photographic description of that experience. God gives us three detailed and well-authenticated reports of the baptism having been received with the supernatural evidence of tongues. He then expects us to have learned what to expect at subsequent baptisms and how they can be identified, authenticated and checked as complete.<sup>1</sup>

Of course propositional critics realized that such a response raises more questions than it solves. How many instances are required before believers are expected to live out other early church experiences (i.e. footwashing, the choosing of elders by lot, etc.)? Of the five occasions where Spirit baptism is at least inferred, in three of them baptism is preceded by the imposition of hands. Is this, therefore, now also required in subsequent baptisms? In apparent contradiction to the logic employed by Horton, Thomas Holdcroft, answers this latter objection saying:

Since two of the five instances of Spirit baptism in Acts did not involve imposition, it is clear that the practice lacks exclusive approval as a rite to accompany the receiving of Spirit baptism. Imposition is seen by most Protestants as ceremonial and external rather than functionally operative.<sup>2</sup>

Evidently, how and why Pentecostals rationalized the difference between the two became their expedient pragmatic choice.

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<sup>1</sup> HORTON, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> HOLDCROFT, *The Holy Spirit, op. cit.*, p. 131.

## 5. Conclusion

From its etymological foundation, *belief* means to “cherish” or to “believe.”<sup>1</sup> As the central tenet of the PAOC doctrinal program, Spirit baptism, as evidenced by speaking in tongues, enjoys a beloved status. Pentecostals fondly embrace this tenet like none other. The moment someone critically examines its exclusive veracity by either denying its claim or by making light of its importance, Pentecostals react not unlike a parent whose children have come under scrutiny. It has become a question of honor and integrity.

However, while the Pentecostals feel an enormous emotional attachment to Spirit baptism, they are not incapable of critical thought. In summary here are their conclusions:

### 1. Written Word

From beneath the canopy of the Written Word, Pentecostals have defended the evidential construct based on a belief in the authority of the Bible. Intuitively, they believe that Bible is on their side. There must be some biblical explanation for their experience. Pentecostals have wrapped their experience and the Word so tightly together that it has often become difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other ends. For Pentecostals Spirit baptism is an matter of orthopathy. It is a matter of the heart.

Critics have counter argued, however sympathetically, that emotional appeals are simply not the basis for doctrine. Doctrine requires a more cognitive approach. And in this case when the biblical facts are accumulated, the evidence does not justify Pentecostal claims.

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<sup>1</sup> JOHN MEAGHER, *The Truing of Christianity: Visions of Life and Thought for the Future*, (New York: Doubleday, 1990), p. 33.

Confronted by such criticism, Pentecostals have had some success in demonstrating the orthodoxy of their stance by using the accepted hermeneutical tools of conservative evangelicalism. However, their most persistent appeal has been made in the spirit of orthopraxy. "Experience proves that it is of God," writes Gordon Atter, "because it makes the recipients love the Bible, love Christ, hate all that is evil. Transforming their lives, it enables them to live purer and holier both at home and abroad."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. The Spoken Word.

Donald Gee exclaimed, "Doctrines about the Spirit are necessary and inevitable, but the all-important question is not what we believe, but what we experientially enjoy." When the curious journeyed to places like the Asuza Street Mission in Los Angeles or the North Avenue Mission in Chicago or The Hebden Mission in Toronto, they did not come to hear impressive lectures on great theological truths, but they came to see and hear what was happening.

Ultimately Spirit baptism is not about doctrine, but is intended to be a doorway into an existential relationship with God. The spoken word manifested through tongues served to substantiate the validity of the experience, at least in the minds of some observers, and it served to propagate the experience to others. "Taste and see that the Lord is good" became "hear and feel that the Spirit is real."

Testifying to changed lives, recipients described miraculous results. Says one seventy-one year old man:

I was finally prayed with to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but I was honestly disappointed. I had come to expect a lot, but I didn't feel anything. I know that for some people it had been a tremendous experience, but it seemed as though nothing had happened to me. A

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<sup>1</sup> ATTER, *Who We are and What We Believe*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

week later, in the middle of the night, I woke up crying like a baby and couldn't stop. It just poured out of me — I was really alarmed. I woke up Ernestine and said to her, "What's wrong; I've never done this before in my life! Something's wrong, I can't stop crying!" She said, "The Holy Spirit is touching you. I'm sure of it." and she prayed for me, and I prayed. On that night, I felt a release of all this tension, of deep hurts from the past.<sup>1</sup>

Testimonies such as this struck a chord with disenchanted church goers and created a longing for a new sense of immediacy. So much so that a missionary could say that the new life in the Spirit "makes the Acts of the Apostles read like autobiography."<sup>2</sup>

In the end, the strongest arguments for the perpetuation and significance of Spirit baptism lay not in trying to create an absolute cause/effect between Spirit baptism and tongues, but is contained in the testimony of everyday lay people. While Spirit baptism may have suffered because of the nominalizing forces of doctrinal conceptualization, testimonials, rooted in their own experience, continually impede the process towards absolute closure.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Institutional Word

By 1919, when the PAOC came into existence, *glossolalia* had already been sufficiently demythologized that it could be formalized into an evidential construct. It was the work of organizers to perpetuate the experience. To that end, the subsequent promotion of a "take it or leave it" evidential construct had the effect of routinizing much of the Spirit baptism's potential. To be sure, the experience of *glossolalia* was

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<sup>1</sup> POLOMA, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> In one Sunday meeting which I attended, the presiding pastor was interviewing one of the teenage adherents to the church about her Christian experience. In evangelical/Pentecostal parlance, he asked her, "when she was saved?" She responded, "I can't really say since I cannot pinpoint any particular time." The pastor was set back since she did not respond in a typical conservative fashion citing the day and hour of her conversion. Nonetheless, he pressed on and asked what happened when she was baptized in the Holy Spirit. She responded, that nothing much happened as she quietly communed with God. From his reaction, the pastor did not receive the response he was hoping for. But it is this very character of Pentecostal spirituality which is always open for surprises that makes it very difficult for Pentecostal "judaizers" to effect closure on even the most entrenched beliefs at a local level.

successfully perpetuated to subsequent generations—but at what cost? Denominational leadership may have been able to reproduce the gift but they have been singularly inept at transmitting the ethos (orthopathy) of the Azusa Street revival. “The early Pentecostal revival,” says Jean-Daniel Pluss:

is a spiritual metaphor of what God does in spite of our own social, ideological and physical limitations. But it is more that because the early testimonies place ever new claims on us, they point to a surplus of meaning through that which cannot be said and yet is implied or hinted at. They speak to us in part because they transcend our ability to explain, and in part because they begin to make sense when we acknowledge God in those events. These testimonies invite us to experience God’s grace through the power of his Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Pentecostal leadership struggles on two major fronts. First, they feel a deep sense of loyalty to their evidential construct. Many witness that this loyalty is concomitantly related to their success in terms of church growth. Pragmatically they point to countless testimonies of people speaking in tongues which supports this evidential construct. And biblically they cite several episodes in Scripture which seem to support their position. In the minds of officials, these witnesses when added together, warrant the use of any legislative powers to ensure its survival. Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking in tongues has come to rank with the deity of Christ on a truth scale. Pentecostal officials are, therefore, at a loss why any Pentecostal would want to question such a recipe. At best, quasi dissidents are toying with something that works, at worse they are courting scriptural heresy.

Second, Pentecostals secretly struggle with how to promote and defend an experience that by its own criteria lacks rational definition. How can one take something fluid, like the work of the Holy Spirit, and conceptualize it into a formula without reifying or domesticating it at the same time?

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<sup>1</sup> PLUSS, “Azusa and other myths,” *op. cit.*, p. 199.

#### 4. Pragmatism

Intuitively, early Pentecostals recognized a connection between being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues. Flowing out of this connection they developed a pragmatic hermeneutic that would fuel Pentecostal theology. Intuitively absorbed into the Pentecostal ethos, this hermeneutic was initially nourished by a sense of apocalyptic urgency. Tongues were not only a sign of the end times but they presumably served a utilitarian purpose in allowing missionaries to travel into other lands and preach the gospel in native language without previous knowledge of that language.

As it became apparent that the end was not so imminent, the pragmatic hermeneutic, fostered by an evidential construct, dedicated its energies to the field of apologetics. For forty years denominational officials allied themselves with evidential tongues in a propositional ethos. Their alliance not only ensured the perpetuation of tongues as a spiritual manifestation but, the evidential construct, more than any other event or decision, was responsible for subsequent growth. The course of pragmatics changed from saying, "the Holy Spirit is alive and well because I have experienced it," to "our evidential construct is true because the Pentecostal church is alive and growing."

## Chapter 6

# Divorce and Remarriage

As a starting point, churches generally resolve matters of ethical dilemmas within the framework of their particular ecclesiastical polity. In an Episcopal system where authority flows from the top downward, this means that the individual decisions of parish priests are dictated by their immediate superiors who spend judicious time interpreting the fine points of canon law. Fundamentally, the system is intended to give maximum security and limited freedom to a parish priest.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, a congregational polity is marked by its individual subjectivity. In any given church, local ruling authorities are given the freedom to establish ethical guidelines or resolve ethical dilemmas as they see fit.<sup>2</sup>

Somewhere between these two poles lies a Presbyterian government. Based on general guidelines established by the Presbytery, ministers are free to interpret them

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<sup>1</sup> James Gordon EMERSON, *Divorce, the Church and Remarriage* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

within the local church setting. If they are not clear how to proceed, an appeal is made to the Presbytery for direction.<sup>1</sup>

For their part, in ethical matters, the PAOC is not easily identified by any of these types. In the spirit of a congregational polity, Pentecostal churches are free to establish many ethical guidelines on their own. Each church is responsible to authorize their own criteria for membership. For one church this may simply involve a general commitment to serving Christ. Or for another it may require the signing of an affidavit which testifies that the applicants will tithe their income and refrain from attending movies, smoking, etc.

On other issues, however, the PAOC behaves more like a Presbytery. In financial decisions or in questions of moral impropriety, an elaborate system of checks and balances is established from the local church board to the resident District Office. While ministers and lay people are admonished to operate within certain established guidelines, appeals are frequently made to the appropriate ruling committee for either suggestive helps or a definitive ruling.

Finally, in questions that have national ramifications and are deemed essential to the well-being of the Movement as a whole, the denomination officiates more like an Episcopalian polity which flows from the top downward. One such issue is the question of divorce and remarriage. In particular, this issue defines the Pentecostal manner in dealing with ethical dilemmas in that it, in turn, shares certain properties with all three classical church polities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-138.



# 1. Historical Assessment

## 1.1. 1906-1925

With antecedents in Wesleyan-holiness, it was not surprising that the emerging Pentecostal groupings were strongly pro-marriage and anti-divorce. Marriage was for life. It was said that while God had allowed a provision for divorce under the law of Moses, because of the hardness of people's heart, Jesus reversed that accommodation and restored matrimony back to the "Edenic Standard."<sup>1</sup>

Husbands and wives were admonished to remain together at all costs. "No court of man should sever the marriage tie (Matthew 19:6)."<sup>2</sup> Under this new law of grace, the only permissible reason for a man to "put away" his wife was because of fornication or adultery. However, even in these cases, it was forbidden for either party to remarry. As for the case of an innocent party, "If Jesus had intended that the innocent party should marry, He would have said so."<sup>3</sup>

Should a person divorce and remarry, they would expose themselves to perpetual adultery and everlasting punishment in hell.<sup>4</sup> In the case where someone was already remarried before they had the "light on the divorce question," they were reminded of Matthew 5:27-30, where if your right eye offends you, then you should pluck it out and cast it away. The implication being it is better to let one party perish than have two individuals perish in eternal damnation.<sup>5</sup>

Given such stringent applications of Scripture, an observer may have well asked the question, "What advantage is there in living under the law of *grace*?" Grace sounded

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<sup>1</sup> "The Marriage Tie," *The Apostolic Faith* 1:10 (September, 1907). Reprinted as *Like as of Fire*, *op. cit.* . p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Questions answered," *Apostolic Faith* 1:11 (October-January, 1908). reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

more severe than the law from which it freed. Evidently, church leaders were endeavoring to stave off two dilemma's that were occurring within the burgeoning Pentecostal movement.

First, in their new religious zeal, many Pentecostal husband and wives were leaving their married partners claiming that the Lord had called them to forsake all to go and preach the Gospel. Such behavior was deemed unacceptable. "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God."<sup>1</sup>

Second, others were encountering difficulties because they had come to think that it was not spiritual for husbands and wives to live as one flesh.<sup>2</sup> To such as these, they were reminded that neither the husband nor the wife had authority to abstain from conjugal intercourse without mutual consent and only in the case of giving yourself to fasting and prayer.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2. 1925-1950

For many years the official position of the PAOC on divorce and remarriage was printed in a caudal appendage at the end of their *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*. Article #21 read:

Marriage and Divorce.

First: there are now among Christian people those who became entangled in their marriage relations in their former lives of sin, and who do not now see how these matters can be adjusted; therefore, we recommend that these cases be left in the hands of the Lord, and that they walk in the light as God lets it shine on their souls.

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<sup>1</sup> "Bible teaching on Marriage and Divorce, *The Apostolic Faith*" 1:5 (January, 1907). Reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "To the Married," *The Apostolic Faith*, 1:12 (January, 1908). Reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, *op. cit.*, p. 51. It is evident from the testimony of this early witness of Pentecostalism, *The Apostolic Faith*, that Pentecostals had a substantial dualistic conception of ethics. They were continually locked in a battle of the flesh versus the spirit. While sexual intercourse between within marriage was justified, "lest Satan tempt you for your inconsistency," it was considered an *impure* accommodation on the part of God to his weak vessels.

Second: Whereas low standards of marriage and divorce are very hurtful to individuals, to the family and to the cause of Christ, therefore, it is recommended that in the future we discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching, and that we shall positively disapprove of Christians getting divorced for any cause except for fornication (Matt. 19:9), and that we recommend the remaining single of all divorced Christians and that they pray God so to keep them in purity and peace (see 1 Cor. 7).

Third: Whereas divorced and remarried persons in the ministry usually cause stumbling, reproach and division, whatever may have been the cause of divorce, therefore, we advise and recommend that our ministers and assemblies do not ordain to the full gospel ministry while former companions are living (Ezek. 44:22).

Fourth: And as a means of making the above effective, we further advise our Pentecostal ministry not to perform a marriage ceremony between any believer and a divorced person whose former companion is still living. We also especially warn all people that unions made in the future in the face of this warning between any of our ministers and such divorced persons will affect the standing of both the minister who performs the ceremony (unless he is innocently deceived into doing the same), and also that of the minister entering into such union, whether man or woman, no matter which may be the innocent party.<sup>1</sup>

In the spirit of a Presbyterian polity, the guideline was strongly suggestive — relying on a substantial amount of goodwill in its interpretation. Ministers were *recommended* to leave certain cases in the “hands of the Lord;” they were *recommended* to discourage divorce by “all lawful means and teaching;” they were *recommended* not to ordain those who have been remarried to the full gospel ministry, lest they cause stumbling, reproach and division and they were strongly “*advised*” not to perform a marriage ceremony between a believer and a divorced person whose former companion is still living.” However, despite the forceful wording of this declaration, words such as “recommend” and “advise,” state the seriousness of the matter but stop short of binding it into a inflexible edict, applicable to every case.

Notwithstanding the sheer length of this declaration for a creedal statement, it is unlikely that early Pentecostal churches were a haven for the divorced and remarried. Steeped in the tradition of the 19th century, the stigma of divorce and remarriage among

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* (1947) *loc. cit.*

Pentecostals was probably enough of a deterrent to warrant any further discussion on the issue.<sup>1</sup> In periodicals, and testimonials the prevailing bias remained unequivocally against divorce. Strongly pro-family, Pentecostals readily linked the well-being of the church with the moral integrity of the family unit. A family within a family, it was commonly believed that divorce not only disrupted the paternal family, but its effects were also percolated into the church family.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, the early emphasis of Pentecostals tended to be preventative rather than prescriptive. Instead of articles dealing with the problems inflicted by divorce, Pentecostal editorials were directed to those married in an effort to stave off the possibility of divorce. In essence, early Pentecostal rhetoric on divorce could be summarized in two statements. First, divorce was not acceptable. God Himself, is bound by His own law on the issue.

He (Jesus) made it quite clear, as recorded in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10 and verses 1-12, that when a man and a woman enter in the state of matrimony that God does something whereby they become one flesh. A condition is set up by God Himself which cannot be changed, except by the death of one of the parties.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the family must be kept together at all costs—the onus of which fell on the wife. Men may have been considered the head of the household, but women held the key to the integrity and health of their marriages. Women were the moral linchpins within their respective households. Periodical evidence from the PAOC would affirm that Pentecostals maintained a “Romantic” conception of marriage. Men, by virtue of their sex, were responsible for the home life, but women by virtue of their God-given desire for

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that paragraph 4 of the PAOC declaration on Marriage and Divorce advises that a “minister not perform a marriage ceremony between any believer and a divorced person.” Such phraseology begs the question of whether, in the minds of early Pentecostal leaders, divorced people could seriously be considered believers. Whether that was the deliberate intent of the affirmation or not, it invariably reflected a general suspicion that in itself would have kept most divorced persons from attending Pentecostal churches.

<sup>2</sup> In the following editorial, notice the link between the integrity of the family and the life-being of the Church. “Our Lord...forbade divorce for any reason. He cut clear across the loose standards of living, which had warped the thinking of His day, and declared for the indissolubility of marriage. He stood for the purity and pre-eminence of the family as the hope of the church.” Editorial, “Concerning Divorce.” *PT* (March 15, 1944), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

purity, held the key to success or failure in man.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, women may have been considered the weaker sex but they were evidently strong enough to ruin any man when they “replaced that finer sensibility and retired grace of Puritanism, with a showy boldness and desire to expose limb and form, which fires the demon that sleeps in unsanctified men.”<sup>2</sup>

Not only were women responsible for the integrity of their marriages but their actions had eternal ramifications. In an editorial entitled, “As it was in the Days of Sodom,” the editorialist does not hold back in declaring:

Do you know that when you dress in a style that exposes the temple of God, you are the subject of all kinds of uncomplimentary remarks, having the gaze of vulgar eyes centered upon you? And do you know you are arousing the weaker nature in young men? Men are all descendants of Adam, and are not MADE OF WOOD. I verily believe there will be men in hell who can look in the face of some young woman and accusingly say, “Your manner of dress and conduct in my presence was the cause of my downfall....”

It would seem that the woman is still bent on dragging man down; she was the one who first tempted man, and she is still at the same old game.<sup>3</sup>

In the end, if divorce was out of bounds, the question of remarriage was redundant. Hence any ambiguity underlining the PAOC statement on divorce and remarriage went unnoticed.<sup>4</sup> For the rank and file Pentecostal, a majority consensus existed which precluded any necessity of further clarity.

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<sup>1</sup> “There is a verse in the Bible that says, ‘Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.’ Man is responsible for the home. Its maintenance and supply devolves properly on him. Its future prosperity is in a large measure in his hands. It is enough to break a man’s heart to be belittled by his wife, to have her talk derogatorily of him behind his back, to have his wife divulge the intimate secrets of their life, to have her nag him incessantly, to have her make odious comparisons of him with others. And worst of all, to be denied the warm affection which makes the battles and struggles of existence worthwhile.” W. Ralph HORNBLY, “Marriage Misfits,” *PT* (June 1954), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial, “Concerning Divorce,” *PT* (March 15, 1944), p. 3. Women were clearly intended to provide the moral fibre for a marriage. They could “weave men’s fortunes or like moths simply feed upon them.” D.N. BUNTAIN, “The Christian Wife,” *PT* (Dec. 15, 1940).

<sup>3</sup> Editorial, “As it was in the Days of Sodom,” *PT* (Feb. 1924), p.3.

<sup>4</sup> After reading the PAOC statement on Divorce and Remarriage an outsider might well ask, “What does it mean that you leave some situations in the hands of the Lord? Are there some situations with such extenuating circumstances that would allow a minister to celebrate the marriage of someone previously married and now divorced? Does the statement imply that a minister can celebrate the remarriage of someone who is not a believer?”

Twenty-five years would pass before the PAOC would feel any urgency at further clarification. It was not until 1946 that the PAOC enacted the first of a series of Resolutions designed to close any perceived loop-holes in their doctrinal statement concerning divorce and remarriage. During their biennial General Conference in 1946, a Resolution was passed that made it abundantly clear, "no minister of the PAOC shall perform any marriage ceremony where either party has been divorced and the former companion is still living and any violation shall mean forfeiture of credentials."<sup>1</sup> Whereas, ministers were ADVISED in the past not to perform a marriage ceremony between any believer and a divorced person whose former partner is still living, they were now TOLD NOT TO.

The dye was cast and things would remain this way until the 1950s, when the thorny issue of divorce and remarriage would reassert itself.

### 1.3. 1950-

At the Biennial General Conference of 1958, a committee was appointed to review the question of Divorce and Remarriage and "present from a purely biblical standpoint, to the next General Conference, the definite stand we (Pentecostals) should take on this question as it affects the membership of our churches."<sup>2</sup>

On August 30, 1960, a committee of six men met to discuss the issue. Their subsequent report to the General Conference resulted in the following three short paragraphs:

After lengthy deliberations on the wording which now appears in the Statement, it was decided to recommend that NO CHANGE BE MADE IN THE STATEMENT.

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "*General Conference Minutes*," Resolution #29 (1946), *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, "*General Conference Minutes*," Resolution #2 (1952), *op. cit.*, p.5.

However, we recommend that though divorced and remarried people may not Scripturally hold the office of Deacon, 1 Timothy 3:2,8, they should be treated with true Christian love.

Furthermore, we suggest that the status of any divorced and remarried Christians in our congregations be determined at the local level, and that such matters as the granting of membership or the extent to which they should be active in local church capacities, except that of Deacon, shall be decided at the local level.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its brevity, the report is significant in both what it affirms and in what it ignores. First, the report acknowledged a hitherto unofficial practice of discriminating against divorced and remarried persons for the elected local church offices of deacon. It based this deduction on the proof-text, 1 Timothy 3:2,8. Although no explanation accompanied this Resolution, it was generally assumed that Paul's injunction admonishing deacons to be the "husband of but one wife," meant that they have never remarried.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the report delegated the task of determining the membership status of divorced and remarried persons to the individual church. Resembling a congregational polity, each church was free to decide what status they would grant those remarried with a previous spouse still living.

However, perhaps the most curious element of the report was in what it ignored. Despite a mandate to review the question of divorce and remarriage from a "purely biblical standpoint," there was virtually no mention of Scripture save the nebulous reference to 1 Timothy. Instead the committee ratified a hidden tradition and refrained from offering any guidelines concerning the question of divorce and remarriage vis à vis the membership of their churches.

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "General Conference Minutes" (1960), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>As far back as 1907, The Apostolic Faith of Azusa Street reflected this assumed position. see "The Marriage Tie," *The Apostolic Faith*, 1:10 (September, 1907). Reprinted in *Like as of Fire*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

The most likely reason for this failure to address seriously the issue at hand was due to the low number of divorce and remarried adherents in PAOC churches. Evidently the leadership felt that this was not yet an issue of any major importance which could seriously threaten membership in their churches.

### 1.3.1. 1968-1978

The nonchalant resolve of the PAOC quickly changed when new Canadian divorce legislation was introduced in 1968. In effect the Government of Canada moved to simplify procedures and make divorce more equitable to both husband and wife. Sensing the ramifications of such a change, the PAOC, in 1968, once again appointed a Special Committee on divorce and remarriage to re-examine this issue and present their findings to the 1970 General Conference.

Clearly, the stakes were increasing with the action of the government. For the PAOC, it was deemed a time to be unequivocal in their response. With the impending threat of widespread divorce, the General Conference convened in 1970 and carried Resolution number 14 which recommended in the strongest possible language,

that the PAOC do not basically change their position regarding divorce and remarriage of individuals within the church, and

That any seeming discrimination within the church against a divorced person remarried and whose former partner is still living, be understood as a measure to preserve the sanctity of marriage in those not affected, especially in this day of moral decline and not as a measure of discrimination against the victim of a broken marriage, and

That we recognize that marriage though terminated by divorce for any reason is a divine institution designed for the earthly lifetime of the partners and that divorce can never produce a satisfactory solution to marital problems and though it might give some measure of respite it nevertheless must suffer some penalty in this life where divine law has been broken, and

That we further recognize that nature has not left us without some help from the problem of divorce in that death on one of the divorced parties frees the other to remarriage and equal place in the membership of the church,



THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we affirm that the Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada regarding divorce and remarriage while the former partner is still living remain basically unchanged, and that we reaffirm our Christian position as:

(1) a PAOC minister cannot be a divorced person remarried and with a former partner still living. (2) a PAOC minister must not knowingly perform the marriage of anyone who is divorced and with a former partner still living (3) a deacon cannot be a divorced person and remarried with his former partner still living (4) elective offices within the church should not be filled by divorced persons remarried while their former partners are still living, lest they cause a stumbling block to others. (5) We recognize the biblical teaching on the permanence of marriage and, therefore, discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. (6) We encourage reconciliation of broken marriages if at all possible. (7) We recommend that all divorced persons who are Christians remain single and that they pray God so to keep them in purity and peace. (8) Divorced persons who are Christians and remarry be treated with love by the church and be encouraged by Christian fellowship to accept gracefully the limitations of their membership in the church as a necessary measure to preserve the sanctity of the divine institution of marriage. (9) Church membership of divorced persons, who have a former partner still living, remarried should be governed by the rules of the local church as set forth in the Statement of Faith and By-Laws #7...<sup>1</sup>

In the spirit of Fundamentalism, Resolution #14 was designed to erase any prevailing ambiguity or ambivalence. Should divorced people wish to remarry, they did so at their own peril. The respective minister was no longer responsible for any subsequent discrimination because of their disobedience in remarrying.

Ironically again, the resolution again makes virtually no mention of Scripture. Instead, it anchors itself on several commonly accepted presuppositions. First, marriage is a sacred icon instituted by God for the duration of the earthly lifetime of the couple. It is protected by divine law and cannot be broken without suffering some sort of earthly retribution. Second, it is the mandate of the church to monitor and protect the sacredness of marriage from the slippery slope of societal norms. Third, the penalty for remarriage is perpetual as long as the former partner is still living.<sup>2</sup> In each scenario the stumbling block which sanctions the offending member from full participation in the

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "General Conference Minutes", Resolution #14 (1970), *op. cit.* pp. 20-22.

<sup>2</sup> It was considered a case where the penalty fits the crime. If the crime is a perpetual form of adultery enacted by remarriage, then its retribution ought to be perpetual as well.

church body, is the life of the former partner. In the event that he/she dies, in theory the remaining partner is no longer in a position of perpetual adultery and is liberated from all penalties.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3.2. 1978-1990

As the 1970s unfolded, the apprehension that Pentecostals had concerning the liberalization of Canadian law on divorce was entirely justified. Formerly a select problem of a few who were converted after their divorce and remarriage, the tentacles of divorce now showed no discrimination by including both believers and non-believers alike. As a deterrent, Resolution #14 apparently had little effect either in preventing divorce or persuading Christian individuals to remain single following divorce.

Again leaders in the PAOC recognized the need for some sort of damage control to arrest this growing cancer. As a result, the General Conference of 1978 assigned yet another committee to the task of "examining the total biblical teaching of the various aspects of divorce and remarriage, giving particular attention to the role of the minister in remarriage."<sup>2</sup> The committee was to report its findings to the General Conference of 1980. When the 1980 Conference convened in Hamilton, the delegates were informed that the committee was unable to reach any majority position for presentation. Instead, the committee polled the opinion of the delegates with Resolution #26. It stated,

A\_\_\_I am in agreement with the present official position, and in favour of no change.

B\_\_\_I am not in agreement with the present official position, and therefore I hereby request the General Executive to prepare a policy with guidelines which permit:

After thorough investigation of the circumstances, pastors may use their own discretion in proceeding with the performance of a marriage ceremony between a couple, either or both of whom may have been

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<sup>1</sup> Some ministers within the PAOC have cynically suggested that a solution would be to kill the former partner and repent of your sin, thereby freeing yourself from both divine and ecclesiastical judgement.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #8" *General Conference Minutes* (1978), *op. cit.* pp. 11,12,22,23.

divorced with a former companion still living, providing that there is clear evidence of qualification under the 'exceptive clause.' (Matthew 19:9)<sup>1</sup>

A secret ballot was cast with option "A" receiving 179 votes and option "B" receiving the majority 232 votes. The carried Resolution, however, was a trivial victory. Without any teeth to bring about any real change, Resolution #26 was relatively painless to accept. While Pentecostals sensed their present position was inadequate, they were still reluctant to commit themselves to change. Subsequently, when the 1982 General Conference convened with a policy Resolution that took into consideration the sexual immorality or the desertion of one of the partners, it was defeated.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this setback, the grass-roots voice for reform was not entirely scotched. When the issue was resurrected at the 1984 and 1986 General Conferences, the emphasis, shifted from establishing the sexual immorality of one of the partners to making exception for those who were divorced prior to salvation.<sup>3</sup> In essence the argument acknowledged the hitherto accepted understanding that not all divorces are equal—divorces between persons prior to conversion are in some way more understandable than divorces among Christians. The rationale for such a conclusion was two-fold. First, it assumed that Christians who divorced were more accountable to divine law than non-Christians. Second, it argued that new believers should not be held accountable for past sins because they have become "new creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17) and are freed from the past.<sup>4</sup> Regardless the rationale, neither resolution was carried.

The only consensus that emerged from the endless reports and Resolutions through the 1980s was that there was no consensus. Individuals were in majority

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #26" *General Conference Minutes* (1980), *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, "General Conference Minutes" (1982), *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> In Pentecostal parlance, "previously divorced," refers to those individuals who were converted some time after they had remarried again.

<sup>4</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #5," *General Conference Minutes* (1984) *op. cit.*, p. 7. and "Resolution #9," *General Conference Minutes* (1986), p. 9.

agreement that change was required but could not settle on any statement that could define that change. Evidently the appointed committees lacked enough weight to rally a consensus through the constituency.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3.3. 1990-

Where committees had previously failed, 1990 marked a new initiative in the push for reform. When the General Conference convened, the District of Western Ontario presented Resolution #21. It read,

WHEREAS the Western Ontario District passed the following resolution at their 1990 District Conference,

WHEREAS the Scriptures teach the totality of the cleansing of the blood of Christ when a person sincerely repents and turns to the Lord, and

WHEREAS we joyfully receive into our Fellowship new believers whose lives give evidence of a genuine new birth experience, regardless of their past history, and

WHEREAS we place certain restrictions on the access of all divorced persons to the ministries of the PAOC,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Western Ontario District request that our General Conference make allowance for persons divorced prior to conversion to be remarried by our pastors.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the General Executive appoint a committee to consider changes to the General constitution and By-laws to make provision for our pastors to be allowed to perform marriages for persons divorced prior to conversion, and to present these amendments to the 1992 General Conference.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there be a study of the biblical, social and pastoral implications of divorce and remarriage and, further, a definition of marriage, divorce and remarriage, and that this be presented by February 1, 1992 to all credential holders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A consensus was reached however, on an additional definition of marriage and the family which would be included in the doctrinal statement of the PAOC. Passed at the 1988 General Conference the new statement reiterated that "marriage is a provisions of God whereby a man and a woman live together in a life-long relationship that is legally sanctioned by the state....It is intended by God to be a permanent relationship. It is a witness to the world of the relationship between Christ and His church....Christians should marry only those who are believers. an individual who becomes a believer after marriage should remain with his or her partner in peace, and should witness to the gospel in the home..." PAOC, "Resolution #17," *General Conference Minutes* (1988), *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #21," *General Conference Minutes* (1990), *op. cit.*, p. 18.

The resolution was carried leaving the General Executive the task of conscripting yet another committee to re-examine this issue. In all, five senior members of the PAOC were selected. The committee, in turn, commissioned several oral and written presentations from interested parties throughout the Fellowship of the PAOC. Following the letter of their mandate, the committee then published a 38 page brief for distribution to the general constituency. The report which was the most extensive of its kind was true to its word in examining the social,<sup>1</sup> biblical<sup>2</sup> and pastoral<sup>3</sup> implications of divorce and remarriage in the church. It even ventured into uncharted waters by Pentecostal

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<sup>1</sup> The report summarized eight observations that had a direct bearing on Pentecostal churches. They were:

1. In the midst of moral and marital chaos what our society needs most is a presentation of Truth. Regardless of the personal experiences and preferences of the membership of the PAOC, there is a foundational commitment to the Scriptures as the Word of God and, therefore, the rule of life. We must examine our position to discover what the unchanging Word says to our particular social situation in 1992.
  2. A significant percentage of adults who are presently being converted in our churches are divorced. If they wish to be remarried, our ministers are unable to officiate at their weddings. They may be remarried by a secular official, or a minister of another denomination, and maintain official membership in one of our churches.
  3. A significant number of adults who are presently being converted are remarried with a former spouse still living. These people are eligible for membership in our churches but ineligible to hold certain offices in the church. They are also ineligible for credentials with the PAOC.
  4. The focus in our Fellowship historically has been on the prohibition of remarriage rather than the limited reason(s) for which the Scriptures permit a divorce. Generally, we have not offered discipline to the divorced person or withheld privileges as long as the person did not remarry.
  5. Divorce statistics have increased not only in the general population but also among the members and adherents of our churches. Often a divorce results in one or both spouses leaving the church. The services of the minister and church which may have been a vital part of a person's life become limited, at least with reference to sanctioning another marriage with a new spouse.
  6. Divorced and remarried people occupy a special status among the body of believers. It may be argued that there is a natural and inescapable consequence for having precipitated, or having been the victim of, the break-up of a marriage. It may also be argued that placing them in a special category is unfortunate but necessary in order to present a clear message concerning God's ideal for marriage. Whatever the line of reasoning, the present situation is that those who have failed in marriage are treated differently in some ways from any other group of sinners.
  7. A growing number of adults are opting for "living-together" arrangements which allow them to escape the commitments involved in marriage. Our society and government has given recognition to common-law relationships as being legally equivalent to marriage in some respects—especially in regard to property and children. Pastors usually encourage such people who come into our churches to either sever the relationship or get married. Our ministers are allowed to officiate at weddings of people who have been involved in what the church would consider an immoral lifestyle, but not if they have been married previously and have a former spouse still living.
  8. Adults get divorce, but children get divorced too. With the significant number of families in the church which have been touched by divorce, it is obvious that there are literally thousands of children and young people in our churches who share the pain. We are aware that our treatment of the subject of divorce and remarriage has a bearing on the welfare of these children.
- PAOC, "Report on Divorce and Remarriage" (1992), pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> For the first time, a conscientious attempt was made at interpreting the relevant biblical passages. In particular the committee centered much of their analysis on the "exception clause" in Matthew 19:9. After reviewing several of the common interpretations of this verse, they settled on the following understanding, "The teaching of Jesus can be distilled to one principle: the 'one flesh' relationship is so powerful that only marital unfaithfulness can sever the union of man and woman. Once it is severed, remarriage is possible since the previous 'one flesh' relationship no longer exists. This would make

standards and offered definitions of marriage, divorce and remarriage. It concluded with the presentation of Resolution # 3 for the 1992 Conference.

WHEREAS General Conference 1990 directed the General Executive to appoint a committee to study the biblical, social and pastoral implications of divorce and remarriage and to provide a definition of marriage, divorce and remarriage, and

WHEREAS the General Executive accepted the procedure that General conference should express itself on this subject by reaffirming or adjusting its position on Divorce and Remarriage, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that ministers may officiate at the marriage of man and woman, one or both of whom has been married previously with the former spouse still living, where the following three conditions exist:

1. all reasonable efforts at reconciliation with the former partner have been exhausted;
2. a legal divorce has been obtained;
3. the sexual immorality of the former partner has been established or one of the partners has remarried.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that

- (a) If the concept of the remarriage of a divorced person, whose former spouse is still living, is contrary to a minister's conscience, the minister is not under any obligation to officiate at such a marriage, and
- (b) If a minister desires assistance in dealing with a request for a marriage involving a divorced person, the minister may appeal to a committee of three who shall be appointed by the respective district executive.

In accord with the foregoing, the previous working definitions of Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage shall be amended by deletion and replaced by the following:

1. ARTICLE V SECTION VII:  
MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Marriage is a provision of God whereby a man and a woman enter into a life-long relationship through a marriage ceremony, which is recognized by the church and legally sanctioned by the state. Marriage establishes a "one flesh" relationship, which goes beyond a physical union, and is more than either a temporary relationship of convenience intended to provide personal pleasure, or a contract which binds two people together in a legal partnership. Marriage established an emotional and spiritual oneness, which enables both partners to respond to the spiritual, physical and social needs of the other. It provides the Biblical context for the procreation of children.

Marriage is to be an exclusive relationship that is maintained in purity. It is intended by God to be a permanent relationship. It is a witness to the world of the relationship between Christ and His church.

Marriage requires a commitment of love, perseverance and faith. Because of its sanctity and permanence, marriage should be treated with seriousness and entered into only after counsel and prayer for God's guidance. Christians should marry only those who are believers. An

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sense of Jesus' command in Mark 10:9: 'Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.' *Ibid.* p. 25.

3 Pastorally it was noted that the balance sheet of any change in the PAOC position on the subject of divorce and remarriage must be examined very carefully. The committee wondered what signals would be sent out to both young people contemplating marriage and couples working through marital problems if they knew there was a back door out. *Ibid.* pp. 28-32.

individual who becomes a believer after marriage should remain with his or her partner in peace, and should give witness to the gospel in the home.

Marriage can only be broken by "porneia" or marital unfaithfulness involving adultery, homosexuality, or incest. While Scriptures give evidence that the marriage vow and "one flesh" union are broken by such acts, and therefore do recognize the breaking of the marriage relationship, the Scriptures do recommend that the most desirable option would be for reconciliation.

The Bible holds family life as a position of trust and responsibility. The home is a stabilizing force in society, a place of nurture, counsel and safety for children.

## 2. POSITION AND PRACTICES.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, page 14 which reads...be rescinded and replaced with the following:

### DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

We believe that divorce, the legal termination of a marriage relationship by the State, is not God's intention. It is God's concession to the "hardness of men's hearts."

We, therefore, discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. Our objective is reconciliation and the healing of the marriage union where possible. Marital unfaithfulness should not be considered so much an occasion or opportunity for divorce, but rather an opportunity for Christian grace, forgiveness, and restoration.

Where all attempts at reconciliation have failed, and a divorce has be finalized, we extend Christ's love and compassion.

### DIVORCE

Divorce, in our society, is the termination of a marriage through a legal process authorized by the state. While the Church recognizes this legal process as an appropriate means to facilitate the permanent separation of spouses, the Church restricts the idea of divorce, in the sense of dissolution of marriage, to reasons specified by the Scriptures.

The weight of the Biblical record is negative and the explicit statement is made, "God hates divorce." Jesus gives one explicit cause for the dissolution of marriage: "Porneia" or marital unfaithfulness. Divorce is more than an action of the courts which breaks the legal contract between partners in a marriage. It is also the fracture of an unique human relationship between a male and a female, Divorce has profound consequences for the children. Divorce is evidence of the sinful nature expressed in human failure.

### REMARRIAGE

Remarriage is the union, legally sanctioned by the State, of a man and woman, one or both of whom have been previously married. It is regarded as acceptable the Scriptures in the event of the death of the former spouse. It is also regarded as acceptable for the non-offending party when "porneia" has been the cause of the dissolution of the previous marriage. If the spouse of a previous marriage has remarried or become involved sexually with another person, the other spouse will be considered free to remarry.<sup>1</sup>

When the General Conference reconvened in August 1992, in Ottawa, the report and the caudal Resolution stimulated much debate. In all, thirty-nine delegates spoke to

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1992) *op. cit.*, pp. 8-11.

the issue before closure was evoked. Voting was carried out by secret ballot. The report of the vote was,

**Table 6.1 — 1992 Vote on Divorce and Remarriage**

Total Ballots Cast .....	587
Spoiled ballots .....	2
Ballots Required .....	390
Votes Received	
Yes .....	323 (55%)
No .....	262
DEFEATED <sup>1</sup>	

Having not required the two-thirds majority required for a constitutional change, the resolution was again defeated.

Defeat, however, would only mean that the question would likely be resurrected for two years later at the next General Conference. It, therefore, came as no surprise when the 1992 Resolution #3 reappeared again at the 1994 conference in Calgary, Alberta. This time, reflecting a strong Western presence, the vote was reversed allowing ministers the possibility in certain circumstances to preside over marriage ceremonies.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.4. Conclusion

Early Pentecostals had very little to say on the issue of divorce and remarriage. Presumably, the incidence of divorce and remarriage was relatively small given the stigma that even secular society attached to such acts of failure.

From a Pentecostal perspective, the crucial ethical issue for the church revolved around family roles. Accommodating themselves to the romantic orthodoxy of other

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12

<sup>2</sup> Although, at the time of writing this thesis, the minutes of the 1994 General Conference have not been published the results of the vote was as follows: Total Ballots cast-536, Ballots required to carry the Resolution-357, votes for the Resolution-394 or 73.5%, votes against-142 or 26.5%. The motion was carried.



conservative churches, Pentecostals formalised the family into a unambiguous model. Everyone knew their role. The husband assumed the leadership of the household while his wife served a supporting role. She *made* the man. And through it all, marriage was for keeps. "Our Lord clearly taught," says General Superintendent, D. N. Buntain, "that once entered into a state of matrimony, one must remain in it until set free by God."<sup>1</sup>

When Pentecostals spoke out on the issue of divorce and remarriage between the formative years 1925-1950, the rhetoric was predictable as it was astringent.

Explains the *Pentecostal Testimony*,

As to the question of re-marriage after divorce, the Lord taught plainly that anyone marrying again while the former partner is still living, **COMMITTS ADULTERY**, as does the new partner. Gospel and Epistles alike make this quite clear. Furthermore, the warning is given that **ADULTERERS CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**<sup>2</sup>

It was relatively easy for these Pentecostals to adopt a hard-line on this issue. Any possible fallout would have been low and in Pentecostal pragmatic terms, that in itself would have made its inclusion a relatively simple decision. Second, the hard-line accommodated itself very well with the propositional theological platform of fundamentalists who strove to erase any life-situation ambiguities with eternally binding laws.

But as author Ray Sutton has noted, churches which have attempted to maintain a strict policy of no divorce/no remarriage have done so very inconsistently. Invariably they create "some sort of safety-valve to get around the inflexibility of their position."<sup>3</sup> As newcomers who have already been divorced and remarried enter the church, the church must decide how to equate the redemptive process of God with their past moral failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Editorial, "Concerning Divorce," *loc. cit.*, It was assumed that the only way an individual could be set free from God's judgement was through the death of his/her partner.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Ray R. SUTTON, *Second Chance: Biblical Blueprints for Divorce and Remarriage* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988), p. 7.

What are the consequences? Is there a statute of limitation on their failure? or is it perpetual?

For Pentecostals, the amplitude of these questions rose proportionally with the liberalization of civil laws governing divorce and the growing swell of “in house” divorces. In successive waves, Pentecostal churches were first confronted with “previously divorced and remarried” persons, then beginning in the late 1970s, the tentacles of divorce began touching the children of church board members and/or clergy. Pentecostal leadership was required to make some crucial decisions. The old deterrents were ineffective. How were Pentecostals in the future going to maintain the status-quo — no divorce/no remarriage, — and not alienate this growing population? Would they compromise on their traditional appeal to the Bible as ultimate authority? Would they simply ignore the tension and hope it would go away? Or would they be willing to expediently sacrifice this group as “a measure to preserve the sanctity of marriage in those not affected?”<sup>1</sup>

History has demonstrated that the PAOC has toyed with all of these options with limited success. At the heart of this drama are two ideological systems vying for control. The battle lines have been drawn between a narrative, pragmatic hermeneutic, in the spirit of early Pentecostalism, and a rationalistic, propositional hermeneutic in the spirit of Fundamentalism. The former has been at the forefront in appealing to a gospel of grace and forgiveness, while the latter has been strident in its attempt to reinforce a policy of deterrents aimed at no compromise.

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, “Resolution #14,” *General Conference Minutes* (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.

## 2. A Sociological Profile of Current Attitudes

On the question of divorce and remarriage, clergy were invited to respond to four different items. The items were arranged in effort to reflect present PAOC attitudes concerning, 1) the degree of satisfaction with present policies and their underlying rationale, 2) the nature of marriage, 3) and the strength of their conviction.

As it has been duly noted, Pentecostals within the PAOC are not satisfied with the status quo (see Table 6.2). If the question keeps reappearing, it is because they appear bereft of any adequate mechanism to resolve consistently this issue. If it is through an appeal to the Bible — then whose interpretation?

They furthermore lack any consensus concerning the underlying intent behind the quest for an adequate policy. Where are their priorities? Do they wish to protect the institution of marriage against the growing rate of divorce? Are they merely reacting to the possibility of losing church members? Are their actions fueled by a desire to simply remain faithful to God's divine law as they perceive it to be outlined in Scripture? Or are they interested in making the church a haven for the bruised, the rejected and those ravaged by sour relationships?

Undoubtedly, many Pentecostals would retort that such distinctions are artificial and not mutually exclusive with one flowing out of the other. Conceivably, for example, were they to apply Scripture faithfully, marriage would be protected and the church would not abandon its role as an advocate for the destitute.

Table 6.2 — Policy and the Status Quo

23. The present policy of the PAOC concerning divorce and remarriage is inadequate.	28%	SA	
	33%	A	-mode
	17%	U	
	8%	D	
	14%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.538			
<i>sd</i> =1.345			
missing-2			

Source: Project Exousia

Clergy were furthermore asked (Table 6.3) if extenuating circumstances would permit a divorced and remarried person to otherwise pastor a church. Surprisingly the response was largely split between those who could envision some circumstances and those who fervently opposed the possibility.

Table 6.3 — Ordination and Remarriage

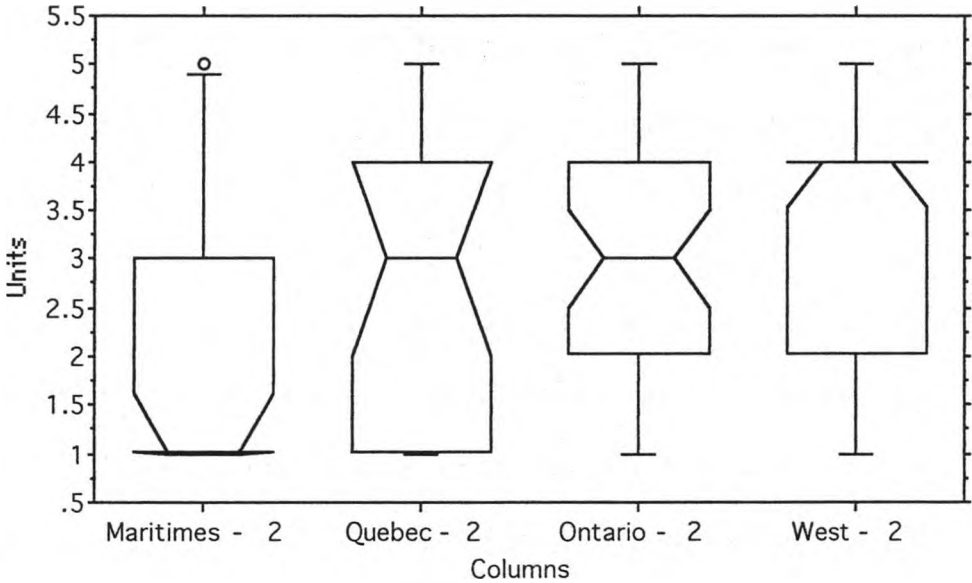
2. There are extenuating circumstances whereby a divorce and remarried person should be able to receive ordination status within the PAOC.	17%	SA	
	26%	A	
	16%	U	
	12%	D	
	29%	SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =2.879			
<i>sd</i> =1.493			
missing-2			

Source: Project Exousia

When geographic factors were taken into consideration (Table 6.4), a significant difference occurred in particular between the Maritime Provinces and Western Canada. The former strongly opposed the item while the latter showed a qualified support for it. The significance of this regional polarity is reflected by the voting bar of the biennial meeting of the General Conference. Held every two years, the conference site alternates between Eastern and Western Canada. Respectively a conference in Western Canada, has a greater representation from that region than does a similar conference in Eastern Canada which enjoys the same polarity in reverse. It is, therefore, not surprising that a resolution to allow a minister of the PAOC, in certain circumstances, to officiate at the marriage of a man and woman, where one or both of whom have been married

previously with the former spouse still living, was narrowly defeated in Ottawa in 1992, only to be passed two years later at the General Conference held in Western Canada (Calgary). The wording of the resolution did not change, only its geographic location. One is left to wonder whether the vote reflected the “will of God,” or regional particularity.

**Table 6.4 — Box Plot Graph Reflecting Regional Responses for Table 6.3**



Unpaired t-Test    X1: Recode of Province    Y1: 2

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
67	-3.106	.0028

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Maritimes	26	2.154	1.461	.287
West	43	3.302	1.505	.229

Source: Project Exousia

The stumbling block for Pentecostals over the issue of divorce and remarriage appears to be the significance of the marriage contract. Pentecostals within the PAOC are not nearly so queasy about complications provoked by the trend towards common law relationships. While the maintenance of such a relationship is strongly denounced in Pentecostal circles, they are not willing to extend the same restrictive policies which

charter the Denominations response to those remarried where a former spouse still lives (Table 6.5).<sup>1</sup> Should someone living in common law terminate their relationship and marry another individual, a PAOC minister would be free to officiate the marriage.

This invariably raises the question: what constitutes a marriage? If the state grants legal rights to common law relationships, should the church not logically follow suit? Could one conclude that marriages conducted in civil court carry less weight in the eyes of the church than marriages officiated by ordained clergy? Of course to ask such questions is to play the devil's advocate. Pentecostals realize that to open the door to equate common law relationships with traditional marriage contracts would be to throw the denomination into a hopeless quagmire. "Keep it simple" is the adjudicating motto.

**Table 6.5 — Marriage and Common Law Relationships**

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17. Concerning what constitutes a marriage, we should	13%	SA	
extend the present policy of divorce and remarriage as it is	11%	A	
laid out in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs to cover	11%	U	
those living in common law.	16%	D	
	49%	SD	-mode
mean=2.223			
sd=1.475			
missing=4			

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Source: Project Exousia

This does not, however, answer why remarriage, in the eyes of the PAOC is singled out as a cause for perpetual shame. The simple answer would be to assume that Pentecostals asseverate that marriage is an inviolable covenant ordained by God. Any breach in this covenant may be recognized by the State but is not by God. Therefore, a subsequent remarriage places the couple in jeopardy of perpetual adultery. Should ministers officiate at such an act, they would, therefore, be a knowing accomplice. While such an answer could explain the reluctance Pentecostals feel towards anything that might may be misinterpreted as a quasi endorsement of remarriage, those who

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<sup>1</sup> Item VII, MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY, recently added to the Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths makes it quite clear that "marriage is a provision of God, whereby a man and a woman live together in a life-long relationship that is legally *sanctioned by the state*..."

responded to this survey were just as adamant in rejecting this solution. Of the ministers polled 88% rejected any notion that remarriage represents a perpetual sin (see Table 6.5).

**Table 6.6 — Remarriage and Consequences**

15. Remarriage, following divorce, represents a perpetual sin that cannot be forgiven as long as the couple remains together.	1%	SA	
	4%	A	
	8%	U	
	28%	D	
<i>mean</i> =1.992	60%	SD	-mode
<i>sd</i> =.86			
missing - 2			

Source: Project Exousia

If marriage, however, is not some sort of perpetual sin, then what else could explain the Pentecostal historical negative reaction to the possibility of remarriage? Again, an analysis of Pentecostals pragmatic disposition provides some clues which hint at the answer to this dilemma.

### 3. Pragmatism and Divorce

No where was the tension between these two competing hermeneutics more pronounced than in the ensuing debate of Resolution #3 at the 1992 General Conference in Ottawa.<sup>1</sup> At stake was yet another resolution that would change the current policy and allow PAOC credentialed ministers, in certain circumstances, to officiate a marriage ceremony between those people previously divorced.

To use the categories of William James, the subsequent debate could be described as a skirmish between the tender and the tough-minded. On the one side, the tender-minded, driven by fixed principles, closed systems and absolutes were interested

<sup>1</sup> The following citations are taken from unofficial recorded transcripts of the proceedings dating from August 19-23, 1992 in Ottawa, Canada.

in maintaining the status quo prohibiting clergy from officiating in the marriage of previously divorced individuals. Over and over again, arguments were heard that were intended to defend the “integrity, sanctity and security of marriage and the home.” Marriage was placed on an elevated pedestal where it would be safe from the ravages of human life. One pastor responded,

I have wrestled with the Scriptures...and in Matt 5:19 I only found peace when I realized that Jesus was more interested in preserving the family than helping those who were [encountering] problems in marriage. And my line of thought came through that .....Jesus was trying to preserve marriage, to preserve family, to preserve home life and that is the main thing he was trying to do and not provide an out for the problem created by divorce.<sup>1</sup>

Opponents accepting anything less than this unyielding position, were described as walking down a slippery slope that would invariably undermine the sacred icon of marriage and open the door for future ethical struggles. Explains one pastor,

Another denomination is meeting this week to debate the issue of sanctioning same gender marriages and we may well say, but that will never happen in the PAOC. Sir, I am of the conviction, that great pressure will be brought to bear upon us and upon the generations that follow us, should Jesus tarry...<sup>2</sup>

In the spirit of the tender-minded, much ado was given to abstract possibilities and analogies. Ironically, one pastor brought affidavits from two lawyers who spoke negatively on the legal wording and implications of the proposed resolution. Still another individual tried to limn an analogy from pre-marital pregnancy.

The question is not one of forgiveness, but rather consequences to what may have been a sinful act. My illustration may be simplistic but it may get my point across. If prior to salvation a woman has a sexual relationship and becomes pregnant, during which time she comes to Christ, recognizes her sinful act and repents, we will all agree that she will be forgiven for a permissive lifestyle. However, will God abort the baby, because it happened prior to conversion. The answer is no, because even if we are forgiven there are consequences to actions and commitments. People who are divorced and remarried must assume some responsibility for their actions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference Debate on Resolution # 3, (Ottawa, 1992)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



Notwithstanding the relevance of such an analogy, the tender-minded began with the cardinal virtue of marriage and proceeded on theorizing over abstract possibilities that could threaten their presupposition. Consequently, their use of Scripture substantiated their concerns. Jesus was depicted as the arch defender of marriage. They, in turn, were simply "remaining true to the standards of holiness set forth in the Word of God." Affirmed one pastor, "My conscience is one thing, Scripture is something else."

For the tender-minded there was no ambiguity. The weight of Scripture clearly fell against the divorced and remarried. Marriage is permanent. "The teaching is plain," says Keith Morrison, "the marriage bond is not merely a human contract but a divine yoke and God lays it on a married couple by declaring His will in His Word."<sup>1</sup> The implication is unequivocal: divorce not only breaks the yoke, but reaps perpetual judgement when it is followed by remarriage. "The basis of our Fellowship," explained one respondent,

is that the Word of God be our ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice....our brother from the Bible College mentioned that Christ addressed the divorce issue and not the remarriage issue and yet the last part of that verse says (that) whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery. I think that is fairly clear. Whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery. Does that mean if I am a pastor, if I perform a marriage between someone who is divorced that I am participating and encouraging them to commit adultery. I believe it does.<sup>2</sup>

This did not mean that the tender-minded were cold-hearted and unsympathetic with those divorced and remarried. The tender-minded reacted strongly to insinuations that their opposition to the resolution was devoid of compassion. "As long as I have been part of the PAOC, observed one pastor,

our Fellowship has exercised compassion and grace. During the many years that I was a pastor, in this Fellowship, I attempted...to be an example of a Christian gentleman....I cannot remember on one occasion that a couple was lost in the church I was pastoring. I cannot remember one couple that left angrily, nor can I remember one couple who accused me or this Fellowship of being hypocritical or having a

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<sup>1</sup> Keith MORRISON, "Love, Marriage and Divorce," *PT* (November 1974).

<sup>2</sup> General Conference Debate on Resolution # 3, (Ottawa, 1992)

dichotomous position. But I can remember several couples...who coveted positively, with regards to me personally and to this Fellowship, "We appreciate the stand that your denomination has taken and we will not pressure you into an uncomfortable position...and we will get our problem resolved." They did. They went to the Justice of Peace or wherever and they came back to church and were received and welcomed and they ministered in the life of the church.<sup>1</sup>

To the tender-minded, compassion is not the issue. At stake is a divine law that cannot be violated without serious consequences. Compassion was simply insufficient to overturn God's law which stand's against divorce and remarriage.

However, even the staunchest tender-minded Pentecostals did not entirely lay to rest their historical pragmatic impulse. Many were simply afraid that a change at this time would needlessly "open a whole can of worms." There was a pervasive feeling that for better or for worse, the status quo provided a uniform shelter from which all ministers could seek refuge from the complications resulting from these messy relationship dilemmas. Employing a form of expedient pragmatism, ministers could wipe their hands of the issue and put the onus on God to rule ultimately on the situation. On this basis, a minister could publicly welcome a remarried couple as members of the church, while privately making it known that the jury was out as to their final status before God. Pragmatically, the "nay" side recognized that perhaps their solution is not ideal, but "by default it is the best solution." "If all the positions on this issue require paying a price," reiterated another speaker, "then I, for one, choose to pay the price of holding the line on this matter."

Those in favor of Resolution #3, on the other hand, were dominated by James's tough-minded temperament. Beginning with facts, concreteness and action, their discourse was rife with personal examples that began with where people are instead of where they should be. Typical of this response is one pastor who affirmed, "Whatever it is that we are doing presently, we are doing a lot of things wrong and we are hurting a lot

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

of people.” Said another, “We are only really acknowledging what we are already practicing.” Still another explains:

We recognize that it is not God's best, it is not His first choice, but because we are involved in a real world and we are involved in the redemptive process in people's lives, we are dealing with divorced and remarried people everyday — some before they were Christian, some after — it's a reality. And unless we're prepared to go to our churches and look at the usher, musician etc., in the eye and say we do not see you as a person who has been redeemed—we see you as a person living in known sin. If we're not prepared to do that, then we acknowledge the fact that there is a redemptive process.<sup>1</sup>

The concern for the tough-minded laid not so much with enshrining their principles as it did with healing the damage associated with divorce. Remarked one of the delegates,

The fact is, there are victims of divorce, whether we like it or not....And while it is easy to say that it is not entirely one sided when it comes to the causes of marriage breakdown, nevertheless, there are certain individual cases where we know one individual walks into the arms of another person and there is *porneia*. There is remarriage of the other person. There are innocent parties...<sup>2</sup>

Innocent parties notwithstanding, these tough-minded Pentecostals did not arrive at their conclusion based solely on experience as their detractors often suggested. In fact, surprisingly it was the tough-minded who were the most diligent in examining the relevant biblical texts.<sup>3</sup> In so doing, however, the affirmative position, departed from the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> While the “nay” forces frequently cited biblical references for their position, no explanation was given for their inclusion. The onus was clearly on the “yea” forces to prove Scripturally that the traditional biases underlining the status quo were based on faulty premises.

sufficiency of grammatical hermeneutics and introduced both historical criticism<sup>1</sup> and the use of experience to inform their interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

While even tough-minded Pentecostals would have rejected making experience the sole criteria for ethical dilemmas of this nature, at some level of understanding they acknowledged the boiling over effect of experience on their understanding of Scripture. Never static, the tough-minded claimed that Scriptures inform the reader and are in part formed by the reader in dialogue with each other. Indeed, one pastor went so far as to interpret the Sermon on the Mount, not so much as an ideal to be achieved but as a plumbline that “disqualifies us at every point.” Integral to such an analysis is the redemptive ability of God to remake broken people. The Bible was viewed largely as an example of God in an imperfect world taking a risk with us. “The alternative,” said one pastor “is to maintain the sanctity of marriage with a ‘chastity belt mentality’.”

Typical of the tough-minded, they concluded that there is no easy or universal answer for the dilemma posed by divorce and remarriage in a permissive society. Should the proposed resolution be adopted, there will always be persons who will abuse it. “But I am not a private detective,” says one young pastor. “There are going to be ‘ties’ when I am going to have to make a choice and leave the risk to God because the highest court is heaven’s and in the end, God will deal with you and I and everybody on the basis of the deepest part of our heart’s intent.”

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<sup>1</sup> One speaker, an academic dean at one of the official PAOC Bible colleges, employed historical criticism but spoke against the resolution. However, his negative vote was not in favor of the status quo, rather he felt that the resolution itself was premature as it did not take adequately into consideration the full historical picture. He argued that the present debate is faulty because it assumes that marriage in the New Testament is in essence the same as marriage in the twentieth century. He concluded that we cannot arrive at a full understanding of divorce and remarriage until we formulate a biblical understanding of what constitutes marriage.

It was clear, however, from the half-way reaction afterwards that his comments soared over the heads of most delegates as a speckled bird. In a crowd of delegates who have been *thoroughfed* on an accommodational pragmatic diet for so many years, such critical reflection is not so much irrelevant as it is incomprehensible.

<sup>2</sup> As has been previously noted early Pentecostals relied heavily on a subconscious experiential hermeneutic that eventually waned as Pentecostals accommodated themselves to the larger fundamentalist agenda.

## 4. Conclusion

There is an obvious danger in limning any universal conclusion based on individual particularities. Be that as it may, to the extent that the ethical dilemma posed by divorce and remarriage typifies the manner which Pentecostals deal with other ethical issues, some deductions can be made.

1. In ethical matters, Pentecostals are guided by a passionate devotion to the Bible as the final arbitrator. Above all else, Pentecostals desire to be biblical. They believe that the Bible speaks to all ethical situations either explicitly or implicitly. And they furthermore presume a direct correlation between the quantity of Scriptural support for any given affirmation and its believability.

Ironically, however, despite their outward verve in appealing to Scripture for direction, Pentecostals seldom take the time to weigh thoughtfully the appropriate Scriptural support which is used to substantiate their claims. It would appear, in ethical/moral dilemmas, that Pentecostals are generally content at punctuating their conclusions with the necessary popular Scriptural references. To what extent are these proof-texts appropriate, is a moot question as Pentecostals readily accept their popular evangelical interpretation. In the end, however, the rank and file Pentecostal insistence to ally any ethical decision with Scripture is betrayed by their reluctance to examine the text seriously. The only thing left undecided is whether this exegetical silence is born out of fear of the unknown, ignorance or just plain laziness.

When Pentecostals have attempted to apply themselves to scholarly exegesis/hermeneutics, they have polarized themselves with two incompatible theological systems. On the one side, Pentecostals generally stand in solidarity with fundamentalists who have built their theological worldview with propositional revelation.

God's will is made known through eternal doctrines mediated through the Scriptures that have escaped the winds of relativity or subjectivity. Upon such knowledge, Pentecostals have sometimes reduced ethical dilemmas to a hodge podge collection of do's and don'ts. On these grounds Pentecostals have, in the past, prohibited women from wearing earrings, make-up, slacks and bobbed hair. They have denounced participation of any kind in sports. And they have been critical of movies, and card playing — all with Scriptural conviction.

On the other side, Pentecostals have also freely applied a subconscious, experiential, narrative, hermeneutic when deemed necessary. There is a strong sense that as the Bible represents real history, with real people, so God continues to address Himself to contemporary society through the experience of His people. At this point, critics have accused Pentecostals of adding on to the canon of Scripture. Pentecostals defend such action as being a derivative of common sense praxis, as their story intersects with the story of Scripture, God's revelation is made known. Typical of this subconscious approach, one pastor defended the 1992 Resolution #3 on divorce and remarriage by first relating his story.

My wife and I are testimony of adult conversion and restoration of a broken marriage. I have a teenage daughter, teenage son and I can approach their secularity in one of two ways. I can inoculate the principles of their faith into them and work with them and encourage them to walk with God as they should or I can utilise the chastity belt. That's not how God works. He takes tremendous risk with us. Frankly no one in this room is sinless. That's the mystery of the Kingdom of God, the power of the grace of God. I am concerned that we would say no to this and try to maintain the sanctity of marriage with a chastity belt mentality that wouldn't allow for things much more complex than they might seem on the surface.

The speaker would be hard-pressed to pinpoint where God's narrative ends and his narrative begins. Revelation, in this case occurred when the two stories collided, mutually informing one and another. It would appear, however, that such a theological approach which is typical by Pentecostal standards, occurs primarily at a primal level. Generally, there is little thought given to the compatibility of such an analysis with a

worldview engendered by propositional theology. The two are not understood as being incongruous.<sup>1</sup>

2. In questions of an ethical nature, such as divorce and remarriage, the Spoken Word serves an invaluable role as a reality check. While the rhetoric emulating from the Spoken Word is far from consistent—with those in favor of the status quo as vocal as those who seek change—its very inconsistency keeps the debate alive and relevant. Through their testimonies, sermons, and coffee table conversations, the debate is removed from the academic arena—if it ever was there in the first place—and tried in the public square.

The gesture is bold as it is fragile. Revelation of this nature is easily circumvented and cut short in moments of insecurity and panic by hasty appeals to Scriptural authority. Asserting themselves as possessors who use Scripture rather than followers who receive Scripture, Pentecostals sometimes deny the time needed for the Holy Spirit to effectively mediate His Word for this generation. But when it is working properly, the Spoken Word brings an otherwise forgotten this-worldly perspective to the church.

3. Seemingly antithetical to the aims of the Spoken Word, the Institutional Word seeks conformity to a single standard to mitigate unequivocally any potential dispute. In the case of divorce and remarriage, it is feared that if pastors were allowed to make decisions for themselves, it would create difficulty for the Fellowship as a whole.

It would be extremely unfortunate if people started shopping among our churches in urban centres to find a PAOC pastor who conformed to their personal preferences. Imagine, also, the difficulties if pastors were

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<sup>1</sup> Occasionally exceptions do occur. Again during the 1992 debate over Resolution #3, one speaker began by applying a narrative hermeneutic. He said, "The issue is quite clearly forgiveness. The eggs are scrambled in relationships. We are not endorsing divorce, by endorsing this resolution. We are saying, 'What do we do with those who have already experienced this? How do we fulfil our mandate as a healing and repentant community?' I had in my office a couple who had four children, one from each of their previous relationships and two from their current relationship. Now they want to get married." The speaker then asked rhetorically, "Do I tell them that their two children have to go fatherless or motherless, so that they can obey Scripture?" It is unclear, how deliberate the speaker's intentions were, but by using the word "Scripture" in a pejorative sense, the speaker pitted the two worldviews against each other.

limited in their call from church to church based on their record of marrying or not marrying divorced people.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that pastors are already understandably "limited in their call" from church to church by virtue of their personal strengths and weaknesses, and the corresponding whims and needs of the congregation, the Institutional Word idealizes conformity to the prevailing consensus. In part, this consensus is based on a particular *a priori* understanding of Scripture but in part, it is also formulated in reaction to contemporary social tensions.<sup>2</sup>

Were this attempt at consensus, a product of an Episcopalian polity, the end might indeed be antithetical to the Spoken Word. But Pentecostals, such as the PAOC, have chosen instead to subject the process and its ensuing results to an ecclesiastical democracy. Within this open forum, which is most evident during General Conferences, questions are raised and subsequently debated. In theory, the result is never certain. Delegates are instructed to weigh carefully and prayerfully the merits of all opinions and then cast their vote accordingly.

However, such an attempt, as is amply highlighted by the recent debate on divorce and remarriage is not without its problems. Beginning with the democratic premise that all opinions are equal, Pentecostals, have struggled with how much weight they should accord their appointed committee's, theologians, or executive officers.<sup>3</sup> They struggle further with the polarity that can exist on any given issue that arise out of

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<sup>1</sup> "1990 Report to the General Conference on Divorce and Remarriage," *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> For example, it is readily apparent that the ensuing debate over divorce and remarriage within the PAOC received its impetus and direction from the corresponding changes in the larger contemporary arena.

<sup>3</sup> During the 1992 debate over resolution #3, one pastor summarized this dilemma saying, "The resolution did come forth from the last Conference for the Conference to set up a committee, to bring their proposal to this Conference. It has been done, with (the) wisdom...of our theologians, quality laymen and different input from churches across the country....I believe that in respect to the authorities we have in our Movement...a lot of debate is not in our best interest right now....We have looked to our Movement the last 10,12,14 years to come up with a consensus, a position and I think we have to focus on that, rather than going back and redoing this whole thing all over again."



regional differences. In a country as vast as Canada, with regional Districts varying in size, and individual personalities, consensus is often reduced to an political equation.<sup>1</sup>

But again, when it is functioning properly, it can compliment both the ideal seat Pentecostals reserve for the Written Word and the functioning role Pentecostals attribute the Spoken Word.

4. Finally, although it is often presented as a wolf in sheep's clothing, pragmatism continues to play an active role in resolving ethical dilemmas. Whether it makes its presence known through the Written, Spoken or Institutional Word, pragmatism reduces the equation to facts. In the issue of divorce and remarriage the fact is, say some, whatever it is we are doing we are doing very poorly. The fact is, say others, marriage is in crisis, we must be unequivocal in our stand against divorce. The fact is, adds another, not all divorces are equal. The fact is, responds still another, to open the door to remarriage for some extenuating circumstances places a horrible burden of proof on the presiding pastor. The fact is, says one more, we are living in a sick society and there with a lot of suffering people. The fact is says yet another, there is a slippery slope as values always move down rather than up. Facts, not ideals, are what motivates Pentecostals. How do Pentecostals mitigate between conflicting facts then, reciprocally becomes the function of the Written, Spoken and Institutional Word.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1990 the Western Ontario District passed a resolution that was presented to the General Conference two years later bereft of the committee's report. While they were willing to change the constitution on this matter, evidently other regions were not quite so ready to make such an amendment. This regional particularity is further exposed by the decision to alternate the setting of the biennial General conference between Western and Eastern Canada. because of the costs involved in travel, conferences in Western Canada are dominated by delegates from those regions while conferences in Eastern Canada reflect their constituency.

## Chapter 7

# Ordination of Women

As was previously observed in chapter four, Pentecostals are genuinely uncomfortable assessing the significance of ordination. They wonder, "Does ordination confer an indelible privileged spiritual status to the priest/pastor over the laity or does it simply imply a functional difference? And, "Is it bestowed from above or from below?" For the most part, any debate over the meaning of ordination has not been public. Instead pastors are left to freely interpret the its meaning and weight for themselves and their congregation.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, while the significance of ordination does not enjoy any uniform interpretation within the Pentecostal community, at the very least, it is intended to communicate two fundamental convictions. First, ordination is somehow symbolic of

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<sup>1</sup> For many pastors' this leads to a kind of authoritarian leadership whereby they envision themselves as God's special spokesperson to whom the congregation is accountable. That such an attitude represents a departure from early Pentecostal ideals is hinted in a recent editorial by a prominent member of the PAOC General Executive. He writes, "It's time for the PAOC to come to serious grips with the fact that the whole church (all the people!) are the 'laos' of God. Leadership gifts and ordination were never intended to be a means of elevating one class of laity over another. It's time we stopped saying to our 'lay' people, at least by inference, 'you're welcome to support our preaching and programs, and you are qualified for certain leadership positions at a local level. But we, the clergy, are the only ones qualified to discern God's will and make decisions governing our fellowship at district and national levels.'" Ken BIRCH, "Let My People Go," *Pentecostal Testimony* (March, 1994), p. 31.

God's setting apart an individual for full-time service.<sup>1</sup> For some, this action is as crucial as it is irreversible. For others, it appears more as a divine gesture of courtesy — God publicly acknowledging an individual's calling. Second, ordination places an onus on adherents to stand behind and support their pastors. It becomes the immediate response to the question "Why should anyone listen to or obey their minister?"

Historically, within the larger ecclesiastical ambit, ordination was deemed a divine privilege reserved exclusively for men. Women need not have applied. Nevertheless, at the risk of oversimplification, a growing emancipation of women in all sectors of society and across all denominational lines has called into question formerly entrenched gender politics of ordination. Punctuating many ecclesiastical agendas are questions such as: Is God limited to "calling" only men for His service? What are the biblical precedents for women's ministry?

For their part, the PAOC has not been immune to tensions evolving out of these questions. Few issues have polarized the Pentecostal readership as much as the ordination of women. When the 1984 General Conference voted to rescind its barriers which barred women from ordination, the reaction among the rank and file was at best bittersweet. It oscillated between those who asserted that this decision represents a step whose "time has come."<sup>2</sup> to those who "believe we have broken the everlasting covenant," and "if we persist to do so it will be the corruption and downfall of the Assemblies."<sup>3</sup>

How and why did this change occur? And what light does this shed on the question of authority?— are the subjects of this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> A commissioned report for the 1978 General Conference on the subject of ordination states: "The PAOC makes ordination to the full Christian ministry, not only the formal recognition of the call of God upon a person who has fulfilled certain requirements of study and probation, but also makes the office of the ordained minister the highest recognition accorded to spiritual leaders within the Fellowship." PAOC archives.

<sup>2</sup> Bob SKINNER, "An Idea Whose time has Come," *Pentecostal Testimony* (December 1984), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Reader's Response, *PT* (March 1985), p. 8.

## 1. Historical Assessment

Since the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, women have played a vital role in its dissemination. Typical of young religious groups, Pentecostal women were proportionately more predominate in active ministry than their counterparts in many established churches. They took the words of, “go and tell” very seriously as they involved themselves in missions, evangelism, Bible Colleges and the printed page. Yet despite such promise, women did not go very far before they began succumbing to the nominalizing forces of a prevailing patriarchal culture which imposed severe strictures on a women’s place in ministry.

Again we will discuss the vicissitudes of this chameleon history in three movements.

### 1.1. 1906-1925

According to a dominant conservative consensus, Modernism was guilty of feminizing the gospel. Liberal theologians were labelled effeminate, sissified, and promoters of an “emasculated Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> Conservative evangelicalism, on the other hand, strove to reassert a waning Victorian gender ideology into church and society. Crucial to this period was the ability of conservatives to consign clearly defined gender roles and expectations. Men were expected to run the state of the economy, politics and government. Women were assigned the “virtuous” tasks of nurturing children,

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<sup>1</sup> Betty DEBERG, *Ungodly Women, Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 91. Frank Bartleman, who originally seemed sympathetic to women voices, averred in 1920, “men are supporting an effeminate ministry, following women. A female ministry is naturally a weak ministry. With doubtless a very few noticeable exceptions. The character seen in the faces of men of a generation ago is gone. And now we have Flapper Evangelism.” Frank BARTLEMAN, “Flapper Evangelism, Fashion’s Fools Headed for Hell,” Privately published A/G Archives.

maintaining the home and supporting their husbands.<sup>1</sup> Likewise the church reflected this same duality. Men assumed the public roles of preaching, teaching and ministering the sacraments while women were admonished to either remain silent or find an outlet for ministry by working with children.<sup>2</sup>

Early Pentecostals, however, frequently ran amuck with the social and biblical norms of their conservative evangelical ancestors. Pentecostals were driven by an apocalyptic urge for the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God in all of its glory. The harvest was great and workers were few. For Pentecostals, simple economics demanded that churches avail themselves of talents from all its members — men, women and children. Besides, Pentecostals had biblical precedent and support. In solidarity with the biblical prophet Joel, Mrs. J.S. Stills explained, “God is pouring out His Spirit today and His daughters and handmaidens are prophesying, no matter what opposition the devil puts up. God’s word is being literally fulfilled and a sign of the last day. Your sons and daughters will prophesy...”<sup>3</sup>

Early Pentecostals considered themselves people of the Book. But if the whole Book (New and Old Testament) was inspired by God, the New Testament was a little more inspired than the rest. Over and against the hermeneutical tendency of conservative evangelicals to build their theology on the Old Testament “pessimism of nature,”<sup>4</sup> Pentecostals celebrated the “optimism of grace” reflected in the New Testament. The apostle Paul’s words to the Galatians, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor

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<sup>1</sup> See Linda KERBER, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, and Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *The Journal of American History*, 75:1 (1988), pp. 9-39.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of sources reflecting such an orientation see DEBERG, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-86.

<sup>3</sup> J.S. STILL, “Should Women Preach the Gospel,” *PT* (June 1927), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Many conservative evangelicals maintained an ontological difference between men and women based on the deception of Eve depicted in Genesis. The argument was straightforward—while both Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, only Eve was deceived. It follows, therefore, that this predilection to deception (read gullibility) is a character flaw inherent within women which explains why women should not be in a position of authority or teach men. See Robert CULVER, “A Traditional View: Let Your Women keep Silence,” in *Women in Ministry: Four views*, eds. Bonnidell Clouse & Robert Clouse (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1989), p. 36.

free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"<sup>1</sup> became a Pentecostal anthem.

So embedded was this new window of opportunity for women that scholar Desmond Cartwright speculates whether the Pentecostal revival could have taken place without the integral role of its women leaders.<sup>2</sup> He concludes

In the beginning men and women were given equal status. At the start Pentecostalism (and its glory) is to be seen not in the narrowness of its strictures but in its freedom and flexibility.<sup>3</sup>

In part, this new measure of flexibility flourished because of the Pentecostal *lassiez-faire* attitude concerning formal ordination. In its early stages, Pentecostal leaders distinguished themselves through their prophetic calling and the recognition of such charisma by the community.<sup>4</sup> Writes Aimee Semple McPherson, "When God anoints you to preach, here are your credentials and authority, students (sic), whether male or female: 'Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.' When people say a woman should not preach in church, remember thus saith the Scripture."<sup>5</sup> To suggest otherwise would be to test the wisdom of God.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Galations 3:27,28 NIV.

<sup>2</sup> Desmond CARTWRIGHT, "Your Daughters shall Prophesy: The Contribution of Women in Early Pentecostal," An essay presented for the 15th Annual Meeting of the *Society of Pentecostal Studies* (1985), p. 2C.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Based on Max Weber's preliminary insights into the Religion of Non-Privileged Classes, Charles Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard defined early stirrings of Pentecostalism (1901-1920) as "Prophetic Pentecostalism." With its emphasis on the charisma of an individual and its priority in preaching, "Prophetic Pentecostalism" distinguished itself from its successor, "Priestly Pentecostalism" (1920-present) which is identified with administrative responsibilities and the administration of church ordinances. As Pentecostals moved from the former to the latter, Barfoot and Sheppard conclude opportunities for women ministers diminished. Charles H. BARFOOT & Gerald T. SHEPPARD, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Church," *Review of Religious Research*, 22:1 (1980), pp. 4-5. See also Nancy HARDESTY, Lucille Sider DAYTON and Donald DAYTON, "Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition," in *Women of Spirit*, eds. Rosemary Ruether & Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), pp. 225-254.

<sup>5</sup> Aimee Semple MCPHERSON, "Class notes on the book of Acts at Life Bible College," (Los Angeles) quoted in BARFOOT, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion." *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Based on a hermeneutical precedent established in Acts 15:1-29, John Christopher Thomas, a Pentecostal professor of New Testament, rhetorically asks, "If God is giving gifts to women for ministry, are we not in danger of divine wrath if we test God by ignoring His actions?" John Christopher THOMAS, "Woman, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," An essay presented for the 23rd Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (1993), p. 15.

Yet despite such promise, a significant rider was attached to the burgeoning freedom women were experiencing within Pentecostal ranks. Evidently, Pentecostals still could not escape the nominalizing forces of the prevailing North American patriarchal culture which continued to separate and limit the sphere of women's activity. Pentecostal women could preach but they were reminded that the basis of their call was prophetic and *only* rooted in the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> It was still clear in the minds of most Pentecostals that women were to avoid any symbolic appearance that could be interpreted as wielding authority over men. Women were discouraged, if not prohibited, from administering the sacraments, becoming involved in any church financial matters and officiating in the rites of marriage and death. They were expected to fulfil their "calling" while remaining subordinate to men.<sup>2</sup> As a result, their role was generally restricted to that of an evangelist, missionary or college teacher.<sup>3</sup> In either of these cases, women could perform their God-given task without appearing to usurp men in authority.

E.N. Bell, the first general superintendent of the AG, underscored the rationale behind this decision by explaining:

There is no instance of any women being put in a place of authority to rule, govern or teach in the authoritative sense, that is, by the authority of their office, anywhere in the NT. When one speaks as a prophet, he

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<sup>1</sup> Pentecostal Historian Edith Blumhofer notes that as a conduit for the Holy Spirit, women could prophesy "since her intellect was not involved and she exercised no authority while she prophesied." Edith BLUMHOFER, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, Vol. 1- to 1941 (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), p. 360. That such an interpretation is also consistent with the broader conservative evangelical camp is evidenced by Baker's entry on the ordination of Women in their Dictionary of Theology. "The prophetic gift involves having a *direct objective message* from God so that the man or woman acts simply as God's mouth and does not convey his or her own message, but God's.... On the other hand, the gifts of government and teaching involve the individual's *giving subjective judgment* under guidance of the Holy Spirit and are always differentiated in Scripture from prophesy. Hence to prophesy is not the same as to preach. Prophecy was the gift par excellence which indicated God's presence, approval, and *sometimes* leadership in government. But from the outset women were warned that for them it did not include governing. Everett Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), s.v. "Women, Ordination of," by Carl WILSON.

<sup>2</sup> D.N. BUNTAIN, "Should Women Preach and Teach," *Pentecostal Testimony* (March 1, 1939), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> The faculty of Canadian Pentecostal Bible College during its early years in Winnipeg was comprised of eleven teachers, five of whom were women. However, their sphere of responsibility was restricted to courses that reflected the separate sphere paradigm. Women taught English, Missions and Sunday School Work while the men were left to teach Theology and Pastoral Studies. See Nelson ROGERS "...And Shall Your Daughters Prophecy? The impact of the Dominant Ideology of Canadian Society on the Role of Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada," (M.S.W. diss., Carleton University, 1992), pp. 36-38.

speaks with the authority of God, but when one speaks as an apostle, he speaks with the authority of an apostle....No woman has been known to have been appointed by the Lord as an elder or an apostle, or to any position where ruling with authority is inferred.<sup>1</sup>

Historians today, may cynically sneer at such an accommodation. They may ask: "How can you sincerely talk about the emancipated role of Pentecostal women when you impose such strictures?" On the other hand, conservative evangelicals were convinced that Pentecostals had breached the line of orthodoxy by even allowing women a platform from which to speak. No matter how it is justified, or disguised, conservatives averred, women had no place in the pulpit. Critical of the Pentecostal movement the editors of *Our Hope* wrote in 1908:

Indeed it is a fact, significant and striking, that nearly all the leaders of these "isms" are women. These with their public teaching and leadership are disobeying the Word of God. If they were to take the place which Nature and the Word of God assigns to them, some of these movements would come to an end.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2. 1925-1950

With the inauguration of Pentecostal denominations and formal polity structures, any chasm that formerly existed between the prophetic and priestly distinctions, and between the status of clergy and laity, began to widen. Increasingly, leaders of the burgeoning Pentecostal denominations began enlarging the list of prerequisites required for a call to full-time ministry. Whereas the reception of Spirit Baptism used to be sufficient, traditional criteria based on education and gender were now included. For women this meant yet another obstacle which hindered their range of opportunities for Christian ministry.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.N. Bell quoted in David ROEBUCK, "Go and Tell My Brothers"? The Waning of Women's Voices in American Pentecostalism," An essay presented for the twentieth Annual Meeting of the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* (1990), p. 13f.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in DEBERG, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> From their inception in 1914 to 1935 the Assemblies of God ordained women as 'evangelists' while prohibiting them from the priestly activities of burying the dead, administering the ordinances of the church and performing the rite of marriage. After much discussion in 1935, the status of women *de jure* was expanded to include the full range of pastoral responsibilities when it was *deemed necessary*, see



In Canada, the birth of the PAOC was no exception to this chameleon approach. Women were excluded from ordination. Initially credentialed either as missionaries or as deaconesses, in 1934 some deaconesses were upgraded by receiving a certificate of ordination and the amorphous title, Lady Workers (the credential later changed to Ministerial License for Women). This third credential which, in the minds of Pentecostal officials, was one notch higher than that of a deaconess on the evolutionary chain of authority, still fell short of the rights and privileges accorded to men. Women's "ordination" was considered a type given to deacons in Acts 6. It was a formal recognition of the call of God to a restricted sphere of ministry.<sup>1</sup>

While women were already active as evangelists and missionaries, gradually they were further encouraged to restrict their activities to areas that were deemed more compatible with their natural maternal instincts. For if Pentecostals challenged the cardinal patriarchal law of conservative Christianity which prohibited women from being involved in public teaching or preaching, then they wholly endorsed its ancillary conclusion which stipulated that a woman's place was at home caring for the well-being of her family.

Typical of this latter popular bias, D.N. Buntain, the general superintendent of the PAOC in 1940, wrote,

Above all, the Christian wife must be a good housekeeper. She must remember that whatever other qualities she may possess, that she cannot have a happy husband if she neglects her home for any other thing. She must keep the dishes washed, the floors clean, the beds made, and have the meals on time.

No amount of curls, frills, or smiles can make up for failure in the kitchen. The happiest husbands are those men who have been fortunate enough to have married a clear-minded Christian girl whose ambition was, and is, to be the best housekeeper in the land.<sup>2</sup>

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Edith BLUMHOFER, "The Role of Women in the Assemblies of God. A new Look at an Old Problem: Women's Rights in the Gospel," *A/G Heritage* (Winter 1987-88), p. 16.

<sup>1</sup> "Report of General Conference Committee, Re: Ordination," (Mississauga, Ontario: PAOC Archives, 1978), p.2.

<sup>2</sup> D.N. BUNTAIN "The Christian Wife," *Pentecostal Testimony* (December 15, 1940), p. 3.

To modern cries of discrimination, Pentecostals would have pled not guilty. They were simply legislating God's ordained economy. Men were chosen to rule the marketplace. Women, however, served a "grander sphere" in that they created men to fulfil their divine mandate.<sup>1</sup>

Buntain did not completely ignore the historical witness of Pentecostal women within the Movement. Given the prominence of female missionaries, it would have been impossible to do so. Instead Buntain conceded that a woman could serve a definite role in ministry provided that she "hid(e) herself behind the cross and the protection of her husband or some man in authority."<sup>2</sup>

Given so many prevailing ambiguities, it was not surprising that the usefulness of "called" women came under great scrutiny. They were evolving into a stop-gap ministry to stave off sudden emergencies. In times of leadership drought where men were either unwilling or unavailable to assume their roles, women were a helpful replacement. Says Buntain,

There can be no doubt that God has put His seal upon many women both old and young, during past years,...One cannot but believe, however, that the success of heaven-called women has given the idea rather than the call to others.<sup>3</sup>

For Buntain, such callings were rare and frequently misapplied. The onus was on women to demonstrate: (a) that they were called, and (b) that in the name of God's work,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* Buntain would have been surprised or even shocked had someone accuse him of either chauvinism or discrimination. He was very sincere in attributing women the "grander sphere." Says Buntain, "In Christian lands women have realized what Christ has done for them, and have always been at the forefront ready to help in every Holy Ghost-led effort. Go into any congregation throughout the land and you will find women in the majority. Survey the Sunday Schools of any Christian land, and you will find the majority of the teachers are women. They are more open and responsive to the moving of the Spirit than men.

Men have their part, but to woman as queen of the home and mother of the children, God gives an intuition, touch and power which men can never know. With Christ in control she becomes God's greatest agency in all the world." *Pentecostal Testimony* (Oct. 1, 1944), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> D.N. BUNTAIN, "Should Women Preach and Teach?" *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

they were not neglecting their primary function as a builder of the home. "The wife's real success is in the success of her husband."<sup>1</sup> Again reiterates Buntain,

How sad is the condition of that woman who, giving home, husband and children second place in her life, believes that she should be in the gaze of human eyes, leading and directing spiritual destiny to others, to the neglect of her home, and when it is too late to decide aright she finds herself alone, with only memories of that which she lost through her mistaken choice. She cast aside her veil and the sweetness of public applause, lost home and children in taking the wrong course and neglecting her first duty.<sup>2</sup>

During these formative years between 1920-1950, the role of women in spiritual ministry seemed perfectly clear in the minds of PAOC officials. The only people that seemed to have difficulty with interpreting their stance, were officials of the Canadian Passenger Association who granted courtesy railway reductions for ordained ministers. Evidently, the railway did not recognize or appreciate the status of deaconesses sufficiently enough to allow usage of an annual book of Reduced Fare Certificates. To alleviate this problem, and the hardship it was causing women in ministry, the PAOC resolved in 1934 to divide their deaconesses into two credentials. The upper tier, designated Lady Preachers, would now be set apart in an appropriate ceremony and receive an identifying clergy book. Presumably, this new status would sufficiently satisfy the demands of train officials.<sup>3</sup> The remaining deaconesses were required to wear in addition to a garb<sup>4</sup> a distinctive badge with the script P.A.O. C.<sup>5</sup> or risk losing their privilege to reduced train fares.

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<sup>1</sup> "Marriage Misfits," *Pentecostal Testimony* (June 1954), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> BUNTAIN, "Should Women Preach?" *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1934), *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> As Deaconesses, women were obliged to wear a distinctive garb consisting of a dark blue dress with a white collar and cuffs with a simple blue hat to match whenever travelling. see PAOC, *General Conference Minutes*, (1928), *op. cit.*, p. 42.

Anthropologist Elaine Lawless suggests that typically such obligations reflected the Patriarchal desire to symbolically remind their constituency of the subordinate role women played. Elaine LAWLESS, "'Your Hair is Your Glory': Public and Private Symbolology of Long Hair for Pentecostal Women," *New York Folklore*, 12:3-4 (1986) pp. 33-49.

<sup>5</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1935), *op. cit.*, p. 107; and PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1936), *op. cit.*, p. 118.

Apparently, however, this was not an issue that would go away. At the 1946 General Conference, it was pointed out that the definition of a deaconess according to the year book still does not conform to that of the railway companies. In response the Conference resolved via Resolution #28 that the General Secretary make a clear definition of such and "FURTHER THAT such definition be printed on the back of the Deaconess Certificate."<sup>1</sup> Incredibly, train certificates had become both the impetus for clarification and a measure of definition for women's ministry within the PAOC.

### 1.3. 1950-

The march towards significant reform began in 1960. Resolution #17 of that same year agreed to grant women who held a Ministerial License aka. Lady Preacher, the right to solemnize marriages within the confines of a church in their charge.<sup>2</sup> While the Resolution was only applicable "as long as such a member (woman) holds the charge of an Assembly," it nonetheless eroded, however slightly, one more distinction between the role of men and women. Theoretically, women could now preside over an activity that was hitherto considered a priestly function of men only.

Such praxis accommodation, born out of courtesy for those women working in special circumstances, was relatively painless to accept as the majority of ministerial opportunities remained the privilege of men. While both men and women were required to fulfil essentially the same requisites for their respective credentials — including a Bible College education and two continuous years of full-time ministry — women were seldom given the opportunity to achieve this latter requirement thereby, denying them their Ministerial Licence.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #28," *General Conference Minutes* (1946), op cit., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1960), loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Nelson ROGERS, op. cit., pp. 44,45.

Perhaps buoyed by the success of the Feminist Movement in general, Pentecostal women were becoming more and more agitated with their ambiguous status within the PAOC. Were they God's second best? Were they simply a stop-gap measure when men were not available? Or did their calling carry the same weight as their male counterparts?

In 1974 the General Conference entertained its first motion to ordain women. Nelson Rogers a witness at the proceedings, writes:

Almost all of the common arguments against the advancement of women in business and politics were dragged up and used as reasons for denying ordination: i.e.: "It's unfeminine, we have never done it this way, women should not have leadership over men, they won't make a lifelong career of it because of their children, etc."<sup>1</sup>

In the end, the resolution failed to garnish the two-thirds majority needed to carry a constitutional change. It did, however, manage to turn a crucial hermeneutical corner. In this sense, the "possibility of debate," on a previously entrenched position, was more important than the actual outcome of the said debate. If any discrimination was previously practiced in the name of remaining faithful to the command of Scripture and if the prevailing bag of assumptions could be challenged without charges of heresy, then what did this imply about their understanding concerning the authority of Scripture?<sup>2</sup> Were they beginning to fudge a previously held biblical conviction that ultimately relegated women to an inferior separate sphere? And were they recognizing the interplay between experience and culture involved in the hermeneutical process? Whatever the motive, a corner was turned and there was no going back.

Subsequently, the ensuing biannual General Conferences were marked by a plethora of study committees, reports, and resolutions on the question of women's

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> A similar juxtaposition was occurring simultaneously over the issue of divorce and remarriage.

ordination.<sup>1</sup> While the Conferences generated a substantial amount of sympathy for their lady workers, it was not enough to generate a change. The Conference was divided.

On both sides, the debate had settled into predictable rhetoric. Defenders of the status quo argued for order and championed thorny Pauline passages of Scripture as proof-texts for their position. Opponents were depicted as wavering on biblical authority by succumbing to the feminist agenda. On the other hand, reformers argued for decency while submitting their own bastion of biblical texts. The issue for them was not biblical authority but biblical interpretation and application. Nevertheless, an impasse had been reached. Reflective of this logjam, a resolution to ordain women in 1980 was defeated by a close vote of 216 for and 211 against.<sup>2</sup>

Of the various arguments and reports on both sides of the equation, one is worth mentioning in particular. In 1978 a commissioned report was presented to the general constituency which stated among other things:

Women have always been excluded from the status of ordained clergy in the PAOC, since ordination makes one eligible for election to every office within the church, whether on district or national levels, as well as conferring the right to use the title "Reverend."<sup>3</sup>

Apparently, the symbolism behind ordination had undergone a metamorphosis. Through the years, ordination had evolved from being a simple formal recognition of the call of God to being a recognition of the call of God *and* the fulfilment of specific requirements of study and probation to being all of the above *and* a means of preserving a patriarchal bureaucratic order. It would appear, the leadership of the PAOC did not fear the possibility of a woman assuming full pastoral powers as much as they did the possibility that she be elected to serving at either District or National levels. Hence the necessity to maintain two levels of ordination—one for men and one for women. Besides,

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<sup>1</sup> The 1976, 1978, and 1980 General Conferences all entertained Resolutions permitting the ordination of women. None of them obtained the two-thirds majority required to make a constitutional change.

<sup>2</sup> PAOC "Resolution #11," *General Conference Minutes* (1980), *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Report of General Conference Committee Re: Ordination" (1978), *op. cit.*, p. 2.

said Pentecostals, "There is no precedent in the New Testament that God called any but men to fill these five offices of leadership and authority within the church. The ministries of women were always in supportive roles."<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3.1. 1984

The critical moment in the march towards ordination for women occurred during the 1984 General Conference. Again a Resolution in favor of women's ordination was presented. And again the Resolution inspired much debate. Conspicuously absent, however, during the debate were any women speakers. Evidently, the women agreed to censure themselves and let sympathetic male pastors plead their case.<sup>2</sup> Consciously or unconsciously, their submissive demure established the tone of the debate.

The crucial argument in favor of women's ordination was given by an assistant executive member. He began his report by diffusing the contentious suspicion that those in favor of women's ordination were acquiescing to the spirit of the modern age.

Some people feel that this issue of women's ordination is being presented because of the social pressures of our society. This is not the case however.

According to our theological tradition on the priesthood of all believers, we believe that the minister is one servant of God among many. ORDINATION CONFERS NOTHING! It is simply a recognition of the call of God and the consecration of that person to that call to certain types of ministry.<sup>3</sup>

The strategy seemed to work. Whether the delegates were tired of the recurring question or whether they were convinced of the new arguments, they voted overwhelmingly in favor of women's ordination by a 90% majority.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Based on conversations with some of the influential participants behind the push for reform.

<sup>3</sup> David BOYD, "Women's Ordination," Presentation to the 36th General Conference of the PAOC. A copy may be found in the library of Eastern Pentecostal Bible College.

<sup>4</sup> PAOC, "Resolution #6," *General Conference Minutes* (1984), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Surprisingly, while the vote represented a change in official policy, there is little evidence to suggest that women are in a more advantageous position. In 1974, ten years before ordination, there were 193 women who held a Ministerial License for Women (MLW). In 1992, eight years after the 1984 decision to ordain women there were 66 women who held a MLW, 57 credentialed as Licensed Ministers and approximately 59 who were ordained, for a total of 182.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.4. Conclusion

Theories abound concerning the ambiguous position women occupy within many branches of Pentecostalism such as the PAOC.

The prevailing explanations for the early prominence of Pentecostal women have been (1) the lack of bureaucracy, (2) a tendency to emphasize the prophetic task over the priestly task of the church, (3) a theology centered in experience, (4) a theology which favors the optimism of grace (New Testament) over the pessimism of nature (Old Testament), (5) the burgeoning movement for women's rights, and (6) an apocalyptic urgency to mobilize all able bodied persons for evangelism.<sup>2</sup>

Conversely, among the reasons for later restrictions include, (1) the increase of bureaucracy and institutionalism whereby the "ministry" became less a calling and more a profession complete with salary, (2) a prevailing ideology in North American culture

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<sup>1</sup> Since 1984 the PAOC has ceased issuing new MLW licences. Gradually as current MLW holders retire or upgrade their status to that of an ordained person, the number of people who hold this credential will continue to diminish. Women who wish to be ordained are now initially granted the same probationary status of Licensed Minister as men before being allowed to apply for ordination. As to the number of ordained women, it is difficult to compile an accurate numerical profile since the gender makeup of ordained individuals is not recorded. *PAOC Official Directory of Ministers and Churches: Revised to September 1, 1992* (Mississauga, Ontario).

<sup>2</sup> See Letha Dawson SCANZONI & Susan SETTA, "Women in Evangelical, Holiness and Pentecostal Traditions," in *Women and Religion in America: Volume 3, 1900-1968*, eds. R.R. Ruether and R.S. Keller (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981-1986), pp. 223-266. see also BURGESS & MCGEE eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements*, *op. cit.*, s.v. "Women, role of," by Richard RISS, pp.893-899. Donald DAYTON, "Yet Another Layer of the Onion: Or Opening the Ecumenical door to let the Riffraff in," *Ecumenical Review* (Vol. 40, 1988), pp. 105-108.



that women had a separate and limited sphere of activity—women were God's second choice, (3) the movement from symmetrical to asymmetrical forms of leadership and (4) a decline in urgency coupled with the availability of more men.

While these factors are useful in understanding the sudden rise and fall of women within Pentecostalism, many questions are still left unanswered. During the formative years of the PAOC, why would women appear so willing to passively support such an ambiguous policy of separate spheres? Hermeneutically how could Pentecostals maintain their shared conservative propositional attachment to the Bible and still permit women to speak either in sermon, song or Sunday school? And why did the PAOC reverse the status quo not to ordain women with such an overwhelming majority when so much uncertainty continued to prevail?

## **2. A Sociological Profile of Current Attitudes**

In partial response to these questions, Project Exousia attempted to detect several contributing factors. Given that the presence of women in ministry has not changed significantly since the 1984 ruling, it speculated whether or not the significance of ordination for women carries the same weight as ordination for men. Or has the former separate sphere ideology which excluded women from ordination been simply replaced by an unofficial, less visible, means of control?

A casual first glance would indicate that clergy across Canada were surprisingly unified in granting women all of the privileges and opportunities as their male counterparts (see Table 7.1, #11). Women were encouraged to speak up on national issues—to become involved on decisions that affect the whole constituency (Table 7.1, #20). And where rhetoric meets reality, men were strongly unified in their willingness to work with ordained women clergy (Table 7.1, #18).

Table 7.1 — Women in Ministry

11. Women should enjoy the same privileges and opportunities as their male counterparts in ordained ministry.	36%	SA	
	37%	A	-mode
	8%	U	
	5%	D	
<i>mean</i> =3.84	15%	SD	
<i>sd</i> =1.201			
missing-3			
18. Should the opportunity present itself, I would not have any difficulty working with ordained female clergy. ( <i>only men need to reply</i> )	32%	SA	
	48%	A	-mode
	8%	U	
<i>mean</i> =3.958	9%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.037	3%	SD	
missing-15			
20. Women ministers should keep a low profile with issues concerning church national policy.	3%	SA	
	11%	A	
	8%	U	
<i>mean</i> =1.924	33%	D	
<i>sd</i> =.959	46%	SD	-mode
missing-3			

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Source: Project Exousia

A second reading, however, reveals some curious contradictions. While clergy were ready to endorse ordained women, they were less likely to include them in church administrative boards. Asked if women should be allowed to have a seat on church boards, 43 % of the respondents were either unsure or felt in some measure that women were unsuited for this task. While it would not be surprising to detect a significant difference between the male and female population surveyed,<sup>1</sup> the most surprising difference occurred when geographical factors were taken into consideration. While Quebec endorsed women board members, the Maritimes opposed them (see Table 7.2 a&b).

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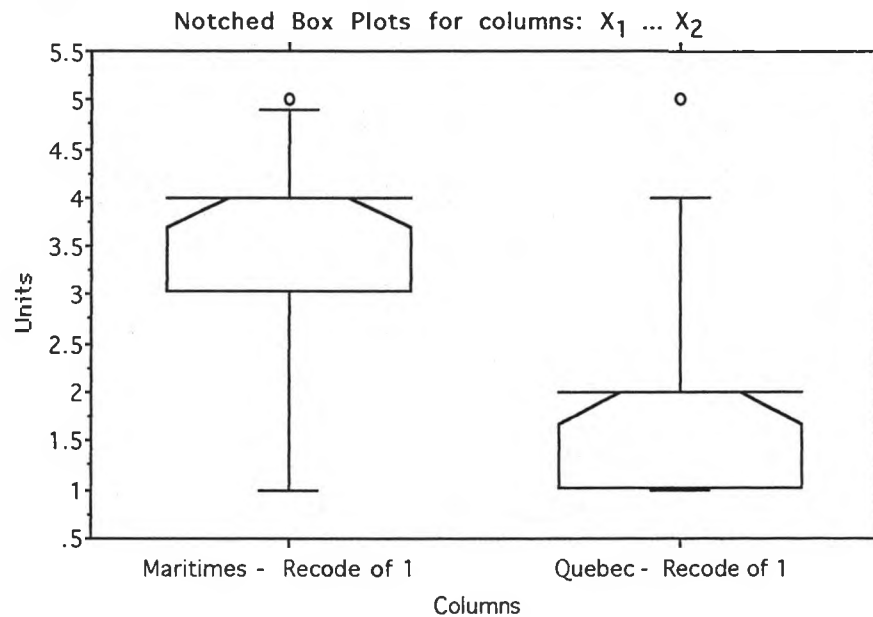
<sup>1</sup> As would be expected, a significant difference on this item occurred between the two genders. In all 61% of women polled strongly disagreed with the statement whereas only 34% of men responded in like fashion. The probability of chance in this case was 3.62%. Source: Project Exousia.

## 7.2a – Women and Administration

1. Women should not have a seat on church boards	12%	SA
	24%	A
	7%	U
	22%	D
	34%	SD
<i>mean</i> =2.567		-mode
<i>sd</i> =1.464		
missing=0		

Source: Project Exousia

Table 7.2b – **Box Plot Comparison between Quebec and the Maritimes over Item #1**



### Unpaired t-Test

DF:	Unpaired t Value:	Prob. (2-tail):
46	4.05	.0002

Group:	Count:	Mean:	Std. Dev.:	Std. Error:
Maritimes	26	3.308	1.225	.24
Quebec	22	1.909	1.151	.245

Source: Project Exousia

One could easily speculate on several cultural reasons for this difference. When Quebecois forsake their Catholic background in favor of Pentecostalism, many mirror the effects of the “Quiet Revolution” by reacting in backlash to many traditional ideals. For

example, architecturally, Pentecostal churches in Quebec bear a closer resemblance to a warehouse than they do any historical church replete with steeple, stain glassed windows and grandiose ceiling. Churches are built with an eye to function rather than aesthetics. Even religious symbols such as the cross are few and far between, if not altogether absent.<sup>1</sup> With a bias to pursue modernization to the detriment of tradition, it should come as no surprise that the traditional Catholic notion of “paternal authority,” which made the husband the head of the family and all other institutional associations carries little weight in the politics of church leadership within Pentecostal churches in Quebec. On the other hand, the Maritimes have both a social and ecclesiastical history of resisting the pull towards modernization and tend to remain strongly conservative on ethical issues. Tradition appears to die hard in the Maritimes.

In addition to these sociological influences, Pentecostal churches in Quebec have an expedient pragmatic concern which influences their response to women in leadership. By and large, churches in Quebec are smaller and younger than those in the rest of Canada. People equipped for leadership roles are at a premium in most assemblies. Quebec churches generally do not have the luxury of fielding a large contingent of possible candidates to serve as church board members. The question whether or not women are ontologically suited as board members within Quebec is treated as a academic question which does not address present realities.

However, notwithstanding the provincial discrepancies, the most intriguing part of Table 7.1, is the apparent contradiction between the response of item #1 and the other two items #11 and #20. In the former case the response, as has already been indicated, is less than overtly enthusiastic. While in the latter two items, those surveyed seemed to heartily endorse women.

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<sup>1</sup> While pastoring in Quebec, I remember debating the merits of placing adorning the front of the sanctuary with a simple empty cross. The final consensus was that such a move would create more controversy than it was worth and the idea was scraped.

Shedding some light on this dilemma is Table 7.3. Here clergy were asked to enumerate which sort of ministries were appropriate for ordained women. In all they were given eight possible choices, namely: A) Christian Education, B) Counselling, C) Visitation, D) Senior Pastor, E) Missions, F) Music, G) all of the above and H) none of the above. When the results were tabulated, it became apparent that a ninth choice should have been added to the list. It would have read I) All of the above except senior pastor. In all 57% of those polled chose all of the above, and 42% selected every category except Senior pastor. Again when geographic demographics were taken into consideration, the Maritimes were the only group that preferred “all of the above except senior pastor.”

**Table 7.3 — Question: Which of the following ministries are appropriate areas for ordained women? 1. Christian Education, 2. Counselling, 3. Senior Pastor, 4. Missions, 5. Music.**

National Response

A. All of the above	77	58%
B. All of the above except Senior Pastor	56	42%

Regional Response

Maritimes			Quebec		
A	11	42%	A	13	59%
B	14	58%	B	9	41%
Ontario			West		
A	22	56%	A	30	68%
B	17	44%	B	14	32%

Source: Project Exousia

From this data, it would appear that when clergy speak of women's ordination, there remains a significant number of people who recognize the title in very qualified terms. In the spirit of early Pentecostalism, ordination *confers nothing*. It is the simple recognition of God's call on an individual's life. The call of God is infinitely more important than any human authorization to perform the task.<sup>1</sup> Who is going to object

<sup>1</sup> Edith BLUMHOFER, "The Role of Women in the Assemblies of God," *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15

whom God has called? However, the evidence would also suggest that God's calling often does not involve administrative personnel such as board members, or senior pastors. Whether this is because men are trying to spare women the burden of some of the administrative functions of ministry,<sup>1</sup> or whether they believe women are incapable of such tasks or whether this appears the only way to satisfy their desire not to restrict the calling of God yet appease their conscience which says women must somehow be ultimately subject to men, is difficult to assess. One thing is for sure, women continue to cope with a double message within the ranks of the PAOC. While no one desires to force their agenda on God, PAOC leadership chooses its words very carefully when discussing the ramifications of women's ordination.

Some would argue that the simplest way to relieve such ambiguity would be to realign oneself with right wing evangelical discourse and apply verbatim the Apostle Paul's more strident recommendations which limit the public role of women. Four years after the ratification of women's ordination, a private member's resolution was presented to the 1988 General Conference. It attempted to rescind Resolution #6 of the 1984 General Conference granting women ordination on the grounds it "violates our belief in the authority, supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice." Although the resolution was quickly defeated, it did reflect the feeling of *angst* that many delegates have had in equating their change in position on women's ordination with their fundamentalist theological orientation which advocated a separate sphere ideology.

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<sup>1</sup> During the First General Council of the Assemblies of God, a decision was made to allow only men to be ordained as "elders" in the church. An editorial entitled "Women Welcome" written in 1915 summarizes this direction.

"We know of no Movement where women of ability and filled with the Holy Ghost have been more highly honored or given much more freedom than among us. She is given the right to be ordained. to preach, witness, give advice, act as evangelist, missionary, etc. The only thing not thrown unscripturally upon her weak shoulders is the making of her a Ruling Elder.

This is not a matter or regarding women inferior to men. We know and recognize that women are superior to men in many things. But there are some things that men, as a general rule, are better adapted for and physically more capable of doing than women. There are some things under normal conditions that God does not require of women and which the Scriptures, neither by New Testament example nor by precept make the regular duty of women to do and one of these is to be a Ruling Elder in the Church of Christ." quoted in BARFOOT and SHEPPARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

In many ways, a separate sphere ideology is strongly appealing. The dualism inherent with such an approach is straightforward and it keeps everyone in their proper place. In this economy, there is no gender confusion. Men are men and women are women. Furthermore, at face value, it harmonizes itself rather well with the Apostle Paul's thorny admonitions which seem to limit the scope of women in public ministry. The alternative, forewarns one adherent, is to break an "everlasting covenant" and risk the "downfall of the Assemblies."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, when the question was put to those surveyed whether the thorny Pauline passages should be taken at face value or culturally reinterpreted, PAOC clergy overwhelmingly opted for this second option (see Table 7.4 #32). In the best of the more liberal reliance on historical criticism, Pentecostals were ready to dilute the cultural relevance of the Apostle Paul's more strident injunctions against women in favor of those verses with more universal appeal. In this case, the merit of Galatians 3:28 outweighed 1 Timothy 2:12. Again whether such a response reflects a conscious attempt to attune the post 1984 ruling on women's ministry with the Scriptures or whether this reflects a prevalent attitude which Canadian Pentecostals have held since their inception, is uncertain. The evidence, however, would tend to support the former hypothesis as Pentecostals have once again allowed experience to inform their hermeneutics.

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<sup>1</sup> Reader's Response, *PT* (March 1985), p. 8.

Table 7.3 — Justification for Women in Ministry

32. The Pauline passages of Scripture admonishing women to be "silent" are culturally conditioned and therefore, not directly relevant to our present situation.	40%	SA	-mode
	44%	A	
	5%	U	
	8%	D	
	2%	SD	
<i>mean=4.137</i>			
<i>sd=.959</i>			
missing-3			
44. The fresh outpouring of the Spirit, at the turn of this century unveiled a new era of opportunity for women in ministry.	11%	SA	-mode
	46%	A	
	18%	U	
	20%	D	
	5%	SD	
<i>mean=3.397</i>			
<i>sd=1.072</i>			
missing-3			

Source: Project Exousia

It should, however, not be concluded that Pentecostals have rejected their dualistic tendency to distinguish between genders. Pentecostals have merely replaced it with another dualistic framework which distinguishes between women in spiritual ministry and women in positions of power. In this way, women can fulfil all of the demands mitigated by their spiritual calling and still remain subjected somewhere to men in authority.

### 3. Pragmatism and Women's Ordination

Whether Pentecostals were defending the right of women to preach or whether Pentecostals advocated Victorian gender roles, they appealed first and foremost to facts as they perceived them. Pioneer Pentecostal women spurred on by an apocalyptic urge for the Kingdom, a heightened sensitivity to the murmuring of the Holy Spirit and the evangelistic example of many women working within the ranks of Methodism, confidently ventured into public Christian ministry. The fact was — there was a tremendous need. The fact was — the labourers were few.<sup>1</sup> The fact was — women were often prepared to

<sup>1</sup> In particular, by their own account, Pentecostals recognized that many men were either dulled by apathy or insensitive to the work of Christ. The implication being that were men to assume their proper role, women would not be needed to pick up the slack.



go where men would not go and do what men would not do without financial remuneration.<sup>1</sup> A prophetic pragmatism was at the helm. Facts, not ideology, won the day.

Concurrently, Scriptures underwent a critical-reflective reinterpretation in light of these facts. Passages such as Galatians 3:28, Philippians 4:3 and Acts 2:17,18 took precedence over other texts as 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12, which appeared to limit the role of women due to custom or creed. Pentecostals were recipients of the latter rain which pre-empted social norms and freed men and women to actualize their potential as Christians representing God's kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the patronizing tone, even the most avid supporter of separate spheres ideology could pragmatically recognize the early contribution of women to the PAOC. In an article entitled , "Why men should teach," G.R. Upton writes,

We appreciate the work that has been done by our faithful women. God bless them! They have contributed largely to the cause of Christ, having answered the call of God when the ears of men seemed to be dull and heavy. They have braved the jungles of Africa to do a man's work, and today are doing for God a service of no small significance.<sup>3</sup>

But with a polite tap on the back, the institutionalization of Pentecostalism spelled the waning of female voices, as Pentecostals hung up their counter-cultural zeal and accommodated themselves to the dominant patterns of conservative Christianity. As an anomaly women could assume "men's positions—especially on the foreign field" but "ordinarily a woman's place is in the home, as the helper of man."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The research of Barfoot and Sheppard suggest that early Pentecostals did not consider ministry as a profession replete with salaries etc. Gradually as Pentecostal ministry secured itself as a profession over and against a calling, women's welcome waned thin. BARFOOT and SHEPPARD, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cheryl Bridge Johns asserts that there is a necessity for contemporary Pentecostals to rediscover their corporate confessional identity by drinking first at their own wells of spirituality. By fusing together biblical precedents with historical antecedents, Pentecostals stand to reawaken the biblical symbols of revolutions and shalom in a world full of prejudice and oppression. see Cheryl Bridges JOHNS, "Pentecostal Spirituality and the Conscientization of Women" in *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton conference on World Evangelization*, eds. Harold Hunter, and Peter Hocken (Sheffield England, Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 153-166.

<sup>3</sup> G.R. UPTON, "Why Men Should Teach," *Pentecostal Testimony* (September 1955).

<sup>4</sup> J. Oswald SMITH "The Ministry of Women," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Sept., 1956). In a similar vein, following the decision of the PAOC to ordain women, a PAOC minister wrote the editor of the

Again, however unconsciously, pragmatism was engaged to maintain this dichotomy. However, it was no longer fuelled by a heightened awareness of God's imminent Kingdom, rather it cosily accommodated itself to the general consensus of conservative orthodox Christianity which maintained that preaching, teaching and pastoring were best suited for men. Writes the *Pentecostal Testimony*,

Men should teach because of the great influence they can wield in their community—particularly to men. Who can attract MEN to our church better than MEN—consecrated, God fearing men empowered by the Spirit of God. To win a husband and father to the church usually means winning the whole family.

Men should teach because they are best able to reach the boys of our generation who are the potential church leaders of tomorrow....There have been some fine godly women who have done a splendid work with boys. They have gained their confidence and have contributed largely to their spiritual well-being, but not all have had the same measure of success.<sup>1</sup>

Men should teach because accommodational pragmatism concluded this is the highway to success. By catering evangelistic efforts to men, in a patriarchal society, Pentecostal leaders believed they could maximize their numerical results. Men have influence to which women simply do not have access.

With every opportunity women were thanked and applauded but in the end encouraged to step aside for the good of the whole Movement.<sup>2</sup> Little effort was made to re-examine historical antecedents or conglomerate the ethos of Spirit baptism with liberation for the oppressed. As prophetesses, women had their day. Limited finances,<sup>3</sup>

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*Pentecostal Testimony* stating: "I personally support this (ordination of women) only on the basis that we do not have enough men to fill the positions." Readers Response, *Pentecostal Testimony* (April 1985).

<sup>1</sup> UPTON, "Why Men Should Teach," *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Nelson Rogers notes that "the PAOC had no specific program to remove women from positions or to create special alternate ministries for them....It was not so much that the women were pushed out by specific men, but that the dominant ideology of the times created unofficial obstacles." In particular he cites the advice given to Edith Middleton and Grace Swanton by a district officer when they requested help for her fledgling congregation. The minister told them, "What you girls need to do is get yourselves a good husband and settle down." ROGERS, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.

<sup>3</sup> In 1925 the Western Council of the PAOC passed the following resolution, "Resolved that whereas the majority of missionaries already on the foreign fields are women and sufficient funds are not yet forthcoming to send all those who offer themselves to the field, be it resolved that when new recruits offer themselves, men have first consideration and are sent to the field and that said missionaries be required to diligently apply themselves to the study of the language according to the custom of the field and missionaries to whom they go." PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (1925), *loc. cit.*

the demands of home life, and the necessity for order worked in tandem to undermine the inclusion of women within "professional" ministry.

This did not mean that the PAOC was ready to shut the door on women ministers. In theory, they readily acknowledged that God is not precluded from calling women even though they were reluctant to publicly endorse such a ministry.<sup>1</sup> As a stop-gap measure, women were often necessary but their usefulness generally waned when an eligible man was ready to take their place.

In difference to the position taken by their southern cousins, the AG, which allowed for a qualified ordination for women, the PAOC adopted a three tier approach to ministry. At the top of this echelon were ordained men. Full voting members, these men were officially sanctioned to assume any or all pastoral roles. In the middle were Lady Preachers (Ministerial Licence for Women). Originally a non-voting position,<sup>2</sup> these women generally worked as teachers, evangelists, and missionaries. Lady preachers could assume most of the responsibilities of their male counterparts with the exception of the more symbolic tasks of celebrating the rites of marriage and so forth. The third and final tier consisted of deaconesses. Generally the wife of an ordained minister, these women distinguished themselves in a variety of supportive roles. Ironically, however, their early distinctions were influenced more by the Canadian Passenger Association than they were by any appeal to Scriptures. When the train companies would not recognize the ministerial credentials of PAOC women preachers or deaconesses the PAOC simply redefined their profiles to meet the criteria of the railway. Pragmatically, the PAOC moved to resolve this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> In one instance, when two lady ministers shared with their district superintendent that they felt impressed to pioneer a church in a certain town, the superintendent replied, "If the Lord is leading you there, go right ahead, but do not tell anyone I sent you." Carmen LYNN, "Women in Pentecost," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Feb. 1976).

<sup>2</sup> In 1950 licensed women ministers were granted the right to vote at General Conferences

However, perhaps 1984 witnessed the ultimate pragmatic experiment in accommodational politics. Until 1984, voices for reform were never able to garnish more than fifty percent of a Conference vote in favor of women's ordination. Suddenly ninety percent of the Conference floor voted in favor of such a resolution. What happened?

It is likely that very little happened during these interval years. What did happen occurred on the conference floor in 1984. The speakers who spoke in favor of ordination for women managed to accomplish three things. First, they invoked historical and biblical precedent to ease the Pentecostal conscience which worried that a change was tantamount to acquiescing to the Feminist Movement. Second, they appealed to common sense decency in recognizing the work women have done even in the face of such ministerial ambiguity. And third, and most importantly, they reminded the constituency that from a Pentecostal point of view, "ORDINATION CONFERS NOTHING! It is simply a recognition of the call of God and the consecration of that person to that call to certain types of ministry."<sup>1</sup> However, inadvertently the three prong thrust of the argument managed to remove existing barriers prohibiting women's ordination by shifting the ground of the debate from a question of authority to a question of recognition. As an issue of recognition, it became relatively easy to remove any gender discrimination. As an issue of authority, very little had changed. The former was a spiritual matter of decency the latter was an earthly matter of order. The fact was ordination of women would not alter the shape or character of the PAOC.

#### 4. Conclusion

In tracing the vicissitudes of women's role and eventual ordination several observations can be made.

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<sup>1</sup> David BOYD, "Women's Ordination," in *Ordination of Women in the PAOC*, ed. Nelson Rogers (Eastern Pentecostal Bible College), p.2.

1. Again, as was the issue of divorce and remarriage, the evolving debate on women's ministry was surprisingly lean on Scripture. The Bible was rarely cited as justification for (limited) women's ministry and it was similarly ignored as a proof-text for their exclusion. To be sure, those opposed to expanding the role of women relied on cherished Bible verses to justify their stance. But having already accommodated themselves to a conservative evangelical agenda, they failed to filter these same biblical passages through their own Pentecostal tradition. Instead, they let evangelicals speak for them and were ready to assume that the Bible supported this orientation.

Clearly the onus was on reformers to justify any change in biblical interpretation. Strategically, reformers paraded biblical examples of women prophetesses and leaders, both in the New and Old Testament, while downplaying some of the Apostle Paul's more strident assertions. Difficult passages were not ignored but they were minimized by relegating them to specific historical situations. Universally they were deemed not directly applicable and should, therefore, be harmonized with both biblical precedent and Paul's other inclusive statements which encouraged the freedom of both men and women.

Recently Pentecostal scholars are questioning the legitimacy of either of these two approaches. Instead of uncritically adopting a hermeneutical approach based on grammatical and/or historical-critical rationalism, these emerging scholars are attempting to drink first from "their own wells."<sup>1</sup> They argue, an approach more in keeping with the ethos of Pentecostalism would integrate the Scripture *with* the activity of the Spirit *and* the particularity of the individual community. Fused together the community then becomes the place,

where the Spirit of God acts and where testimony regarding God's activity is offered, assessed and accepted or rejected. It also provides the forum for serious and sensitive discussions about the acts of God

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<sup>1</sup> "Drinking from Our Own Wells" was the theme of the 1992 Conference for the Society of Pentecostal Studies.

and the Scripture. The community can offer balance, accountability and support. It can guard against rampant individualism and uncontrolled subjectivism. A serious appreciation for the role of the community among Pentecostals generally, and Pentecostal scholars specifically, might perhaps result in less isolationism on the one hand, and a serious corporate engagement with the biblical text rather than equating a majority vote with the will of God, on the other hand.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the talk of scholars. It is clear, however, that rank and file Pentecostals at present are largely unaware of such discussions. Instead, many are left with a gnawing feeling that somehow they have skewed what is immutable in granting women ordination. Their hesitancy to engage the biblical text may be in part due to their fear of substantiating their suspicions.

2. Pentecostals, however, have not let their internal suspicions and/or fear of the Written Word keep women silent. Both as a model and as an instrument of the Spoken Word, the voice of women has ultimately prevailed over its rationally flavored Written competition. From testimonies within the local congregation, to teaching Sunday School, to organizing mission rallies, to preaching, women have made their presence known through the Spoken Word. Remarkably, despite many disadvantages and double messages from among their male colleagues, Pentecostal women have not responded with bitterness or militancy (two salient trends of modern feminism) but in the spirit of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) have taken the "crumbs from under the table," to spread the gospel message. It was not a question of rights or authority but a question of urgency born out of a pragmatic apocalyptic commitment to ministry.

Exceptions aside, women, not men, have been largely responsible for preserving any remnants of the early ethos of Pentecostalism. They are the ones who have consistently remained the most faithful to the orality of early Pentecostalism. In the words

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<sup>1</sup> John Christopher THOMAS, *loc. cit.*

of Walter Hollenweger, it is women who celebrate song over systematic theology, testimony over doctrine, parables over treaties and banquets over ideologies.<sup>1</sup>

3. Even the most vocal opponents of women's ordination are reluctant to deny, by retraction, the voice of women. Practicing a form of ecclesiastical acrobatics, the Institutional Word has endeavored to balance biblical rhetoric, the eminence of women's voices and mounting societal pressures. In this case, the task has been particularly difficult since men remain at the helm of the Institutional Word.

Out of this melee, the picture which emerges is that of a reluctant practitioner whose vested interest is in solving the short term situation. In responding only to the immediate crises (ie., train fares, voting privileges, qualifications, rites of marriage, ordination) the Institutional Word has created a patchwork quilt of ambiguities, inconsistencies and general confusion.<sup>2</sup> On the relevant biblical passages they acknowledge "there will be no agreement until we get to heaven."<sup>3</sup>

4. Finally pragmatism has consistently served as the cord that binds the decision process together. In the measure the PAOC keeps evangelism at the forefront of the ecclesiastical agenda, the pragmatic method will ensure an active place for women in ministry, notwithstanding a few ambiguities along the way. At the very least women will be required to fill in the gap. And in the event conflicting ideologies are encountered, pragmatism works to resolve them.

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<sup>1</sup> HOLLENWEGER, "After Twenty Years' Research on Pentecostalism." *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> In 1986 the Western Ontario District to the PAOC took it upon themselves to research the meaning of ordination of women and the role of women in ministry, based upon Scripture and present their findings to the General Conference. Among their observations they noted that the "the 1984 General conference resolution allows for the Ordination of women, at the same time the Constitution addresses the issue of LEADERSHIP in other sections, and specifically refers to 'MEN of mature experience and ability...ordained.' "see PAOC General Constitution, *By-law 3, election of officers, Section 1, Qualifications a) Executive officers, By-law 14, District Conference, Section 9, Elections, (a) Qualifications.* (Mississauga, Ontario: PAOC Archives), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Committee on Women in Ministry, "Report to the 1986 Conference" (Western Ontario District, PAOC: 3410 South Service Rd., Burlington, Ontario), p. 1.

What remains to be seen is whether the experience generated by pragmatism will continue to perform on a need only basis or whether it will evolve into a consciousness will exist as entity of its own. In other words, will the ordination of women and other subsequent related changes be simply an "idea whose time has come," or will evolve into an informed Pentecostal ethos.



## Chapter 8

# Conclusion

Frank Ewart perhaps captured the ethos of twentieth century Pentecostalism with all its idealism and glory, when he declared:

Pentecost is factual, and not theoretical. It is an experience, and not a denomination. It is a religion that defies definition. Pentecost cannot be weighed, ticketed, or analyzed with the methods applied to the various "religious bodies" in the world today. It stands alone, and stubbornly refuses to be categorized with any of them. The Pentecostal experience deftly weaves human life into an adventure both interesting and fascinating. It draws Jesus Christ out of the hurly-burly of theological speculation, and makes Him unspeakably real and precious.<sup>1</sup>

Early Pentecostals were in the "Holy Ghost School of progressive truth."<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals celebrated intuition over systematics, experience over creeds, spontaneity

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<sup>1</sup> Frank EWART, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost* (Houston, Texas: Herald Publishing House, 1947), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Frank SMALL, *Living Waters: A Sure Guide for Your Faith* (Winnipeg: Columbia Press Ltd.), n.d.) p. 82.

over liturgy, proclamation over articulation, practicality over abstracts, affections over reasoning and discovery over apologetics. With its sails billowed by the Holy Spirit and Christ at the helm, Pentecostal theology appeared primed to sail into untested waters.

However, the need to provide working parameters, coupled with the pressure to fall in line with historic Christianity, proved too toxic for a faith built on religious affections alone (**orthopathy**). The early Pentecostal pragmatic impulse, driven by a sense of apocalyptic imminency which openly flirted with new ideas, quickly began yielding to an additional pragmatic urgency for structure and acceptance into the larger ecclesiastical picture. Lacking the tools or — in many cases — experience to construct their own theological discourse, it was natural for Pentecostals to ground their religious affections in an existing theological foundation. In this vacuum, fundamentalism was a natural choice. They already shared 1) many of the same holiness issues of being a separate people, 2) a reverence for the Bible as their final authority, and 3) a belief that the Holy Spirit must be an active force if the church is going to prosper and be healthy. From this affinity, Pentecostals created a neo-fundamentalist ideology from which they could lay claim to **orthodoxy**. In popular parlance, Pentecostals promoted themselves as fundamentalists with a capital F. With liberal panache, they dipped into the treasures of fundamentalism and borrowed whatever doctrinal equations that were deemed useful. When Pentecostals encountered fundamentalist beliefs, that were either inadequate or antagonistic to the Pentecostal enterprise, they either nullified, ignored, or as in the case of dispensationalism, modified them to suit their own purpose. Formerly promoted, as a faith that defied definition, Pentecostals were soon doing everything possible to catalogue their doctrinal beliefs.

A marriage, however, requires two consenting partners. And while Pentecostals courted fundamentalists, fundamentalists were less than willing to return the favor. The ire of fundamentalism was raised as Pentecostals sought shelter under their theological

propositional canopy, while at the same time engaged an unencumbered Spoken Word. Be it in the form of prophecy, preaching, testimony or worship, Pentecostals acutely *listened for* the Word of God. Pentecostals did not believe that a doctrinal stance on the final authority of Scripture was in any way inimical to a belief that the Holy Spirit is liable to burst through anyone, at anytime, anyplace. The Spoken Word said propositional theology may have a word, but it was not the whole word. It might intend truth, but it did not necessarily own truth.

Then when fundamentalists dismissed Pentecostals as emotional theological amateurs who were freely breaking the rules to suit their own agendas, Pentecostals defended their self-described orthodoxy pragmatically in **orthopraxis** terms. Pentecostals stood firm in their conviction that they possessed something no one else could claim. They had empirical evidence which demonstrated that they were *full* of the Holy Spirit. Other Christian groups could speculate about such a promise, but Pentecostals *experienced* what they believed. They spoke in tongues. Under the influence of such an *infilling*, the weak and tired were made bold, strong and courageous. A person's potential was maximized.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, for Pentecostals, any question of authority must necessarily be analyzed in light of this tug-of-war between the demands of propositional theology (fundamentalism) and the verve of a dynamic spoken revelation. From this struggle one can trace the theological vicissitudes of PAOC life and experience for the past seventy-five years. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, the resulting tension has not been evenly disseminated. In part, this dramatic oscillation has been the result of a hesitant institutional presence. In short, the institutional arm of the PAOC has historically been reluctant to take sides. Officials within the PAOC cringe at the prospect of getting involved in doctrinal skirmishes that would force them to seriously consider the question:

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<sup>3</sup> F.W. LEMONS, *Our Pentecostal Heritage* (Cleveland, Tennessee: Pathway Press, n.d.), p. 155.

“By what authority do we believe one idea over another?” Their goal is to keep things moving and moving, in this case, has come to be pragmatically interpreted as numerical growth.

For example, for many years the PAOC policy on divorce and remarriage worked quite successfully because a) it involved relatively few people within their ranks, b) it allied itself with a Fundamentalist propositional commitment to the ultimate sanctity of the family, c) it was unambiguous — PAOC ministers forfeited their credentials in the event they knowingly officiated over a remarriage, and d) the policy shouldered any awkwardness for a refusal on a faceless national office — in the end pastors could sympathize with a couple’s plight while at the same time declare their hands tied in the name of national unity. As a result, a pastor was spared from reflecting theologically on the issue and left to treat the question pragmatically as a simple logistical hurdle to overcome.<sup>4</sup>

But change in the PAOC, as painful as it is for all organizations, has never come to the place where it has been atrophied. Buoyed by a new climate of acceptance within the larger ecclesiastical community, a stronger and more confident laity that is willing and desires to take greater ownership for its future, and a burgeoning academic community which is beginning to venture outside its self-imposed theological constraints, Pentecostals are beginning to take ownership of their future.

In summary, a contemporary PAOC matrix of authority would be as follows:

#### 1. Written Word

Pentecostals are committed to the primacy of Scriptures. The weight of authority rises or falls in the measure that adherents are persuaded that a given idea is Scriptural

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<sup>4</sup> In a similar vein, during the 1940s to 1960s the theological/biblical question of legitimizing the ordination of women was overshadowed by a mandate to adopt a policy that would allow clergy women the opportunity to receive the same reduced train fares as their male counterparts.

or in the case of leaders, that they *know* the Bible. However, it would be inappropriate to describe Pentecostals, in the spirit of fundamentalism, as rationalists working on the back of abstractions, mining the Scripture for all the answers an adherent may seek. The pragmatic comportment of Pentecostals continues to concede that most ideas are *born out of experience*. Nonetheless, they would also adjoin that, if experience is going to have a lasting value, it must be verifiable in Scripture. Any ideas which *remain* true, do so because of their proven fidelity with Scripture.

Pentecostals endeavor to maintain a dialectical relationship between experience and Scripture. It is the role of experience to interpret Scripture and for Scripture to inform experience. Today, with the advent of a Pentecostal academia, the tension between these two poles is increasingly lively as Pentecostals make a conscious attempt not to sacrifice either side of the equation. Testimony to this fact, within the PAOC both the 1984 decision to ordain women and the 1994 decision to allow remarriage in limited circumstances, were the result of a healthy ongoing struggle between experience and the Scriptures.

For Pentecostals, the Bible is an interactive text which freely responds to the question: What is God saying to the church attempting to be faithful today?"

A fugitive rabbinical parable recounts a time when Moses returns from the dead and attends a lecture on the meaning of the Pentateuch given at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. After listening for some time, Moses finally interrupts the discourse and shouts, "This is ridiculous! You have it all wrong. I didn't mean any of that when I wrote the Pentateuch."<sup>5</sup>

The parable then asks the question: "Who is right, the professor or Moses?"

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<sup>5</sup> William WILLIMON, *Shaped by the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), pp. 35-36.

Hermeneutical orthodoxy would suggest that Moses must be right since he alone could be sure what his intent was the moment he wrote the passage. From a Rabbinical perspective, and one could add from a Pentecostal perspective, Moses was wrong. As a living revelation, the Bible continues to surprise its readers with new challenges, surprises and meaning that may not have been evident before.

## 2. Spoken Word

A Holy Spirit anointed Spoken Word remains the most crucial precipice from which the authority of truth is mitigated. Authority Pentecostal style is oral/aural. Pentecostals ask, "How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?...Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."<sup>6</sup> Whether it be in the form of preaching, prophecy or testimony, Pentecostals come to *hear* the word of God. This does not mean that the authority resides in preachers, or in their ability to proclaim the Gospel persuasively with passion; rather an idea is *made* true by an external presence of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals assemble together both to participate and witness a moment which transcends spatial existence. It can come from anybody — a preacher, a layman or even in some cases an outsider. When it happens, a connection is made and people eagerly respond to the invitation. In the end, it is the orality of the Pentecostal experience that has prevented final doctrinal enclosure at any given moment in their sometimes tumultuous history. Unpredictable, and unbridled, the Holy Spirit continues to temper all attempts to objectify its presence. Other traditions may pay lip-service to such an operation, Pentecostals, at the grass roots, wait expectantly for this to occur.

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<sup>6</sup> Romans 10:14-17, NIV.

### 3. Institutional Word

It has been said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. One might conclude that such a link is found in the Institutional Word. To be fair, the fault for such a predicament does not lie entirely with the work of the Institution in and of itself. The heart of the problem lies with its inherited reputation. Pentecostals are forever suspicious of institutions or regimentation. Even their acknowledgement of its necessity does little to allay such negativity. Pentecostals are not necessarily anti-institutional, they just do not like institutions. With only a reluctant mandate from which to operate, the institutional process is subsequently impeded by 1) a temptation to resort to religious jargon in an attempt to bolster authority, 2) a prejudicial commitment to an other-worldly spirituality that frequently handcuffs any attempt to build adequate mechanisms designed to adjudicate between possible conflicting factions, and 3) a general suspicion of experience — the very thing which distinguishes the ethos of Pentecostalism.

As a result, in a partial effort to bolster its own self-esteem, the Institutional Word has translated pragmatism into a blueprint for success. If *glossolalia* is verifiable evidence of Spirit baptism, then church growth has become verifiable evidence of God's blessing on the organization. Pragmatism argues again that if it works then it must be true. Church growth like no other agent effectively exonerates the Institutional Word of any wrong doing. Therefore, if it is perceived that collectively PAOC churches are languishing, the Institutional Word is stripped of its central authority, leaving congregations in the unfortunate position that they feel they must do what is right in their own eye.

### A Future Synthesis

Pentecostal theology cannot be described or listed, rather it occurs. It is a verb before it is a noun. It occurs in the fusion of experience with Scripture. Even their

partiality with propositional theology has at worse only caused them to think twice before acting. Whether it be the issue of remarriage, ordination of women or Spirit Baptism, experience has prohibited Pentecostals from sitting down. Theology/authority is born out of the skirmish between experience and Scripture.

Be that as it may, if the PAOC wishes to rekindle a sense of destiny that will carry them into the next century, and avoid David Moberg's final indictment of the evolution of institutionalism, this thesis would indicate that there are some things they will need to bring with them.

1. They will need to move beyond a tendency to prematurely react and *circle the wagons* whenever they are confronted with an idea or experience which lies beyond the current status quo. Pentecostalism was born out such an experience. It stands to reason that further experiences will come and time needs to be taken to fully evaluate their usefulness/authority on their own terms. The alternative is to bid farewell to adherents who switch allegiances and join other neophyte groups who are far less protectionist.

2. The Institutional Word will need to resist at all costs the temptation to covert their methods with esoteric religiosity. Instead they need to come to grips with and even exploit their "Christian down-to-earth 'this worldliness'"<sup>7</sup> which has characterised much of Pentecostalism's history.

3. The roots of the PAOC are as a lay movement. To ensure their future viability, mechanisms need to be built to involve maximum participation at the grass-roots level. Lay persons must not only become involved, but clergy must welcome them and allow them to take initiative for their own destiny.

In addition, the PAOC should reassess the notion of the community as the seat of God's will. If, in the action of hiring a minister for a church, the congregation *makes*

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<sup>7</sup> Harvey COX Jr., "Some Personal Reflections," *loc. cit.*



the will of God known through a vote, then is it wrong to suggest a pastor's decision to leave the local pulpit will in some way be reflected by the congregation. Must pastors rely on their own spiritual intuition to make such decisions or should not pastors consciously be evaluating their calling as it is reflected by the people? And if this is true for questions of hiring, can it not be equally true for deciding everyday church issues?

4. Pentecostals such as the PAOC need to rekindle an urge for the Kingdom, not through spurious speculation, but in recognizing the eschatological promise that nothing can separate God's people from His Kingdom.<sup>8</sup> In the words of Steven Land, "Back to Pentecost meant back to the Holy Spirit and then forward to the future that God will give soon."<sup>9</sup> To encourage a sense of imminency, one does not need to create a frenzied, speculative end-time scenario (something world politics is doing all by itself), rather, by promoting the presence of the Spirit in word and deed, one is left with an unshakeable future hope that is riveted on the character of God.

5. The PAOC needs to guard against the human predilection to canonize both their experiences and their collateral linguistic embodiment. Early Pentecostals recognized the need to re-evaluate continually the *cash value* of cherished words/phrases. For example, do compound phrases such as *initial evidence*, *Full Gospel*, and *filled with the Spirit* resonate with the same significance today as they did 75 years ago? In the spirit of naive pragmatism, early Pentecostals witnessed doctrine less as a solution than as a program for more work. "Theories thus become instruments, not answers, to enigmas in which we can rest. We don't lie back upon them, we move forward, and, on occasion, make nature over again by their aid."<sup>10</sup>

6. Pentecostals need to refit their plumbline for truth. William James contended that an idea is true if it is useful and it is useful because it is true. In like fashion, the

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<sup>8</sup> Luke 12:32.

<sup>9</sup> LAND, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> William JAMES, *Pragmatism*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

PAOC has consistently, either explicitly or implicitly, held up their numerical success vis-à-vis the historical churches as their standard for validating any truth claim. In Canada, the PAOC boasts many of the largest churches and remains one of the few church bodies that claims a positive growth pattern. It is growing; therefore, they conclude it must be true.

While early Pentecostals were as pragmatically inclined as Pentecostals today, the measure of their plumbline did not ally itself with generic numerical growth. A passion for missions, not bean counting, lay behind their claim for truth. Instead of counting the number of Sunday morning worshippers, perhaps Pentecostals should stop and observe how many adherents leave their churches for mission fields, Bible Colleges, or get involved with local social programs and so forth. In the final analysis, the norm by which we can measure the health of the PAOC is its ability to integrate its beliefs, practices and affections into a working missions statement.

7. Finally Pentecostals need to resist politics of fear and unleash the reins of the Holy Spirit in a bid to live "in radical openness, meek yieldedness and passionate zeal for the things of God."<sup>11</sup> They need to move beyond promoting Spirit Baptism as some sort of "spectral fireworks,"<sup>12</sup> with limited long-term appeal and begin to ask the questions: What does it mean to be a Christian inundated by the Spirit of God, living at the dawning of the twenty-first century? and, How can we integrate the ethos of Spirit Baptism into an informed Pentecostal theology?

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<sup>11</sup> LAND, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>12</sup> COX Jr., "Some Personal Reflections," *op. cit.*, p. 34.

# Annexe A

## Project Exousia

### Section 1: General Information

The following information is based on 134 returned responses from ordained clergy within the PAOC.

QUESTION	LABELS	PERCENT
1. Gender	Male	86%
	Female	14%
	Missing-1	
2. Education	College	81%
	University	19%
	Missing-12	
3. Age	20-29	4%
	30-39	40%
	40-49	20%
	50-59	16%
	60+	20%
	Missing-2	
4. Experience	1-10yrs	30.5%
	11-20	30.5%
	21+	41%
	Missing-2	
5. Province	Maritimes	20%
	Québec	17%
	Ontario	30%
	West	33%
	Missing-3	
6. Marital Status	Married	92%
	Single	8%
	Missing-2	

## **Section 2**

Read carefully the following statements and respond either:

**SA** I strongly Agree

**A** I agree

**U** Undecided

**D** I more or less disagree

**SD** I strongly disagree

- |  |     |    |       |
|--|-----|----|-------|
| 1. Women should not have a seat on church boards.  | 12% | SA |       |
|  | 24% | A  |       |
| <i>mean</i> =2.567   | 7%  | U  |       |
| <i>sd</i> =1.464   | 22% | D  |       |
| missing=0  | 34% | SD | -mode |
|  |     |    |       |
| 2. There are extenuating circumstances whereby a divorce and remarried person should be able to receive ordination status within the PAOC. | 7%  | SA |       |
|  | 26% | A  |       |
| <i>mean</i> =2.879   | 16% | U  |       |
| <i>sd</i> =1.493   | 12% | D  |       |
| missing=2  | 29% | SD | -mode |
|  |     |    |       |
| 3. Culture plays an important role in Biblical interpretation.   | 23% | SA |       |
| <i>mean</i> =3.629   | 49% | A  | -mode |
| <i>sd</i> =1.238   | 2%  | U  |       |
| missing=2  | 18% | D  |       |
|  | 8%  | SD |       |
|  |     |    |       |
| 4. Speaking in other tongues is a natural consequence of the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit."   | 81% | SA | -mode |
| <i>mean</i> =4.705   | 14% | A  |       |
| <i>sd</i> =.759  | 0%  | U  |       |
| missing=2  | 3%  | D  |       |
|  | 2%  | SD |       |
|  |     |    |       |
| 5. District and/or National officers exercise too much control over the local church.  | 5%  | SA |       |
| <i>mean</i> =2.075   | 13% | A  |       |
| <i>sd</i> =1.205   | 7%  | U  |       |
| missing=0  | 35% | D  |       |
|  | 40% | SD | -mode |

6. The Lord will likely return before the year 2000.

*mean*=2.523

*sd*=1.4

missing-2

10%	SA	
23%	A	
10%	U	
25%	D	
32%	SD	-mode

7. Freedom of the Spirit is threatened by the present level of bureaucracy within the PAOC.

*mean*=2.523

*sd*=1.4

missing-2

10%	SA	
23%	A	
10%	U	
25%	D	
32%	SD	-mode

8. The discoveries through "higher criticism" have only served to undermine the authority of Scripture.

*mean*=3.071

*sd*=1.415

missing-7

20%	SA	
27%	A	-mode
12%	U	
24%	D	
17%	SD	

9. Speaking in other tongues as "initial evidence" is over emphasized within the PAOC.

*mean*=1.955

*sd*=1.242

missing-1

5%	SA	
13%	A	
5%	U	
27%	D	
50%	SD	

10. Clergy demonstrate a degree of authority that is generally unavailable to laity.

*mean*=3.328

*sd*=1.166

missing-3

11%	SA	
50%	A	-mode
9%	U	
23%	D	
7%	SD	

11. Women should enjoy the same privileges and opportunities as their male counterparts in ordained ministry.

*mean*=3.84

*sd*=1.201

missing-3

36%	SA	
37%	A	-mode
8%	U	
5%	D	
34%	SD	

12. There are occasions when the Scripture is overruled by the living Spirit.

*mean*=1.328

*sd*=1.242

missing-3

2%	SA	
3%	A	
2%	U	
11%	D	
82%	SD	-mode

13. Tradition is a legitimate source of religious authority.

*mean*=1.84

*sd*=1.1

missing-1

1%	SA	
14%	A	
6%	U	
26%	D	
53%	SD	-mode

14. Our Bible Colleges are out of step with what the Holy Spirit wishes to accomplish in our churches today.

*mean*=2.458

*sd*=1.178

missing-3

4%	SA	
21%	A	
15%	U	
36%	D	-mode
24%	SD	

15. Remarriage, following divorce, represents a perpetual sin that cannot be forgiven as long as the couple remains together.

*mean*=1.992

*sd*=.86

missing-2

1%	SA	
4%	A	
8%	U	
28%	D	
60%	SD	-mode

16. All Christians are instilled with latent ability to manifest the "Gifts of the Spirit."

*mean*=3.539

*sd*=1.408

missing-6

31%	SA	
34%	A	-mode
5%	U	
17%	D	
13%	SD	

17. Concerning what constitutes a marriage, we should extend the present policy of divorce and remarriage as it is laid out in the Statement of fundamental Beliefs to cover those living in common law.

*mean*=2.223

*sd*=1.475

missing-4

13%	SA	
11%	A	
11%	U	
16%	D	
49%	SD	-mode

18. Should the opportunity present itself, I would not have any difficulty working with ordained female clergy.  
(only men need to reply)

*mean*=3.958

*sd*=1.037

missing-15

32%	SA	
48%	A	-mode
8%	U	
9%	D	
3%	SD	

19. The present relationship between local clergy and executive leaders encourages both the development and exchange of ideas.	14%	SA	
	34%	A	-mode
	16%	U	
	23%	D	
	14%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.107			
<i>sd</i> =1.291			
missing-2			
20. Women ministers should keep a low profile with issues concerning church national policy.	3%	SA	
	11%	A	
	8%	U	
	33%	D	
	46%	SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =1.924			
<i>sd</i> =.959			
missing-3			
21. It is not only what the Spirit revealed to us via the Bible but what he reveals to us in the here and now that is the Word of God.	7%	SA	
	8%	A	
	3%	U	
	15%	D	
	68%	SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =1.654			
<i>sd</i> =1.166			
missing-4			
22. The survival of the PAOC is integrally linked with adherence to the doctrine of "initial evidence."	17%	SA	
	19%	A	
	2%	U	
	40%	D	-mode
	21%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =2.712			
<i>sd</i> =1.438			
missing-2			
23. The present policy of the PAOC concerning divorce and remarriage is inadequate.	28%	SA	
	33%	A	-mode
	17%	U	
	8%	D	
	14%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.538			
<i>sd</i> =1.345			
missing-2			
24. The Bible is the primary witness to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.	77%	SA	-mode
	20%	A	
	0%	U	
	2%	D	
	1%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =4.703			
<i>sd</i> =.668			
missing-6			

25. Ordained "dissenters" in matters of official dogma should not be tolerated.

*mean*=3.354  
*sd*=1.193  
 missing-4

18% SA  
 38% A -mode  
 13% U  
 26% D  
 4% SD

26. The central foundation of our faith is the Holy Scriptures.

*mean*=4.885  
*sd*=.386  
 missing-4

90% SA -mode  
 9% A  
 0% U  
 1% D  
 0% SD

27. A pastors' salary should reflect the size of his church.

*mean*=2.554  
*sd*=1.264  
 missing-4

5% SA  
 29% A  
 7% U  
 35% D -mode  
 24% SD

28. The PAOC is structured more than is necessary.

*mean*=2.715  
*sd*=1.189  
 missing-4

6% SA  
 25% A  
 21% U  
 31% D -mode  
 17% SD

29. The Bible is essentially an encyclopedia of revealed, timeless, propositional truths which transcend culture and time.

*mean*=3.881  
*sd*=1.275  
 missing-8

40% SA -mode  
 36% A  
 4% U  
 12% D  
 8% SD

30. Speaking in other tongues is the indisputable initial evidence of the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit."

*mean*=4.308  
*sd*=1.099  
 missing-4

62% SA -mode  
 21% A  
 5% U  
 9% D  
 3% SD

31. A pastor's scholastic achievements and experience are substantively less important than his spiritual call.

*mean*=3.641  
*sd*=1.277  
 missing-2

27% SA  
 44% A -mode  
 5% U  
 15% D  
 9% SD



32. The Pauline passages of Scripture admonishing women to be "silent" are culturally conditioned and therefore, not directly relevant to our present situation.	40%	SA	
	44%	A	-mode
	5%	U	
	8%	D	
	2%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =4.137			
<i>sd</i> =.959			
missing-3			
33. The minister's family should be a model to the whole community.	26%	SA	
	61%	A	-mode
	3%	U	
	8%	D	
	2%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =4.008			
<i>sd</i> =.859			
missing-2			
34. Distinctions between clergy and laity are simply functional in nature.	19%	SA	
	47%	A	-mode
	5%	U	
	24%	D	
	5%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =3.511			
<i>sd</i> =1.199			
missing-3			
35. The Gospel as the transcendent Word of God will appear somewhat different to the church in every age, since the Spirit always has a fresh message for the churches.	3%	SA	
	14%	A	
	8%	U	
	36%	D	
	39%	SD	-mode
<i>mean</i> =2.071			
<i>sd</i> =1.149			
missing-7			
36. The authority of local ministers lies in their person and not in their office.	13%	SA	
	15%	A	
	9%	U	
	35%	D	-mode
	28%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =2.504			
<i>sd</i> =1.391			
missing-7			
37. The minister has a uniquely God-given authority to interpret rightly the Scriptures.	17%	SA	
	20%	A	
	6%	U	
	34%	D	-mode
	24%	SD	
<i>mean</i> =2.714			
<i>sd</i> =1.447			
missing-8			

38. A Pastor should maintain higher standards of personal conduct than other people.	46%	SA	-mode
	37%	A	
<i>mean</i> =4.13	2%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.063	13%	D	
missing-3	2%	SD	
39. The Bible alone, however managed, explained, confirmed and applied is nothing but a dead letter without the Spirit.	27%	SA	-mode
	25%	A	
<i>mean</i> =3.117	5%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.565	20%	D	
missing-6	23%	SD	
40. Salary should be based on years of experience and education.	8%	SA	
	41%	A	-mode
<i>mean</i> =3.119	10%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.138	35%	D	
missing-0	5%	SD	
41. I look to the National office to provide for policy concerning the social issues that affect us.	15%	SA	
	54%	A	-mode
<i>mean</i> =3.523	7%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.136	18%	D	
missing-4	6%	SD	
42. As a pastor your first responsibility, is to the congregation you are serving.	22%	SA	
	28%	A	
<i>mean</i> =3.068	2%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.488	30%	D	-mode
missing-1	18%	SD	
43. Before I began pastoring my present church, I was given a clearly defined job description.	3%	SA	
	13%	A	
<i>mean</i> =2.107	8%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.089	47%	D	-mode
missing-12	31%	SD	
44. The fresh outpouring of the Spirit, at the turn of this century unveiled a new era of opportunity for women in ministry.	11%	SA	
	46%	A	-mode
<i>mean</i> =3.397	18%	U	
<i>sd</i> =1.072	20%	D	
missing-3	5%	SD	

45. The Genesis account of creation is largely symbolic and is not a firsthand description or recording of actual events.	0%	SA	
	4%	A	
	2%	U	
<i>mean</i> =1.328	16%	D	
<i>sd</i> =.723	78%	SD	-mode
missing-0			
46. Christians need the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" to successfully resist temptation.	22%	SA	
	33%	A	-mode
	5%	U	
<i>mean</i> =3.263	29%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.365	10%	SD	
missing-1			
47. Every text of Scripture can be harmonized with secular history and natural science.	18%	SA	
	34%	A	-mode
	11%	U	
<i>mean</i> =3.213	25%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.325	12%	SD	
missing-7			
48. The trend towards the pursuit of higher education among PAOC ministers is a negative one.	6%	SA	
	16%	A	
	19%	U	
<i>mean</i> =2.485	36%	D	-mode
<i>sd</i> =1.089	22%	SD	
missing-2			
49. Bible College played an instrumental part in my spiritual formation.	35%	SA	
	44%	A	-mode
	5%	U	
<i>mean</i> =3.929	11%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.128	5%	SD	
missing-7			
50. The "Statement of Fundamental Beliefs" as it is described by the PAOC, is synonymous with Scripture.	25%	SA	
	28%	A	-mode
	5%	U	
<i>mean</i> =3.19	22%	D	
<i>sd</i> =1.5	19%	SD	
missing-7			

### Section 3

Read each of the following questions carefully and check accordingly the choice you feel best answers the question.

	<u>count</u>	%
51. Which of the following statements best reflects your understanding of ordination?		
_____ A/ Ordination is essentially a ceremony recognizing that I have had specialized training.	12	9%
_____ B/ Ordination is a "commissioning" which, if I chose, I could relinquish.	40	30%
_____ C/ Ordination provides me with sacred orders which, even if I chose, I could not relinquish.	18	14%
_____ D/ None of the above	61	47% -mode
52. As a vehicle of the National Office, it is the job of the Pentecostal Testimony to fulfil <u>primarily</u> , which of the following functions?:		
_____ A/ personal testimonies	15	6%
_____ B/ news concerning PAOC	28	36% -mode
_____ C/ public forum of ideas	11	14%
_____ D/ promote official policy concerning doctrine and belief	22	28%
_____ E/ devotional	11	14%
53. Which of the following factors would <b>best</b> describe the origins of this latter Pentecostal resurgence:		
_____ A. Divine, spontaneous insertion into history by God	55	49% -mode
_____ B. A reaction to a liberal move away from spiritual fervor within the church.	13	12%
_____ C. A natural consequence of the Holiness Movement.	11	10%
_____ D. Sociological reaction to the economic situation	0	0%
_____ E. A preordained fulfilment of prophecy.	29	29%

54. Which of the following ministries are appropriate areas for ordained women ministry? (More than one answer may be given)

_____ A/ Christian education	1	1%
_____ B/ counselling		
_____ C/ visitation		
_____ D/ Senior pastor		
_____ E/ missions		
_____ F/ music		
_____ G/ all of the above	76	57% -mode
_____ H/ none of the above.		
_____ I/all of the above expect senior pastor	56	42%

55. Which of the following tasks do you see as being the most fundamental role of National officers?

_____ A. Co-ordinating home and overseas missions.	12	17%
_____ B. Providing moral and spiritual direction for the PAOC.	42	58% -mode
_____ C. Acting as a voice for Pentecostals in the Political/Social arena	2	3%
_____ D. Shaping and protecting official church doctrine.	4	6%
_____ E. General Resource Center	10	14%
_____ F. Providing financial stability for the PAOC.	1	1%
_____ G.		
Other _____		

## **Section 4**

On a scale of 1-7 with 1 showing little satisfaction and 7 showing high satisfaction, rate the overall efficiency of the following official voices of the PAOC.

	<b><u>mean</u></b>	<b><u>sd</u></b>
56. General Executive	5.405	1.316
57. Department of Home Missions and Bible Colleges	4.824	1.551
58. Department of Overseas Missions	5.323	1.527
59. Radiant Life Curriculum	4.365	1.661
60. District Office	5.278	1.429
61. Pentecostal Testimony	5.128	1.675
62. National Bible Colleges	4.85	1.352
63. Department of Church Ministries	4.664	1.408
64. Department of Spiritual Life and Evangelism	3.959	1.596
65. Decade of Destiny	4.222	1.779

## Annexe B

### Latter Rain Movement

As is the nature of paradigms, paradigms work when they successfully answer the questions being asked. Eventually, the paradigm is challenged by new assumptions and new questions which are not being addressed. The new challenge creates a tension within the existing paradigm and eventually will either break away from the reigning paradigm, be assimilated into it or succeed in creating a collective new paradigm.

It should not be surprising that this mounting dichotomy between 1920-1950 within Pentecostalism between a theology and an orientation would reach an impasse. This impasse would result in the “New Order of the Latter Rain” of 1948. — the first major threat to the reigning paradigm. Originating in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, under the leadership of George and Ern Hawtin, the New Order arose as a reaction against the fundamentalizing of Pentecostalism. It stood out as a call back to their roots, with a strong renewed emphasis on healing, prophecy and the imminence of the premillennial return of Jesus Christ. Visions abounded as the leaders of the Movement established their personal authority and justification for their revival. Called the “Latter Rain Movement,” they believed themselves to be the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles—the third of Israel’s Great Feasts after the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Pentecost.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive look at the Latter Rain Movement see, Richard RISS, *A Survey of 2th Century Revival Movements in North America* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 105-125. and Richard

George Hawtin, a former PAOC minister and the catalyst for the Movement, managed to strike a nerve within the psyche of Pentecostals and soon had the attention of churches throughout North America. In the spirit of Azusa street, North Battleford quickly became a Mecca of dissatisfied people seeking renewal.

Initial reaction from the established Pentecostal congregations such as the PAOC was cautious but not unsympathetic. A meeting in October 1948, in the city of Edmonton, Alberta, was officially attended by members of several Pentecostal denominations. Soon services were held in crowded Meeting halls from Vancouver, B.C., to Detroit, Michigan. As the Movement gained momentum, early reservations from the established Pentecostal brethren quickly turned to open opposition.<sup>1</sup> Pentecostals reacted to their exclusivism—if the New Order represents the true Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit, then what does that say about their experience. They publicly spoke out against the self-appointed apostles and prophets behind the New Order Movement. They felt that the New Order was giving undue attention to the practice of laying on of hands to receive the gifts of the Spirit. This stood in direct contrast to the accepted Pentecostal method of tarrying for the Spirit. They pointed to excesses where prophecies were stenographically recorded and later duplicated as messages from God. Finally, when pastors and lay people began leaving PAOC churches, the battle lines were clearly drawn.

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RISS, Latter Rain: *The Latter Rain Movement of 1948 and the Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Awakening* (Mississauga, Ontario: Honeycomb Visual Productions Ltd., 1987).

<sup>1</sup> Opposition existed primarily on word of mouth basis. Despite the early impact of the Latter Rain school written denunciations of this Movement by the PAOC were infrequent. Largely by inference J. Purdie the Chairman for the National Committee for Bible Colleges and schools, has in mind the New Latter Rain Movement when he prints this report in the *Pentecostal Testimony*, "The division in the Canadian ranks of the Pentecostal family apparently setting forth new claims and new interpretations, presents a challenge and a problem such as the P.A. O.C has never before had to face. The history of the Church demonstrates that if any group of Christians leaves out the proper teaching on the infilling of the Holy spirit and His normal operations, barrenness is bound to follow. On the other hand if they over-emphasize the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit at the expense of the Person of Christ and His Finished Work on Calvary, and justification by faith plus nothing, declension, unbalanced emotionalism's, and fanaticism follow." J. PURDIE, *PT* (October 15, 1948). Though Purdie never commits himself to naming the source of his criticism, it is never really in doubt.



Stanley Frodsham, a leader within the Assemblies of God who had witnessed Azusa Street, lamented the growing polarity between the two sides. Frodsham wrote:

I can see that the Council is waging an all out war against the new revival God is sending. Of course there are frailties in the folks that are in this new revival. They have made mistakes. But there are frailties in all of God's saints, and I could recite a story of mistakes that have been made by my council brethren that I have seen during the past 33 years. but I want to keep silent. I have to confess that I have made many mistakes myself.<sup>1</sup>

Of particular interest is how the opposition from the major Pentecostal camps so closely paralleled the opposition of established churches at the turn of the century with the emergence of Pentecostals. It is a truism how often we forget from whence we came. Among the litany of similarities, both groups were accused of using prophecy without restraint; both groups were awash in extreme emotionalism; both groups were denounced for the dubious practice of proselytizing established churches and both groups were committed to an anti-established and anti-organized church position.<sup>2</sup> But the most striking resemblance lies in the tension between the Bible as Word and Spirit. Thomas Holdcroft, a witness of the New Order, writes:

In the scale of authority in religious faith practice, New Order leaders often gave the Bible second place. Even as they used the Bible they made much of the distinction between the letter that kills and the Spirit that gives life. In a choice between the cautious exegesis of the written Scripture, or the excitement and inspiration of an ecstatic prophecy, they would almost surely choose the latter. And when using the Bible, they tended to spiritualize and to ignore contexts. Thus, they found Biblical proof texts for beliefs and practices where such "proofs" were simply not evident to other Christians.<sup>3</sup>

Transported back in time thirty years, one would have heard the exact opposition being voiced against Pentecostals. The fact that most leaders were unable at the time to make such a parallel suggests the extent that the original intuitive paradigm that gave

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley FRODSHAM as quoted by Richard RISS, *A Survey of 20th Century Revival Movements in North America*, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Richard RISS, "The Latter Rain Movement of 1948," *Pneuma*, 4:1 (1982), pp. 36-38.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas HOLDCROFT, "The New Order of the Latter Rain," *Pneuma*, 2:2 (1980), p. 51.

birth to the Pentecostal Movement had shifted to a rationalistic paradigm in the spirit of Fundamentalist/Evangelicalism. At stake was the battle between an emerging paradigm with one entrenched in a newly established tradition. History records that the established Pentecostal churches prevailed as the New Order of the Latter Rain Revival waned out. The significance of the New Order, however, would be felt in the charismatic renewal of the 1960s and the 1970s. Richard Riss lists spiritual singing and dancing, praise, the foundational ministries of Ephesians 4:11, the laying on of hands, tabernacle teaching, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the foundational truths of Hebrews 6:12 as being among the beliefs and practices of the Latter Rain that have made their way into the fabric of the Charismatic Movement.<sup>1</sup>

The PAOC like their American neighbours the AG had gone full circle. What was once an unpredictable grass root movement had become firmly entrenched within the ecclesiastical order. Things and ideas that would have been formerly eschewed were now being openly embraced as if they were always believed. The Pentecostal church which originally made waves as a Latter Rain phenomenon led wholly by the Holy Spirit, was now describing herself as a continuation of the historic Evangelical Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard RISS, "The Latter Rain Movement of 1948, op. cit., p. 44.

## Annexe C

### National Association of Evangelicals

From the vestiges of Fundamentalism, leaders headed by Harold Ockenga (pastor of Boston's Park Street Church), began talking about the possibility of creating a voluntary association which could serve as a rallying point and spokesperson(s) for the "traditionally accepted" evangelical position. On April 7th, 1942 in St. Louis, Mo., close to 150 religious leaders gathered for this historical summit. For the first time, since the turn of the century, religious groups that had hitherto opposed one another were now seeking the basis of fellowship with one another. Many distinctive differences were either temporarily shelved or they were deemed simply as non essential differences of doctrine. From the fruits of this labour the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action (NAE) emerged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of God as one of its dominate members.

Though the PAOC was not directly involved with the genesis of the NAE, they subsequently passed this resolution in September 1944.

WHEREAS a body has been formed in the United States of America, known as the National Association of Evangelicals, for the purpose of presenting a united front in matters such as securing missionary passports, negotiating for radio time for Gospel Broadcasts, etc.,

AND WHEREAS there is nothing in this Association which in any way demands a sacrifice of our distinctive testimony, and therefore the General

Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States, with which are in co-operative fellowship, has associated itself with this organization,

AND WHEREAS Provincial organization of the same association with the same objectives has been formed in Canada,

BE IT RESOLVED that this District Conference recommend that the General Executive communicate with the provincial committee of the Canadian Association of Evangelicals to investigate the advisability of associating the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada with the Canadian Organization and that the matter of affiliating be reported back to the next General Conference.<sup>1</sup>

Four decades of division and mistrust could not, however, be overcome without opposition. Many dissenting fundamentalist groups described the organization as a new wave of modernism. Baptist Ernest Gordon sarcastically described the NAE as a "little knot of clerical politicians who issue manifestos as from 'we the Christians of America'."<sup>2</sup> Likewise many Pentecostals, felt betrayed by their leadership. Commenting on affiliation with the NAE, Pentecostal Robert Brown the pastor of New York City's Glad Tidings Tabernacle reports:

This (cooperating with the NAE) is what I call putting the grave clothes again on Lazarus, while the Scripture says: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; I will receive you and will be your Father unto you..."<sup>3</sup>

History records, however, that not only did the NAE survive its tumultuous beginnings but that the AG became its largest supporting member and by 1962 Thomas Zimmerman, the General Superintendent of the AG, became its chairman.

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<sup>1</sup> PAOC, *General Conference Minutes* (September, 1944)

<sup>2</sup> Ernest GORDON quoted by Edith BLUMHOFER, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism vol. 2 - since 1941* (Springfield, Miss.: Gospel Pub. House, 1989), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

## Annexe D

### Personal Reflection

Absolute objectivity is the “Holy Grail” of the research world. Yet the psychology of knowledge has demonstrated the fallacy of such a quest. Sociologist Peter Berger reminds us that knowledge grows out of a socially shared structure.<sup>1</sup> My prejudices, the paradigm or model to which I belong invariably influences the way I “see” certain things. If this is true of natural sciences as Thomas Kuhn has suggested, it rings equally true for the human sciences. In retrospect, my conclusions are invariably shaped by my questions, which evolve out of my social consciousness.

However, all in all, I maintain that a researcher working inside any given structure is better equipped at analyzing that same structure. Moving from the vantage point of an insider, one gains quick access to the ultimate questions at hand. The researcher is not impeded or bogged down by trying to fit or make sense a foreign *weltanschauung*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter BERGER, *Rumor of Angels: Modern society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (New York, Doubleday & Company, inc., 1969), p. 8.9.

<sup>2</sup> In his most recent book *Charismatics Chaos*, John MacArthur desires to set the record straight by exposing the litany of wrongs espoused by charismatics. One senses, however, that MacArthur is motivated by his self-induced insecurity of being a “have-not.” As a fundamentalist-evangelical, he fails to discern any solidarity with the movement he so readily criticizes. Both evangelicals and Pentecostals struggle with individualism. Both struggle with legalistic perfection where abstinence is equated with righteousness. Both struggle with the seduction of hyperorthodoxy where one interprets God’s Word only through the lens of one’s own cultural and theological setting (ie. MacArthur fails to see how his uncritical acceptance of dispensationalism has shaped his hermeneutical approach to Scriptures). And both struggle in balancing cognitive and subjective experiences with God’s

Instead the insider can enjoy a little more freedom in exploring and weighing the implications of one's findings.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, such an approach does not grant immunization against lacunae. The difference is that by recognizing the role of subjective interpretation on the part of the researcher, the same researcher is more apt to account for one's own short-sightedness. In this way even one's blind spots can function as a methodological *via negativa* that tells one something about oneself.<sup>2</sup>

Having said this I wish to recognize the indebtedness I owe to the community of faith that I have committed to scrutiny. Being raised in a Pentecostal family, having completed undergraduate work in a Pentecostal college, and having been involved in pastoral ministry for a twelve-year period has firmly established me within the Pentecostal camp. This is not to say, that my entire life experience has evolved in Pentecostal circles. For four of those twelve years pastoring, I was involved with a mainline Presbyterian church and I have completed my graduate work in a Roman Catholic setting at Laval University in Quebec City. These two additional experiences have helped to reveal to me some of my blind spots and they have made it easier to examine critically my own value system. Nonetheless, my affections are firmly embedded in the spirit of Pentecostalism.

Here then are my prejudices as best as I can thematize them. First, I have come to believe that Truth is best understood as the fulcrum point between two poles. In other words, while Truth certainly has theoretical objective content, we can never quite possess it. I side with Richard Hooker who said, "heresy is more plain than true,

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revelation. In short, his supposed objectivity is rendered impotent by a refusal to acknowledge the subjectivity of himself as researcher.

<sup>1</sup> A further advantage afforded the insider, is data by way of personal experience. Throughout the course of this thesis, such illustrative data will be included in the footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> NEWELL, *Truth is our Mask*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

whereas right belief is more true than plain.”<sup>1</sup> “Heresy,” reiterates Donald Bloesch, “resolves the tensions and paradoxes in Christian faith by exaggerating one side of the Gospel or reducing the Gospel to empirical objectifying knowledge. Right belief on the other hand, feels the pull of the opposites, but keeps them from flying apart and thereby keeps them true.”<sup>2</sup> As such I tend to react negatively to any airy banter that seeks to alleviate this tension through authoritarian reductionism.

Second, I believe in the dynamic presence of Jesus Christ within the life of a believer. I believe that through His Spirit we can continue to encounter Him in fresh ways. I would also add, that it is precisely here, at this point, that Pentecostalism has the potential of making its greatest contribution to Christendom. Furthermore, I would suggest that the title often employed by those in the Pentecostal movement—Full Gospel—is a misnomer, because we will never arrive at the position in which we can fully articulate that presence.

Third, I affirm the authority of the Bible in what it purports to do, namely its ability to present the normative and clearest articulation of God’s ever dynamic relationship with His people. I am left unimpressed by historical critics who endeavour to cleave the written Word into little morsels as a ruse to demythologize the text and make it more palatable to the contemporary world. Neither am I persuaded by fundamentalists who attempt to reduce the Bible to a set of empirical propositional facts. I believe that the Bible strives for conversion not agreement. The locus of its authority is found in its narrative ability which is capable of penetrating our lives in such a way that we are changed. By superimposing the Bible’s story on our story we encounter God.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard HOOKER as quoted by Donald G. BLOESCH, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology: Life, Ministry & Hope*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), pp. 268,269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Fourth, I believe that, as the "Bible is the church's book, so the church is the Bible's people."<sup>1</sup> The church is witness that the Christian faith cannot be lived out in isolation. Described alternatively in the Bible as a colony, a body, a family, a flock, a race, the church is evidence that one can never only believe God in the abstract. The church mediates the presence of God by putting flesh on Him. In the end, the authenticity of the Christian faith relies more on the visible witness of the church than it does on any theoretical inerrant Bible.

I believe, as well, that the Church plays a vital hermeneutical role in translating the objective content of its faith. It is the role of the church to help unpack the matrix of traditions (both scriptural and historical) that embodies their faith, not unlike the work of a critic in the arts. Its analysis, therefore, is always open to censure and further analysis with the passing of time. In such a matrix, a certain amount of relativism is not only welcome but it is necessary in mediating a fuller image of the identity of God.<sup>2</sup>

Fifth, while I acknowledge the danger of canonizing tradition, I disapprove of attempts to deny its legitimacy, both as an authority for the church and as a means for providing a sense of belonging within the church.

Sixth, I do not hold to a strict natural/supernatural dichotomy. Such categories can be useful in tracing the movement of God in history, but in the end, I find them too delimiting. I believe in a sovereign God who acts in the "here and now" as He sees fit. Calling this action natural and that action supernatural seems superfluous and self-defeating. In the end, since it is left for humanity to define the categories, God is left contingent on our procrustean models. If we accept the God-hypothesis that He is a real

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<sup>1</sup> William H. WILLIMON, *Shaped by the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), pp. 66-81.

<sup>2</sup> Despite its awkward wording, I believe the preamble to the original *Statement of Fundamental Truths and Beliefs* approved in 1928 by the PAOC reflects this analysis. It stated, "The human phraseology employed in this statement is not inspired nor contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a Full Gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all the truth of the Bible, only that it covers our present needs as to these fundamental matters." The statement was later dropped in 1980.



creative entity, it stands to reason that what seems supernatural to humanity, is perfectly natural to God.

Seventh, my anthropology is both pessimistic and simplistic. Outside of Jesus Christ, I have little hope for humanity. Left to its own vices, humanity tends to evolve downwards, not upwards. Furthermore, I see little warrant in trying to shore up humanity's weakness through a body/spirit dichotomy or the even more lugubrious tripartite being: body, soul, spirit. Again while such designations can be helpful in understanding human nature, they can be all too easily manipulated to create heuristic solutions to difficult dilemmas. In its place, I believe it is healthier to affirm that a person's "body is the actuality of the soul."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the two are indissoluble.

Eighth, I recognize that my eschatology is ambivalent. On the one hand, I am embarrassed by the frequent attempts on the part of the leaders and lay people alike within the Pentecostal Movement to date the return of Jesus Christ, and to dragoon people into Christianity with visions of "apocalypse now." Such attempts belie the essence of the Gospel which calls upon Christians to bear witness of the Spirit of God now. On the other hand, I am moved by the pristine hope for the Lord's return that has strengthened many believers in the midst of very difficult circumstances.

Finally, I am not an apologist. My interest does not lie in defending the Christian faith. Such faith needs no defense. However, I have a passion for exploring its ramifications for the individual believer and for the life of the church. In this regard, I am especially intrigued with the role of the Holy Spirit which I purport to be antithetical to the spirit of protectionism. It is out of these convictions that I addressed myself to this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> NEWELL, *Truth is our Mask*, op. cit., p. 63.

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