

**GORDON FEE'S CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY PENTECOSTALISM'S
THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

by

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis is to examine the contribution of Gordon D. Fee to contemporary Pentecostalism's theology of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the background of Pentecostal doctrine is explored, as the 'second blessing' is traced historically from Wesley's emphasis on sanctification to the focus on empowerment evident in the forerunners of Pentecostalism. Early Pentecostalism accepted this interpretation openly and proclaimed a baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to conversion, the clear evidence of which was glossolalia. The substantial growth of the movement academically and theologically is evident as classical Pentecostalism is compared to its contemporary form. Gordon Fee promotes authorial intent as the key to a proper understanding of Luke's purposes in Acts and maintains that historical precedent cannot be used to establish normative practices of Christian behaviour. Though he will not argue for subsequence and initial evidence as outlined by many Pentecostals, his calls for a return to 'life in the Spirit' are substantial. Pentecostals have taken considerable exception to Fee's proposals regarding authorial intent and historical precedent, and have offered hermeneutical guidelines of their own regarding both the charismatic intentions of Luke, and the proper use of historical precedent. The contention of this thesis is that Fee's work has been supremely beneficial to Pentecostalism. Although publicly in disagreement with many of Fee's proposals, Pentecostal theology has continued to mature significantly through its dialogue with Gordon Fee.

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Most important, my strongest gratitude and love are reserved for my wife, Melinda, who endured much talk about this thesis, and my mental absences during the writing. You are truly a gift from God and my best friend. Thanks for making life so fulfilling that looking elsewhere is pointless.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my father, Truman Noel (1945-1998), who was promoted into the presence of God during this writing. Throughout his life, he consistently demonstrated Christian morality and academic integrity. My prayer is that I might walk in the path he so strongly modeled.

Pentecostals cannot continue to rely on the interpretive methods of the 19th century Holiness Movement and expect to speak to the contemporary evangelical world.

R.P. Menzies

The essence of [Pentecostalism] is the belief in and encounter with the supernatural in the Christian life. This experiential worldview is at the heart of the present hermeneutical debate.

K.J. Archer

The preceding quotations signify the "coming of age" of Pentecostalism, both chronologically, and more importantly, theologically. No longer content to trust in the teachings of past generations, modern Pentecostals have trained themselves academically. They are examining their every doctrine both in terms of a scholarly approach to Scripture, and their relationship to other Christian groups such as the evangelical community.

At issue is the validity of the most closely held of all Pentecostal beliefs. The chief of these is the insistence that there is a baptism of the Holy Spirit, distinct from the impartation of the Spirit that makes one a believer. This subsequent baptism empowers the believer for effective witnessing. Without this, Pentecostals believe, the Church has remained weakened, ineffective, and often unsuccessful at evangelization. Second, and to a lesser degree for the purposes of this study, the Pentecostal proclaims that such a baptism will be accompanied by glossolalia - speaking in other tongues that one has not learned. These twin doctrines are felt by many to be the heart of Pentecostalism - to deny either is to deny the movement itself.

It might be helpful to pause and inquire as to both the appropriateness and benefit of examining one of Protestantism's younger movements. Perhaps the most convincing argument for the usefulness of this investigation lies in the remarkably successful manner in

which Pentecostalism has propagated the gospel. From its beginnings in 1906 at the Azusa outpouring in Los Angeles,¹ Pentecostalism has spread beyond anything its founders could have hoped for. Estimates of its size in 1906 range from 13,000 to 15,000. Within a decade, in the United States alone, it had increased tenfold.² By the time of its "golden jubilee" it had reached ten million worldwide and had become known as the "third force in Christendom".³

Within 75 years of its conception, David B. Barrett reported the astounding growth of the movement in his *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1982).⁴ From this data, Richard Ostling of TIME noted that "The biggest category of Protestants today does not consist of traditional Reformation groups, such as Lutherans, but the Pentecostals - at 51 million strong..."⁵ Barrett's update in 1988 proclaimed a total Pentecostal and charismatic headcount of 332 million, increasing at a rate of 19 million per year. By 2000 he predicts that Pentecostals will number around 562 million souls.⁶ Donald Dayton concludes: "There are now more Pentecostals in the world than there are Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, or Methodists - and all this in less than a century."⁷ Though numbers do not automatically

¹ For an eyewitness account of Azusa street see Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1980); *idem. Another Wave of Revival* (Pittsburgh, PA: Whitacker House, 1982). Also see R.M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979): 62-78; and J.R. Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (London: University of Arkansas Press, 1988); and S.J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplementary Series, eds. J.C. Thomas, R.D. Moore, and S.J. Land, no.1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993): 15-20.

² Grant McClung, "Explosion, Motivation, and Consolidation: The Historical Anatomy of the Pentecostal Missionary Movement," *Missiology* 14 (April 1986): 159.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁵ "The Counter of Souls," *TIME*, 3 May 1982, 67

⁶ Russell P. Spittler, "Implicit Values in Pentecostal Missions," *Missiology* 16 (Oct 1988): 410.

⁷ Donald W. Dayton, "The Holy Spirit and Christian Expansion in the Twentieth Century," *Missiology* 16 (Oct 1988), 399.

equal success, such a worldwide impact in just over ninety years is worthy of attention and study.

The early Pentecostal belief that they were living in the last days⁸ made a significant contribution to their overwhelming recognition of the importance of missions. Influenced by the rise of premillennialism in the late nineteenth century, Pentecostals were convinced that civilization would deteriorate before Christ returned. The constant rumblings of Zionism and the possibilities of international war served to reinforce their literal reading of Matthew 24:14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (AV). The challenge was issued to those who wished to help usher in Christ's kingdom - every nation on earth must be evangelized.⁹

Though this perception was not unique to Pentecostals - shared as it was by many premillennialists - they seized upon the notion that they could have a role in quickening the Second Coming, and worked solidly to this end.¹⁰ So convinced were they of the imminent return of Christ, most were unwilling to build or rent permanent places of worship, believing in the futility of such efforts when faced with the shortness of time.¹¹ Adherents desiring missionary experience were placed in every corner of the world, with little or no preparatory training. "This early evangelistic zeal was characterized by a spontaneity in sending forth personnel without prearranged financial help. Missionaries went strictly 'by faith'."¹²

⁸ For a good discussion see Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, trans. R.A. Wilson (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 413-421; and Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 58-121.

⁹ Murray Dempster, ed. *Called and Empowered* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 207.

¹⁰ Gary B. McGee, "Assemblies of God Mission Theology: A Historical Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10 (1986): 166.

¹¹ Anderson, 77. Indeed, Anderson believes that it was their urgent eschatology, not their pneumatology, which was the key element of Pentecostal belief. "In the early years at least, speaking in tongues and healing were subordinate elements in what was first and foremost a millenarian movement" 80.

¹² McClung, "Explosion", 163.

Whole families volunteered for the Work, sold their possessions, and started for the field. They were possessed with a passion to go to the ends of the earth for their Lord, and no sacrifice seemed too great to them that the gospel might be proclaimed and the coming of the Lord hastened.¹³

Coupled with this urgent eschatology, the early Pentecostals saw themselves as the recipients of the “latter rain” outpouring of God’s Spirit, signifying the end of the age.¹⁴ As such, they believed they were in the midst of the literal fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29, and that the Spirit of God was being poured out upon them with all of the accompanying signs and wonders. For the Pentecostal, their newly acquired “baptism in the Holy Spirit” was about one thing: power for witnessing. A literal reading of Acts 1:8 shows clearly the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit-baptism: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Early Pentecostal writings are replete with references to Spirit-baptism and the reception of power for witnessing.¹⁵ Donald Gee, a noted British Pentecostal from the first half of this century, wrote the following:

It is the Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-empowered Christian who truly possesses dynamic power for witnessing. We have derived the word *dynamite* from the Greek word *dunamis*, used in Acts 1:8. The power of the gospel sometimes acts with blessed explosive force. Opposition to God’s word is sometimes hard as granite and needs the explosive nature of dynamite before the preaching can make any impression. The need is for dynamic power.¹⁶

¹³ McClung, “Explosion”, 163.

¹⁴ Anderson, 81.

¹⁵ Throughout this work, “Spirit-baptism” will be used interchangeably with “Baptism in the Holy Spirit.” No distinction in meaning is implied. For an excellent discussion of the various understandings of “Spirit-baptism” see H.I. Lederle, *Treasures Old and New: Interpretations of “Spirit-Baptism” in the Charismatic Renewal Movement* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988).

¹⁶ David A. Womack, ed. *Pentecostal Experience: The Writings of Donald Gee* (Springfield, MI: Gospel Publishing House, 1993), 37.

Contemporary Pentecostals continue to echo this theme. “The very heartbeat of Pentecostal missions is their experience with the power and Person of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal Christianity does not merely assume the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the church. It expects it, plans for it, and depends upon it.”¹⁷ Speaking on missions, Thomas F. Zimmerman, former General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God (USA), warned his colleagues of forgetting the total reliance upon the Spirit which characterized early Pentecostals, and instead forging ahead on “mass strength”.¹⁸

Few Christians groups would debate the necessity of total reliance upon the Holy Spirit. Many today would claim this early Pentecostal zeal as their own. But Pentecostalism has come under fire from all sectors of Christianity, regarding both their hermeneutics and theology of subsequence. The debate surrounding Pentecostalism has varied from extreme to mild in nature, from caustic accusations to friendly challenges.¹⁹

One of the earliest and most common rebuttals to Pentecostalism was the standard cessationist position of Christianity, competently espoused by such scholars such as B.B. Warfield²⁰ in times past, and Richard B. Gaffin²¹ more recently. Essentially, this view holds that the gifts of the Spirit, with special focus on the sign gifts such as tongues, interpretation, and healing, passed away in the apostolic age with the completion of the canon. Divine

¹⁷ McClung, “Azusa”, 72.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See, for example, Hollenweger, “Pentecostals”; *idem*, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998); F.D. Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970); P. Damboriene, *Tongues as of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1969); J.D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970); S. Durasoff, *Bright Wind of the Spirit: Pentecostalism Today* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972); R.B. Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979); and J.T. Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

²⁰ *Counterfeit Miracles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918; reprint, Banner of Truth Trust, 1972).

²¹ *Perspectives on Pentecost*.

Providence is supposed to have allowed them to pass from Church life, unneeded as they were alongside a completed canon.²²

Some scholars appreciate the emphasis that the movement has brought to the Church concerning the Holy Spirit, but are theologically unwilling to support any subsequent act of grace.²³ That the Holy Spirit indwells the individual at conversion is certain. That the individual must also appropriate the available empowering for witness is also essential. But the suggestion that this is a subsequent experience, evidenced by tongues, is further than they are willing to go. This group, represented by such scholars as James Dunn,²⁴ and Robert Saucy,²⁵ admits that the gifts of the Spirit ought to be alive and well in the Church today, but does not support the Pentecostal theology as such.

²² Leon Morris is a typical exemplar of this tradition: "The early church knew quite well what these gifts were. They even exulted in the exercise of them. But, in view of the fact that they disappeared so speedily and so completely that we do not even know for certain exactly what they were, we must regard them as the gift of God for the time of the Church's infancy. They did not last very long, and in the providence of God evidently they were not expected to last very long." *Spirit of the Living God: The Bible's Teaching on the Holy Spirit* (London: IVP, 1960), 64-65.

²³ The following works are testimony to the ambiguity surrounding Pentecostalism. While owing much of the recent interest in pneumatology to Pentecostalism, few are willing to support Pentecostal theology. See Gary Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Karl Barth, *The Holy Ghost and Christian Life*, trans. B. Hoyle (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1938); Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, *Contours of Christian Theology*, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IVP, 1996); Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Revised ed. (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1989); Hermann Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*, trans. R. Harrisville and P. Quanbeck (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); G.T. Montague, *Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1976); C.F.D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, *The Mowbrays Library of Theology* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co., 1978); H.J. Ockenga, *The Spirit of the Living God* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1947); Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996); Michael Ramsey, *Holy Spirit: A Biblical Study* (London: SPCK, 1977); Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979); Eduard Schweizer, *The Holy Spirit*, trans. R. Fuller (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); H.B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1912); *idem*, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1916); and Max Turner, *Power From on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplementary Series*, eds. J.C. Thomas, R.D. Moore, and S.J. Land, no. 8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

²⁴ Dunn, "Baptism".

²⁵ "Open But Cautious," In *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*. Wayne A. Gruden, ed. Counterpoint Series. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

Another large contingent is comprised of those who do not come from Pentecostal backgrounds, but through renewal and revival have experienced the reality of a second blessing, often replete with obvious demonstrations of the Spirit's empowerment. Generally known as charismatics, and perhaps best represented academically by J. Rodman Williams,²⁶ these believers have the second blessing experience, but fail to see the need of expressing their theology in Pentecostal terms.

Almost unique among the challenges mentioned is Gordon D. Fee. A Pentecostal by background, the son of Assemblies of God minister Donald Fee, Gordon is himself an ordained Assemblies of God minister since 1959. Having served as the pastor of various assemblies from 1958 to 1966, Fee was conferred the Ph.D. degree in New Testament studies by the University of Southern California in 1966. During a teaching career that has spanned more than three decades, Fee has taught at Southern California College (AG, 1966-69) in Costa Mesa; Wheaton College (1969-74), Wheaton, Illinois; Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1974-86), South Hamilton, Massachusetts; and since 1986 he has been Professor of N.T. at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia.²⁷

As a scholar, Fee enjoys worldwide respect and admiration for his work as a New Testament textual critic. In addition to many articles in areas of his specialization, he has also authored several books on NT studies, including *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Pastors and Teachers* (1983)²⁸; and *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* (With D. Stuart, 1982).²⁹ His *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*³⁰ appears in the

²⁶ *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology From a Charismatic Perspective*. 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988-1992.)

²⁷ P.H. Alexander, "Fee, Gordon Donald," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, S.M. Burgess, and G.B. McGee, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 305.

²⁸ Philadelphia, Westminster Press.

²⁹ Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 2nd. ed., 1993.

prestigious New International Commentary Series, as does his commentary on Phillipians.³¹ Since 1991 he has been named the editor of the series.

Within Pentecostal circles, however, Fee is both admired and denounced. With "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent: A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," published in a 1976 collection of essays³², and "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Issue of Separability and Subsequence," published in *Pneuma* in 1985,³³ Fee waded deeper into the debate concerning Pentecostalism than even he intended. His demonstrable skills as a textual scholar can make the traditional Pentecostal wary, while recognizing Fee as a voice to be reckoned with. Fee's determination is that while Scripture does not convincingly support the Pentecostal insistence upon subsequence and initial evidence, it does nonetheless support the Pentecostal emphasis of a dramatic empowerment for witness, charismatic life in the Spirit, with a constant openness to the supernatural, miraculous moving of the Holy Spirit in and through His people.³⁴

Fee's hermeneutical guidelines are readily available. Four articles in *Cruz*³⁵ have been reprinted in the 1991 release of *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*.³⁶ Other publications have offered little new insight into Fee's hermeneutics as

³⁰ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

³¹ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

³² In *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, R.P. Spittler, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 118-134.

³³ *Pneuma* 7:2 (1985): 87-99.

³⁴ In personal conversation, Fee indicated that he had no idea that his writings in this area would cause such a stir. He simply wrote some proposals which he hoped would get Pentecostals thinking about what he perceived were the weaknesses in their hermeneutics. Interview by the author, 5 December, 1997, telephone conversation.

³⁵ Volumes 26 (June 1990); (September 1990); (December 1990); and 27 (March 1991).

³⁶ Chapters Six and Seven each deal with Fee's theology, and will be dealt with below. Chapter One, "Hermeneutics and Common Sense: An Exploratory Essay on the Hermeneutics of the Epistles," and Chapter Eight, "Laos and Leadership Under the New Covenant: Some Exegetical and Hermeneutical Observations on Church Order," have little new to offer regarding Fee's hermeneutics and Pentecostal theology. Each is also a

many contain reprints from his older books. For our purposes, we will examine several of Fee's works. First, Fee's hermeneutic as detailed in *Gospel and Spirit*. This is the most up-to-date explanation of his hermeneutic available.

When looking at Fee's contributions to Pentecostal theology, *Gospel and Spirit* provides much of the material needed, for chapter six is a reprint of "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent: A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* (R.P. Spittler, ed. 1976); and chapter seven, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Issue of Separability and Subsequence," from *Pneuma* 7:2 (1985). In these two articles, slightly updated for the 1991 reprint, Fee examines Pentecostal theology and its hermeneutics. Further material is gleaned from what may well be his *magnum opus*, the 900 page *God's Empowering Presence* (Hendrickson, 1994).³⁷

Fee's contribution to Pentecostal hermeneutics and theology cannot be overestimated, though a comprehensive examination of his impact on contemporary Pentecostalism has not been written. This thesis seeks to address that omission. It will begin by charting the background of the Pentecostal movement, the changes brought with maturity, and the significant interaction between Gordon Fee and Pentecostalism in the areas of hermeneutics and Pentecostal distinctives. While Neo-Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement are in themselves worthy of attention, this work will limit itself to the traditional Pentecostal movement, for it is the arena in which most of the debate between Fee and Pentecostal theologians has occurred.

republishing of an original article. Chapter One, from R.R. Nicole and J.R. Michaels, ed., *Inerrancy and Common Sense* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980); and Chapter Eight from *Crux* 25 (1989):36-44.

³⁷ Though Fee has written a superb commentary on I Corinthians for the NICNT series, any portions relevant to this work were transposed directly into *God's Empowering Presence*. Often, when looking for Fee's most recent thought on this topic, one finds that his newest effort is a reprint of previous material. Though frustrating, it signifies Fee's attempt to move towards other pursuits.

Chapter one will examine the roots of the Pentecostal second blessing doctrine, tracing it from Wesleyan perfectionism to Pentecostal empowering. The movement in emphasis is gradual, but essentially unstoppable in the theological climate preceding the Pentecostal movement.

Chapter two explores Pentecostal Spirit-baptism theology. Beginning with the earliest apologists for the movement, and continuing with contemporary scholars, any significant change in the official Pentecostal position regarding Spirit-baptism will be investigated. The specific exegetical considerations which propels the Pentecostal theology will be examined in detail. As the Pentecostal use of Scripture is carefully examined, their increasing ability to defend their beliefs academically will be observed.

Pentecostal hermeneutics is the focus of Chapter Three. Interested as this thesis is in Pentecostal theology, it must first discover whether Pentecostalism falls in line with traditional conservative Protestant teaching on the role and purpose of God's Word. If Pentecostalism can be found to be unorthodox in this regard, it may safely be assumed that the resultant hermeneutic will be unsatisfactory as well. Early Pentecostal hermeneutics were literalistic, without much concern for scholarly research and carefully constructed exegesis. In the last several decades, however, Pentecostal hermeneutics have begun to come of age as Pentecostal scholars have debated the need for a separate hermeneutic. Some conclude that the Pentecostal experience automatically affects their hermeneutic, while others maintain that the traditional evangelical historical-critical method will serve Pentecostalism well. Signifying their awareness of contemporary culture, recent debate has focused on postmodernism and a reader-centered hermeneutic. Four responses to the challenge of postmodernity will be considered, each highlighting a representative scholar.

In Chapter four, the specific hermeneutical and theological proposals of Gordon Fee are appraised. The impact of his proposals concerning authorial intentionality, exegesis and the role of tradition, and historical precedent will be investigated. Fee's willingness to vouch for the Pentecostal experience and ever-increasing life in the Spirit will be clearly shown, as

will his insistence that Scripture does not concretely support the Pentecostal position as it is officially stated.

Finally, Chapter five will note the response of Pentecostal scholars to Fee. Pentecostals have taken exception to certain of Fee's principles and these differences will be examined. In slightly different ways, each of the scholars surveyed upholds the traditional Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence, with varying degrees of interaction with Fee's hermeneutical principles and theology. Space has been given for Fee's response to his critics, often clarifying the issues substantially.

Overall, it will be shown that the interaction of Pentecostal hermeneutics and theology with the proposals of Gordon Fee has been tremendously beneficial to the Pentecostal movement. As never before, Pentecostalism has been forced into academic self-examination by one of their own. They must wrestle with fundamental questions: Does the decision to support or deny the Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence rest more on theological presuppositions than on actual hermeneutics and exegesis? Can evangelical hermeneutics be used in defense of subsequence, or is a unique *Pentecostal hermeneutic* required? Can one support Pentecostal theology only with the understanding that true academic integrity will be lost? Chapter one provides the historical background to this debate.

CHAPTER I

The Historical Roots of the Second Work Doctrine

Though Pentecostalism would seem to differ from evangelicalism in many respects, the distinctives are often less extensive than they appear. As heirs of the Reformation, Pentecostals hold to the various orthodox doctrines, including justification by faith, the authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ, and the Trinity.¹ Pentecostalism's strong emphasis on a second work of grace does, however, differentiate it from other conservative Protestants. All evangelical groups believe and teach the necessity of a conversion event, during which the unregenerate individual is met by the grace of God and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals however, teach the importance of a second experience, that of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This chapter will explore the historical background of the second work doctrine at both the academic and popular levels. Beginning with the writings of John Wesley, the furtherance of the idea can be clearly found in the thought of the Holiness movement, and then in the evangelists Dwight Moody and Reuben Torrey. In each of these Pentecostalism is rooted. A larger question will then present itself. In its Wesleyan origin, the second work was a divine act of sanctification. Inasmuch as a present-day Pentecostal understanding views the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a provision of power for evangelism, the concept of the second

¹ Russell P. Spittler, "Theological Style Among Pentecostals and Charismatics," In J.D. Woodbridge and T.E. McComiskey, ed. *Doing Theology in Today's World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 296.

work of grace has undergone a radical shift in meaning and purpose. This chapter will now address the roots of this doctrine and the movement in purpose from sanctification to power.

John Wesley

The first historical occurrence of the doctrine of a second blessing is debated among scholars², though in all such discussions, the writings of John Wesley figure prominently. When researching the historical roots of Pentecostalism, however, Wesley is without doubt *the* place to begin. Without the theological contribution of Wesley, the Pentecostal conception of subsequence would likely have never occurred.

Wesley's belief in a second work of grace came through his study and preaching on the doctrine of sanctification. The son of an Anglican minister, he trained in Anglican doctrine at Oxford. At the age of twenty-five, as an Anglican himself, he began his own reading program in order to further define his convictions.³ From the time of his conversion onwards, Wesley developed and perfected his doctrine of Christian sanctification. Beginning in 1739 and continuing until 1777, he issued and repeatedly revised his beliefs concerning perfection in a tract entitled, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as Believed and Taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley."⁴ This 81 page document has become a veritable manifesto for various holiness groups since it was written.⁵

² See James Dunn, "Spirit-Baptism and Pentecostalism," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970): 397-399. Dunn believes the move towards two distinct works began with the Puritans, from whom Wesley borrowed the idea. This was not conclusively demonstrated, nor referred to in the other works consulted. For further reading on the Holy Spirit in Puritan thought see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.)

³ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 14. The reading which followed helped shape the young Wesley's views. Most notable among the titles were Jeremy Taylor's *Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying*, and William Law's *Treatise on Christian Perfection and Serious Call to a Holy and Devout Life*, which he read in 1725.

⁴ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*. Vol. XI. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 366-446.

⁵ Melvin E. Dieter, et al. *Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 37.

Wesley's Theology of Christian Perfection

How might we summarize the teachings of Wesley on holiness and sanctification? With his use of the term "perfection", Wesley has often been accused of idealism, holding up as attainable something which humanity can never hope to accomplish.⁶ Much of this misunderstanding can be eliminated when one digs into the original language from which Wesley derived "perfection". The crucial term for Wesley was not the Latin *perfectus*, but τελειώ in the Greek.⁷ While the former stresses perfection in the modern sense, that of "being without fault", the latter has a different connotation. It suggests "perfecting" or "completing"⁸, a dynamic understanding that came to him from many of the Eastern fathers with which he was familiar.⁹ Wesley did not mean "sinless perfection" in the sense that some have understood it, but rather "Christian perfection".¹⁰

Harald Lindstrom argues that prior to his conversion in 1738, Wesley believed in perfection as something the Christian was commanded to strive for but could never procure. After his conversion and realization that justification is obtained by faith alone, he saw sanctification as something that might be achieved in similar fashion. Each is a gift of God, unattainable by any other means than *sola fides*.¹¹

⁶ William R. Cannon, "John Wesley's Doctrine of Sanctification and Perfection," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 35 (1961): 92-3.

⁷ Thomas Oden and L.R. Langdon, ed. *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*. Essays of Albert C. Outler. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 121.

⁸ F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 198.

⁹ Oden, *Heritage*, 121.

¹⁰ John R. Higgins, et al. *An Introduction to Theology: A Classical Pentecostal Perspective*. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1994), 117.

¹¹ Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 133.

Wesley's new view of grace had its repercussions on his doctrine of perfection as well as on his doctrine of justification. Man was justified by faith, and by faith he would be fully sanctified too. He explained the fact that perfect sanctification was not ordinarily accorded to the Christian until shortly before death by pointing out that it was not expected earlier, and therefore not prayed for in faith.¹²

Most scholars agree that Wesley did perceive sanctification as an act of God, subsequent to salvation, completing the process of holiness begun at conversion.¹³ The clearest and most convincing evidence of Wesley's second work doctrine are the words of Wesley himself:

But does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously? Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some . . . but it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin "by the breath of his mouth," in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does; a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou* therefore look for it every moment! Look for it every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first, before* you are sanctified. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are*; and if as you are, then expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connection between these three points, - Expect it *by faith*, Expect it *as you are*, and Expect it *now*!¹⁴

Clearly, Wesley believed in entire sanctification as a work wrought by God, in an experience subsequent to salvation. This is the first step in tracing the Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace. Before we leave this era however,

¹² Ibid. See Wesley, *Works*, VIII, 285.

¹³ See Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal*, 19; Dieter, *Five Views*, 17; William R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley*. (New York: University Press of America, n.d.), 242; R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfectionism in Christian Theology*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 329-341; and Lindstrom, *Sanctification*, 132-133. Typically, not everyone agrees with the preceding statement. Albert Outler suggests that the doctrine is a later development of Methodist "holiness movements". See Oden, *Heritage*, 122.

¹⁴ John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," in *Works*, Vol VI, 53.

it may be helpful to consider briefly the ideas of Wesley's designated successor, John Fletcher.

Once it was clear that the "moment" of entire sanctification was emphasized in Wesleyan thought, the question naturally arose as to whether it was appropriate to describe this moment in terms of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Fletcher was keen on using the phrase¹⁵, but Wesley appears to have resisted. He insisted that "the phrase in that sense is not scriptural and not quite proper; for they all 'received the Holy Ghost' when they were justified."¹⁶ For Fletcher's part, he agreed to disagree on this issue, commenting

You will find my views on this matter in Mr. Wesley's sermons on Christian Perfection and on Scriptural Christianity; with this difference, that I would distinguish more exactly between the believer baptized with the Pentecostal power of the Holy Ghost, and the believer who, like the Apostles after our Lord's ascension, is not yet filled with that power.¹⁷

Fletcher's ideas were the beginning of what would later become a significant Pentecostal doctrine and are the first hint of the change in focus from Methodist to Pentecostal perspectives. These beliefs did not develop in early Methodism, due in large part to Wesley's resistance, and the widespread faithfulness to his theology. America would provide the proper ground for these motifs to grow further.

The Holiness Movement

When Methodism was transplanted to American soil the doctrine of entire sanctification came with it. In the earliest recorded Methodist sermon in the United States,

¹⁵ Dunn, "Spirit-Baptism," 399.

¹⁶ Letter of John Wesley to John Fletcher, dated 28 December 1770, in John Telford, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M. (London: Epworth, 1931) 5:214-215. Though see Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 21, who concludes, perhaps in an assumption, that Wesley equated entire sanctification with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ Letter of John Fletcher to Joseph Benson, dated 22 March 1771, reprinted in Luke Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1882), 411.

dating back to 1766, Captain Thomas Webb declared, "The words of the text were written by the Apostles after the act of justification had passed on them. But you see, my friends, this was not enough for them. They must receive the Holy Ghost after this. So must you. You must be sanctified"¹⁸ This is the initial tying together of the second work with the baptism of the Holy Spirit in America. As Methodism spread, so did this theology. Though the War of Independence several years later slowed the growth of the new movement, Methodism soon became the largest American denomination. Although statistics do not tell the whole tale, the four ministers who cared for 300 people in 1771 had grown to 2,000 ministers and over 200,000 Methodists by 1816.¹⁹

Phoebe Palmer

Many factors contributed to the rise of the holiness revival, and space does not permit an analysis of them all. In New York, a physician's wife, Phoebe Palmer, received the experience of sanctification in 1837. Meetings known as the "Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness" became, over a sixty year period, a magnet for those interested in holiness, both as a movement and for themselves.²⁰ Palmer was the first to popularize the vocabulary associated with Pentecostalism. She began to use the phrase "baptism of the Holy Spirit", which she felt was synonymous with "entire sanctification".²¹ Her teaching

¹⁸ J.F. Hurst, *The History of Methodism*, Vol III (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1902), 1252.

¹⁹ Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 173. See also W.R. Richardson, "Methodist Revivalism and the Baptists of Eastern British America in 1858," in *A Fragile Stability: Definition and Redefinition of Maritime Baptist Identity*, ed. D.T. Priestly (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1994), 21-36.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

²¹ Richard M. Riss, *A Survey of 20th-Century Revival Movements in North America* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 18.

that a pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost was every believer's privilege and duty, spread far and wide.²²

In her "shorter way" to holiness, she outlines 3 steps, each of which focuses on the human decision: 1) entire consecration; 2) faith, that is, believing we have already received that we which have asked for; 3) and testimony to the fact that we have received it, whether or not we have felt anything. The difference between Palmer's attitudes and those of early Wesleyanism (see pp. 3-4 above) are tremendously significant. Whereas Wesley had originally believed in holiness as a life-long pursuit, full of hard work and many failures, Palmer seems to be a forerunner of the "name it and claim it" theologies. Holiness is now a matter of the proper human steps, secured by faith, not by hard work and perseverance. Mrs. Palmer's influence on Pentecostalism can hardly be overemphasized. Indeed, she has been called "the missing link between Methodist and Pentecostal spirituality."²³

Charles G. Finney

In the decades before the U.S. Civil War²⁴, Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) emerged as the best-known revivalist in the United States.²⁵ As such, he impacted the religious thought of America in several ways that would help to prepare the way for Pentecostalism.²⁶ Conventionally, in the Calvinistic pattern of the First Great Awakening under Edwards, salvation was firmly in the hands of God alone. Little could be done to

²² Ibid.

²³ Henry Knight III, "From Aldersgate to Azusa: Wesley and the Renewal of Pentecostal Spirituality," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (1996): 86. See also: W. Ralph Richardson, "Methodist Revivalism and the Baptists of Eastern British America in 1858." In *A Fragile Stability: Definition and Redefinition of Maritime Baptist Identity*, ed. David T. Priestly (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1994): 21-34.

²⁴ 1861-1865.

²⁵ Noll, *History*, 174. See also Charles G. Finney, *Memoirs* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1876).

²⁶ Though beyond the scope of this work, detailed information on Finney's revival measures may be found in Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1868.)

advance salvation to individuals or communities. All was the work of God, as the Fall left humanity so utterly depraved as to render all people incapable of choosing Christ. When conversion did occur, it was the culmination of a long process of conviction and grace.²⁷

Under Finney, however, the focus began to change dramatically. His revivalism was for the "whosoever will" and stressed the free will of man. Conversion was understood less as a process, and more as a crisis experience, gained in a moment of time.²⁸ This transformation in the understanding of conversion helped prepare the way for a similar move in the doctrine of sanctification.

These developments were a necessary prelude to what would follow. Once "crisis" overwhelms "process" to make sanctification primarily an event occurring at a definite point in time - that is, when sanctification has been largely absorbed into entire sanctification - and once the teleological thrust of Christian perfection is transmuted into an initiatory experience that usually follows rapidly on conversion, the stage has been set for the reemergence of the Pentecostal formulation of entire sanctification.²⁹

John L. Gresham, in *Charles G. Finney's Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, argues that Finney laid new emphasis on the doctrine of Spirit-baptism. Not only was the baptism essential for sanctification, but also for *empowerment for service*. "Finney's later discussions of the baptism in the Holy Spirit revolved around those two themes: sanctification and usefulness. The baptism was presented either as a cleansing, liberating experience or as an act of empowerment for ministry."³⁰ Finney wrote, "If filled with the Spirit, you will be useful. You cannot help being useful. Even if you were sick and unable to go out of your room, or to converse, and saw nobody, you would be ten times more useful

²⁷ William W. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture 1765-1840* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), 148.

²⁸ J.D. Douglas, ed., *New 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 715.

²⁹ Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 70.

³⁰ John L. Gresham, *Charles G. Finney's Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 15. See also Knight, "Aldersgate to Azusa," 88.

than a hundred of those common sort of Christians who have no spirituality."³¹ This tendency to interpret the baptism of the Holy Spirit in terms of sanctification *and* power for service is an important theme, and one which will be of great significance for early Pentecostalism.

Social and Theological Factors

In the nineteenth century, several social factors helped prepare the way for Pentecostal ideas and theology. To be sure, the revival that swept across the American north in 1857-8 spread holiness thought as never before.³² Beginning in New York City and spreading to the Northeast before becoming a worldwide movement, it proved to be a powerful tool not only for the disseminating of holiness teachings, but also for propagating what would become Pentecostal rhetoric and themes. Everywhere the revival was discussed, it included the plethora of pentecostal imagery that was in vogue when describing such a move of God.³³

Other factors also conspired to support a major transformation within Wesleyan thought. Various issues of great severity combined to create splits in nearly all the major denominations. The struggle over slavery, for example, produced within Methodism the anti-slavery Wesleyan Methodist Connection and the Free Methodist Church. The upward mobility of denominations such as Methodism caused its own share of divisions, as some (such as the holiness movement) attempted to keep in contact with the masses. Further, the broad cultural optimism and push toward perfection that so characterized the first half of the 19th century began to diminish even before the Civil War. The dissolution of cultural

³¹ E.E. Shelhamer, ed. *Finney on Revival* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, n.d.), 114. See also Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 41, who believes that Finney placed more emphasis on power than perfection.

³² Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal*, 31.

³³ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 74.

supports for the doctrine of Christian perfection gave stimulus for ways to re-express the doctrine in a culturally relevant manner.³⁴ This turn towards a more personal and "spiritual" mood among many holiness groups anticipated the coming Pentecostal style and message.

The Holiness currents were increasingly, though not exclusively, the carriers of the experimental fidelity to the doctrine of entire sanctification. One of the most striking differences in mood between the antebellum advocates of Christian perfection, especially those at Oberlin college, and the postwar proclaimers of Pentecostal sanctification is the earlier sense of "ability" and the latter search for "power." It may well be that the late nineteenth century saw the decline of confidence, at least in some circles, in the ability of human effort to cope with growing social complexity and a consequent growing search for the "power" either to cope or to sustain one through to better times. The Pentecostal formulation of entire sanctification may have played an important role in the "empowering" of the "powerless". . . .³⁵

Finally, two theological factors may be recognized. First, it is possible to discern in the nineteenth century a radical turn to themes of the Holy Spirit and spirituality. The rise of spiritualism, Christian Science, and philosophical idealism all embodied this new focal point. In theologically conservative circles this development took the form of an increased emphasis on the Holy Spirit.³⁶ From this vantage point, the shift in Wesleyan thought to Pentecostal sanctification may be seen as the product of an increased interest in the Holy Spirit. Second, the theme of perfection had always been controversial, and full of apologetical problems. While the shift towards an emphasis on power over sanctification was clearly visible in certain circles, many scholars of Methodism continued to debate the theology of entire sanctification. William Burt Pope³⁷ and John Miley³⁸, both writing in the last decade of the nineteenth century, declared openly that entire sanctification did not occur

³⁴ Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-nineteenth Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 178-224.

³⁵ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 77.

³⁶ Noll, *History*, 380.

³⁷ *A Compendium of Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1890).

³⁸ *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1893).

through a second blessing of the Holy Spirit. They further admonished that any talk of Spirit-baptism for increased power alone was mistaken. For example, Pope observed:

There has been a tendency among some teachers of religion in modern times so to speak of Christian perfection as to seem to make it the entrance into a new order of life, one namely of higher consecration under the influence of the Holy Ghost. That this higher life is the secret of entire consecration there can be no doubt. But there is no warrant in Scripture for making it a new dispensation of the Spirit, or a Pentecostal visitation super-added to the state of conversion In other words entire consecration is the stronger energy of a Spirit already in the regenerate, not a Spirit to be sent down from on high.³⁹

The debate intensified when holiness motifs crossed denominational lines into other theological contexts, especially that of the Reformed tradition. Thus in 1874, one such as the Methodist Daniel Steele, past president of Syracuse University, admonished Christians to "cease to discuss the subtleties and endless questions arising from entire sanctification or Christian perfection, and all cry mightily to God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit" ⁴⁰ Whatever the reasons, the shift in focus did take place, and the consequences for Pentecostalism cannot be underestimated.

Holiness Campmeetings.

It would not be sufficient to conclude this section without some commentary on the role of the Holiness campmeetings. In the years following the American Civil War, the Holiness movement increasingly adopted the language and beliefs of sanctification as a second blessing. The most important institution of this movement was the *National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness* in 1867.⁴¹ The call to the campmeeting hoped "to realize together a pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost".⁴² From 1867 to 1883 a

³⁹ *Compendium*, vol 3, 64.

⁴⁰ Daniel Steele, "Baptism of the Holy Spirit," *Guide to Holiness* 20 (February 1874): 38.

⁴¹ Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement* (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), 15.

⁴² George Hughes, *Days of Power in the Forest Temple* (Boston: J. Bent, 1873; reprint, Salem, Ohio: Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1975), 55.

total of fifty-two national camps were held, each interdenominational, though dominated by Methodists. Synan believes that this may be properly understood as the beginning of the modern Holiness movement in the United States. It was responsible for birthing over 100 new denominations, including that of Pentecostalism.⁴³

Pre-Pentecostal Doctrine

Perhaps most influential spokesman on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899). In his book *Secret Power*⁴⁴ Moody outlines what he believes is the cause for the lack of spiritual effectiveness in believers of his time - a failure to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. He distinguishes clearly between the reception of the Spirit at conversion, and the subsequent empowering for service. Unlike the later Pentecostals, he does not seem to clearly expound the notion of *one* future empowering, or Spirit-baptism. Moody leaves open the possibility of many occurring over the course of a lifetime, empowering and energizing the Christian for service.

The Holy Spirit dwelling in us is one thing; I think this is clearly brought out in Scripture. And the Holy Spirit upon us for service is another thing.

I think it is clearly taught in Scripture that every believer has the Holy Ghost dwelling in Him . . . But I want to call your attention to another fact. I believe, today, that though Christian men and women have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, yet He is not dwelling within them in power.⁴⁵

⁴³ Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal*, 37. The Keswick Movement is another contributing factor in the shift from Wesleyan to Pentecostal doctrine. The influence of American holiness figures such as Finney and Cullis was strongly felt in Britain as well. In 1875 a series of annual conventions commenced in Keswick, England. These events became a major center of late nineteenth-century holiness and spirituality. Theologically, Keswick occupied territory somewhere in between the Holiness movement and the Revivalist teachings. It was concerned with the second blessing as a remedy for sin, but steered clear of perfectionism. Though not spelling out in exact similarity what was to become known as Pentecostal doctrine, the Keswick teachings continued the Wesleyan emphasis on a second work, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for the completeness of the Christian life. See S. Barabas, *So Great Salvation* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1952), v; and Knight III, "Aldergate to Azusa," 91-92.

⁴⁴ (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1881; repr. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1987).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 47,51.

Concerning the difference between the reception of the Spirit by the disciples in John 20:22⁴⁶ and Acts 2, he writes:

Now the Spirit had been given them certainly or they could not have believed. And they could not have taken their stand for God and gone through what they did . . . if they had not been converted by the power of the Holy Ghost. But now just see what Christ said: "You shall receive power, after that they Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Then, the Holy Spirit *in us* is one thing, and the Holy Spirit *on us* is another . . ."⁴⁷

Another well-known advocate of the Pentecostal view of sanctification and empowerment came from Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928),⁴⁸ the longtime associate of Moody. While Torrey did not support the doctrine that would become the "initial evidence" position of Pentecostals, he nonetheless clearly expounded their views concerning the purpose of Spirit-baptism. He taught that "the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a definite experience of which one may and ought to know whether he has received it or not,"⁴⁹ and "it is evident that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an operation of the Holy Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work."⁵⁰

In addition, he wrote:

The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not primarily to make believers individually holy. I do not say that it is not the work of the Holy Spirit to make believers holy, for as we have already seen, He is "the Spirit of holiness," and the only way we shall ever attain unto holiness is by His power. I do not even say that the baptism with the Holy Spirit will not result in a great

⁴⁶ "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'receive the Holy Spirit'." New International Version.

⁴⁷ Moody, *Secret Power*, 61.

⁴⁸ Torrey wrote several books on the Holy Spirit, including *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1910; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974); and *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1927).

⁴⁹ Torrey, *Person and Work*, 147.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

spiritual transformation and uplift and cleansing . . . *but the primary purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is efficiency in testimony and service.*⁵¹

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the doctrine of a second work, subsequent to conversion, through the writings of John Wesley, and into the theology of the forerunners of Pentecostalism. We have seen the gradual connection between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the second work. The movement from sanctification as the purpose of this work to empowerment for service was also unhurried, taking shape in the thought and teachings of individuals such as Mrs. Palmer, Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, and R.A. Torrey. Though this period was rife with tensions between academic and popular writers, it is noteworthy that the doctrine of subsequence had supporters and teachers on both sides. Wesley, Finney, and Torrey were academic writers, while Mrs. Palmer and Moody were popularisers. From this rich background the theological ground had been tilled for the planting of the Pentecostal movement, with its unwavering emphasis on an empowering baptism of the Holy Spirit subsequent to conversion.

Clearly, the foundation had been laid for the Pentecostal movement to interpret the occurrences of Azusa Street in terms of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as an empowering for service and witness. What further developments occurred in Pentecostal thought over the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 155-156. *Italics Torrey's.* By the time the "Spirit of God" began to fall on worshippers at Azusa street in 1905, the religious world was well prepared to understand the occurrence in terms of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit". The dominant issue for many involved in the debate, however, consisted of integrating the "perfection" and "cleansing" motifs of Wesleyanism, with the increasing theme of "power" in Pentecostalism. The solution of some, such as Mrs. Palmer and others, involved somehow combining the two. She suggested that "holiness *is* power" and that "purity and power are identical." See Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father* (Boston: H.V. Degen, 1859), 206 and *idem*, *Pioneer Experiences* (New York: W.C. Palmer, Jr., 1868), vi. Charles Finney tended to understand the baptism in terms of both sanctification *and* power, as has been demonstrated above. Others such as E.P. Ellyson and Russell Byrum taught that when the Holy Spirit came in His fullness, He cleansed the vessel from abiding sin, and through His indwelling presence, empowered the believer for active service. See E.P. Ellyson, *Doctrinal Studies* (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1936), 106; and Russell Bryum, *Holy Spirit Baptism and the 2nd Cleansing* (Anderson, Ind.: Gospel Trumpet, 1923; reprint, Guthrie, Okla.: Faith Publishing House, n.d.), 18.

coming decades? How did the Initial Evidence doctrine gain such prominence and notoriety? Has the movement matured theologically since their earliest apologists first espoused the Pentecostal distinctives? The answers to these questions and others will be found in chapter two, with an in-depth examination of Pentecostal theology, both classical and contemporary.

CHAPTER II

The Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism: Classical and Contemporary

Despite the rapidity of their growth and the success with which they have proclaimed the gospel, Pentecostals in general, and their theology in particular, remain the object of as much criticism as applause. The Pentecostal case for the doctrine of Spirit-baptism will now be presented. Major Pentecostal writers and theologians will be studied to gain a clear understanding of the Pentecostal message. As representatives covering the 90 years of the movement are surveyed, it will become apparent that Pentecostalism has changed its theological stance very little, though the methods with which it defends itself have matured with academic integrity. When faced with a critique such as Fee's, it is wise first to attempt a thorough understanding of Pentecostal theology in this area. Only then is one equipped with the necessary framework to evaluate Fee's work properly.

Classical Understanding

From the beginning, a majority of Pentecostals clearly tied the second work of Baptism in the Holy Spirit to an endowment of power. This followed directly on the path set for them by teachers such as Finney, Moody, and Torrey. Though some early leaders of the new movement were inclined towards the "three blessing" view, which desired to incorporate

Wesleyan sanctification teaching as well, the two stage theology took precedence.¹ Those who experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Azusa,² clearly believed it was to empower them for service.

The Earliest Pentecostals c. 1910

Frank Bartleman, an eyewitness to the events at Azusa during 1906-1908 wrote, "But here we are the restoration of the very experience of 'Pentecost', with the 'latter rain', a restoration of the power, in greater glory, to finish up the work begun."³ Another early member noted that the movement stood for "the restoration of Apostolic faith, power and practice, Christian unity, the evangelization of the whole world preparatory to the Lord's return . . ."⁴ Other early writers echoed similar strains. William J. Seymour, one of the "founding fathers" of the Azusa Street revival, declared:

There is a great difference between a sanctified person and one that is baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. A sanctified person is cleansed and filled with divine love, but the one that is baptized with the Holy Ghost has the power of God on his soul and has power with God and man When the Holy Ghost comes in and takes us as His instruments, this is the power that convicts men and women and causes them to see that there is reality in serving Jesus Christ.⁵

The themes of sanctification and holiness, while still important to the Christian lifestyle, had all but disappeared from discussions surrounding the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

¹ See Knight, "Aldersgate to Azusa," 93, who notes that Parham, Seymour, C.H. Mason, G.B. Cashwell, and Florence Crawford all subscribed to Irwin's 3 stages - Conversion, Sanctification, Spirit-baptism. The third stage was, of course, evidenced by tongues.

² For an eyewitness account of the the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, see Bartleman, *Azusa Street*; and *idem*, *Another Wave of Revival* (Pittsburgh, PA: Whittaker House, 1982).

³ Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 89.

⁴ Quoted in E. Blumhofer, ed. *Modern Christian Revivals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 148.

⁵ McClung, ed. *Azusa Street and Beyond*, 50.

Donald Gee and Myer Pearlman - 1930's

Though the lack of any attempt to develop Pentecostal theological works before this time may seem unusual, as children of the Holiness movement, Pentecostals felt no immediate need to write theologies of their own. "The central belief, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, was set on top of the commonly accepted conservative Christian orthodoxy."⁶ Not until the late 1930's did Pentecostals realize the importance of articulating and defending their beliefs to themselves, and the greater Christian world.

One of the most influential early Pentecostal writers was Donald Gee (1891-1966), a British Pentecostal leader, known to many as the "Apostle of Balance".⁷ His most lasting influence came from his early books, written during the 1930's, which strongly articulated and defended the largely misunderstood Pentecostal experience to both adherents and interested observers.⁸ "The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct experience from conversion, which agrees with the clear testimony of the Scriptures (Acts 8:16; 9:17; 19:2; etc.) When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we know it. In the final analysis, it is not a doctrine but an experience."⁹ His preference for experience over doctrine is further evidenced: "Doctrines about the Spirit are necessary and inevitable, but the all-important question is not what we believe, but what we experientially enjoy."¹⁰ These quotations accurately capture the thought of Gee. He taught that there were three steps to the reception of Spirit-baptism, and that the clear evidence of such was tongues.

⁶ Spittler, "Theological Style," 296.

⁷ D.D. Bundy, "Gee, Donald," In *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 331. Gee wrote more than 30 books and contributed over 500 articles to *Redemption Tidings*, the official organ of the British Assemblies of God.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Womack, ed., *Pentecostal Experience*, 51.

¹⁰ Ibid., 55.

The first step is repentance. It means giving up all known sin, changing our attitude toward it, ceasing any conscious rebellion against God, and returning home to our Heavenly Father. The second step is baptism for the remission of sins. Baptism in water should be literally obeyed if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. The water of baptism cannot purify the soul, but in baptism, we witness to our personal faith in something that does cleanse us from all sin - the precious blood of Christ. The third step is the promise. This third step is receiving. It does not imply much effort. The gift has already been promised and is, therefore, ours for the taking from the hand of Him who loves to give good gifts to His children. We ought not to wrestle and work to receive the Holy Spirit.¹¹

You may stumble at first over the teaching that the scriptural evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking with other tongues and that it should be expected in every case as an initial sign. I firmly believe that if you ponder this with an open mind before the Lord, you will come to see from the examples of the recorded cases in the New Testament . . . that it is really so. This sign unquestionably marks the divine choice for a simple, universal, and supernatural evidence to seal the baptism with the Holy Spirit.¹²

Gee does not feel it necessary to debate the passages Pentecostals use to support their theology. Rather, he confidently states that the Pentecostal position agrees with the "clear testimony of scripture" - a telling insight into the mentality of this early Pentecostal teacher.

Another very influential figure in early Pentecostal theology was the American Myer Pearlman (1898-1943).¹³ As a convinced Pentecostal, he undertook in 1937 to write a doctrinal summary called *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*.¹⁴ This work provided his classes with a text which until then did not exist. No other Pentecostal work has matched the circulation or longevity of his work. Since its appearance in 1938, this single volume text of less than 300 pages has been in continuous print. More than 125,000 copies have been sold

¹¹ Ibid., 44.

¹² Ibid., 50.

¹³ See G.W. Gohr, "Pearlman, Myer," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 684.

¹⁴ Springfield MI: Gospel Publishing House, 1937.

in English alone, and served for many years as the standard Pentecostal theology text in their Bible colleges.¹⁵ His lack of training considered, Pearlman wrote a very thorough summary of the work of the Spirit. He notes the nature of the Spirit; the Spirit in the O.T.; the Spirit in Christ; the Spirit in human experience; the gifts of the Spirit; the Spirit in the Church.¹⁶

In his section on the Spirit in human experience, he discusses the role of the Spirit in empowering believers for service. "In addition and subsequent to conversion, a believer may experience an endowment of power whose initial oncoming is signaled by a miraculous utterance in a language never learned by the speaker."¹⁷ Pearlman acknowledges that the above conclusion has been challenged, particularly by those who correctly observe that Christians know the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification, yet fail to speak in tongues, or otherwise demonstrate His presence. He replies honestly, and is worth quoting at length, for here we see classical Pentecostalism at its best:

It cannot be successfully denied that there is a real sense in which all truly regenerated persons have the Spirit. But the question naturally follows: What is there different and additional in the experience described as the baptism in the Holy Spirit? We answer as follows:

There is one Holy Spirit, but many operations of that Spirit, just as there is one electricity but many operations of that electricity. The same electricity propels streetcars, light our houses, operates refrigerators, and performs many others tasks. In the same manner, the one Spirit regenerates, sanctifies, energizes, illumines, and imparts special gifts.

The Spirit regenerates human nature in the crisis of conversion, and then, as the Spirit of holiness within, produces the "fruit of the Spirit," the distinctive feature of Christian character.

But in addition to these operations of the Holy Spirit, there is another, having for its special purpose the energizing of human nature for special service for God,

¹⁵ Spittler, "Theological Style," 296-7.

¹⁶ Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines*, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 310. For an interesting study of the Initial Evidence doctrine, see Gary McGee, ed. *Initial Evidence* (Hendrickson, 1991), and P.H. Wiebe, "The Pentecostal Initial Evidence Doctrine," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984): 465-472.

and issuing in an outward expression of a supernatural character. In the New Testament this experience is designated by such expressions as falling upon, coming upon, being poured out, being filled with, which expressions convey the thought of suddenness and supernaturalness. All these terms are connected with the experience known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Now while freely admitting that Christians have been born of the Spirit, and workers anointed with the Spirit, we maintain that not all Christians have experienced the charismatic operation of the Spirit.¹⁸

Though not expounding in detail the Acts passages so cherished by later Pentecostals, he seems content to refer the reader to Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, where the truth of his teaching should be apparent.¹⁹ In this statement, Pearlman has expounded the traditional Pentecostal theology on Spirit baptism, corresponding closely to the second blessing doctrine taught by both Moody and Torrey. In his view, Pentecostals do not dismiss the role of the Spirit in conversion. They do, however, point to an additional empowering for service available by the Spirit, that is witnessed by obvious physical signs.

Carl Brumback - 1947

A longtime Pentecostal pastor and speaker, Carl Brumback (1917-87)²⁰ expanded a series of radio sermons from 1942 to 1944 into his significant defense of Pentecostalism, *What Meaneth This?: A Pentecostal Answer to a Pentecostal Question*.²¹ A telling insight into the Pentecostal mentality at this time is seen in Donald Dayton's suggestion that "Carl Brumback's classic *apologia* for Pentecostalism is basically a defense of glossolalia."²² The importance of this observation should not be missed. At the time Brumback wrote,

¹⁸ Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines*, 311-313.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See D.J. Wilson, "Brumback, Carl," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 100.

²¹ (Springfield, MI: Gospel Publishing House, 1947).

²² Donald Dayton, "The Limits of Evangelicalism: The Pentecostal Tradition," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1991), 38.

Pentecostals continued to defend forcefully their understanding of tongues as evidence, while almost assuming the validity of subsequence.

Brumback provides an excellent example of the continuity Pentecostalism maintained throughout the first five or six decades of the movement. He examines five key passages from the book of Acts to support his position: Pentecost (ch 2); the Samaritans (8); the Disciple at Damascus (9); Cornelius' Household (10); and the Ephesians (19). Brumback's "exegesis" of the passages is, to the modern hermeneutical mind, somewhat incredible. Though space will not permit an analysis of each of the five passages, sufficient insight will be gained from an examination of the passage detailing Paul's conversion in Acts 9. Brumback refers neither to the Greek, nor the historical-critical questions concerning this passage. He notes simply that although Paul has been sent to receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit, no record is made of his receiving the Spirit, but only of the return of his sight. His continued explanation is worth reading verbatim:

Of course, we all conclude that the will of God was accomplished in this respect as well as in the restoration of his sight. However, if our non-Pentecostal friends insist on emphasizing the absence in the record of Paul's speaking in tongues, we can say, just as logically, that he was not filled with the Holy Ghost at that hour. How could there be any mention of tongues in the narrative, when there is a complete absence of mention of the experience of which the speaking with tongues is such a part?

At the time that Paul was writing the First Epistle to the Corinthians it is certain that he possessed the gift of tongues (I Cor. 14:18). This being so, there must have been a first time when he was given this miracle of utterance. The logical place for this primary experience would have been, as in the case for all the other apostles, at the hour when he was filled with the Spirit.²³

The manner by which Brumback explicates proof of initial evidence from this passage is an excellent example of the pre-scholarly hermeneutic so often employed by classical Pentecostals. Though some will perhaps feel that little has changed in the decades

²³ *What Meaneth This?*, 216-217.

since, Pentecostals have made real progress in training themselves and utilizing all the modern hermeneutical tools available to them, as will be seen in chapter three.

Modern Pentecostalism

Contemporary Pentecostals have deviated very little from the teachings of their fathers.²⁴ Although their theology has remained essentially the same since their beginnings, the manner in which they articulate and defend their position has begun to change dramatically.

Gordon F. Atter - 1962

One of Canada's foremost authorities on the Pentecostal revival, Gordon Atter (1905 -) gives what he believes to be the answer to the question, "Who are the Pentecostals?" Having served for many years on the faculty of Eastern Pentecostal Bible College in Peterborough, Ontario, Atter was well acquainted with the questions so often put to Pentecostals regarding their theology. In his work, *The Third Force*²⁵, he presents the origin and development of Pentecostalism; their organization and growth; the history of the doctrinal developments in Pentecostalism; and their missionary work worldwide. From the table of contents alone, we are able to see development in the academic presentation of the Pentecostal position.

Atter correctly notes the immense debt of Pentecostalism to Reformation teachings. The Reformers view on justification by faith, the Trinity²⁶, the authority of Scripture, and the

²⁴ We note, however, the number of challenges from within concerning both the idea of subsequence, and the Initial Evidence doctrine. For example, see the debate in chapters 4 & 5, below.

²⁵ (Calcedonia, ON: ACTS Books, 1962; 3 rd. ed. 1970).

²⁶ The exception here would be the Oneness Pentecostals, who undermine the doctrine of the Trinity by advocating a 'Jesus only' position. See D.A. Reed, "Oneness Pentecostalism," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 644-651; *idem*, "Aspects of the Origins of Oneness Pentecostalism," in *Aspects of Pentecostal and Charismatic Origins*, ed. V. Synan (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975): 143-168; also R. Del Colle, "Oneness and Trinity: A Preliminary Proposal for Dialogue with Oneness Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10/2 (1997): 85-110.

Person of Christ, are all fully upheld by Pentecostalism. "In a surprisingly short space of time there developed a soundness of doctrine and unity of practice in most Pentecostal circles that was truly remarkable. Almost all of the doctrines held by the historic churches of the Reformation soon came to be the accepted basic doctrinal position of Pentecostal people everywhere."²⁷ Thus Atter, like many before and after him, sees no need once again to work through the commonly held Reformation theology. Rather, he concentrates on the distinctives of Pentecostalism.

The basic distinctives of Pentecostalism are simply restated, with little or no comment made by way of defense regarding subsequence. He notes that Pentecostals believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to conversion, available for all believers. The baptism is an endowment of power for witnessing and service, though other characteristics such as holiness of life, boldness, and a passion for souls ought to be evident also. In addition, "They expect frequent 'manifestations of the Spirit' in a fuller and richer measure than could otherwise be possible."²⁸

Initial evidence, however, continues to receive much attention. Atter gives several pages to stating the Pentecostal position, complete with arguments from Scripture, concerning why tongues must be the evidence. He uses the story of Cornelius in Acts 10 and the Ephesians in Acts 19 to show that in each case, tongues was the evidence of Spirit-baptism. The fact that Paul declared he spoke in tongues, and commanded others not to forbid it, seems proof enough for Atter that tongues was the evidence required. Tongues are listed as one of the signs which follow those who believe (Mark 16:17) and since the New

²⁷ *Third Force*, 122.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Testament gives no indication that God intended to change the signs that followed, he concludes that tongues are for today as well.²⁹

The fact that there are three or four signs given in Mark 16 seems to escape his notice, as does the fact that prophecy is given with tongues as the evidence in Acts 19:6. No attempt is made to explain these incongruencies, which is typical of Pentecostal apologetics of the period. The Pentecostal position is simply stated, with supporting texts, *without any effort to defend the use of these texts theologically*. Pentecostals of this period still operated on the assumption that anyone who came to Scripture openly and honestly could see the truths in the passage related.

Assemblies of God Conference on the Holy Spirit - 1982

From August 16-18, 1982, the Assemblies of God (USA) held a *Conference on the Holy Spirit* in Springfield, Missouri. Various prominent speakers from within and without addressed the delegates on pertinent themes and issues. By this time there is a marked difference in the Pentecostal approach to articulating their distinctives. Whereas Initial Evidence was once the bone of contention, it is now deemed necessary to defend and explain the doctrine of subsequence. Arvid Kingsriter, speaking on "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit - An Experience Subsequent to Regeneration," gives the greater part of his address to "proofs" that Spirit-baptism and regeneration differ. Drawing from Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, Kingsriter details how in each case, believers are "living below their privilege" and are subsequently baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Greek is used as the speaker examines the differences between John 1:12 "To them He gave *power* to become the sons of God," and Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive *power*." Though these would seem to speak of the same event by their use of the same word,

²⁹ Ibid., 126. The reader should note that Mk. 16:17 is textually questionable and problematic. See B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 4th. ed. (New York: American Bible Society, 1995): 122-128.

Kingsriter explains that "In the original Greek the two major New Testament words for power are used - *exousia* and *dunamis*. *Exousia* means the power of authority, and *dunamis* means power in action. *Exousia* is received at regeneration, *dunamis* is received at Spirit baptism."³⁰

T.E. Gannon, speaking at the same conference on "Tongues as the Initial Evidence of Holy Spirit Baptism," demonstrates a similar awareness of the need for a more academic defense. He debates the proper method of interpreting narratives, and examines the five Acts passages which he feels makes his point, including Acts 8. Though his work on the evidence of Spirit-Baptism is clearly advanced over his predecessors, Gannon nonetheless makes similar assumptions that many in hermeneutics simply do not allow. In discussing Acts 8, for example, he notes that Simon *saw* something for which he offered money. From this he quotes several commentators who assure us that "tongues is the only thing that fits."³¹

Today

The present position of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada³², as stated in their official *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*, is as follows:

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit.³³ Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way³⁴ and receives power to witness and grow spiritually.³⁵ Believers should

³⁰ *Conference on the Holy Spirit Digest*, Vol 1. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1982), 159.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 163-4.

³² Though it differs very little, the Assemblies of God (USA) position may be found in n.26 of Chapter Four. More specific information on the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada may be found in G.E. Milley, *The Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Study Guide to Accompany the Text Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the P.A.O.C.* (D.Min. diss., Acadia University, 1994), 41-79; and T.W. Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the P.A.O.C.* (Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994.)

³³ Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; Eph. 5:18. The following scriptures are those given in the PAOC's *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*, 1988. Page 5.

³⁴ John 16:13-15.

earnestly seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁶ The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.³⁷ This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth.³⁸

Though other recent Pentecostal authors³⁹ have written on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it may be noted that there is no new theological formulation beyond that of Pearlman or Gee. The theology of subsequence and initial evidence has not changed. A recent Pentecostal theology text,⁴⁰ for example, begins by restating the pertinent article from the Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths.⁴¹ It continues the themes of baptism as empowerment for service and as a gift to all believers.⁴² Howard M. Ervin's 1984 *Spirit Baptism: A Biblical Investigation*,⁴³ goes into great detail as it examines the Biblical support for the Pentecostal position, but deviates very little from Pentecostal doctrine as stated above. To be sure, this is a more academic presentation, but it continues to tow the party line faithfully. Other contemporary, well-trained scholars, such as Robert P.

³⁵ II Cor. 3:18; Acts 1:8.

³⁶ Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8.

³⁷ Acts 2:1-4, 39; 9:17; I Cor. 14:18.

³⁸ Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46.

³⁹ Besides the Pentecostal authors listed above, the interested reader may wish to consult non-Pentecostal sources for a presentation of Pentecostal theology. The fairest of these are R.M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*; S. Durasoff, *Bright Wind of the Spirit: Pentecostalism Today*, W.J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 291-523; John T. Nichol, *Pentecostalism*, 1-17; Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 95-176; and Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995.)

⁴⁰ William Menzies and Stanley Horton, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1993).

⁴¹ "Statement of Fundamental Truths", *Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth General Council of the Assemblies of God* (Miami Beach, Fla., August 12-16, 1973), 102.

⁴² Menzies, *Bible Doctrines*, 121-130.

⁴³ (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).

Menzies,⁴⁴ Roger Stronstad,⁴⁵ Harold Hunter,⁴⁶ William G. MacDonald,⁴⁷ have examined their own Pentecostal theology from an academic viewpoint. Each was able to maintain the traditional view of his Pentecostal denomination,⁴⁸ though in some cases offering new explanations and support for the Pentecostal case.

Some Exegetical Considerations: The Key Acts Passages

How do today's Pentecostals defend their belief in a subsequent experience of the Holy Spirit when faced with mounting pressure from within and without to modify their views? Beginning in the 1970's, scholars from many backgrounds began to take Pentecostalism seriously, and published works challenging the Pentecostal position. James Dunn's *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*,⁴⁹ first published in 1970, has been Pentecostalism's most serious debating partner. With Dunn, F. Dale Brunner,⁵⁰ Michael Green,⁵¹ and others

⁴⁴ *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplementary Series, eds. J.C. Thomas, R.D. Moore, and S.J. Land, no.6. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994. Menzies, like Stronstad, is somewhat typical of the new Pentecostal scholar, in that he defends the traditional statement of Pentecostal belief concerning Spirit-baptism, but is engaged in new ways of defending Pentecostal interpretations of the key Acts passages. Menzies, as with Stronstad, has diligently sought to show that for Luke, the coming of the Spirit was primarily charismatic/vocational in function, not soteriological. Thus, the historical portions of Acts which describe the coming of the Spirit say little or nothing about salvation, and a great deal about the importance of the charismatic empowering of believers.

⁴⁵ *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, 1984.

⁴⁶ *Spirit-Baptism: A Pentecostal Alternative* (New York: University Press of America, 1983).

⁴⁷ "Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint," In *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. R.P. Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976): 58-71.

⁴⁸ The exceptions here are Fee, who will be examined in chapter four, below, and Tak-Ming Cheung, "Understandings of Spirit-Baptism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (1996): 115-128, who suggests that Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Roman Catholics all have something to contribute to our understandings of Spirit-baptism. The truth, he suggests, lies somewhere in a combination of these three views.

⁴⁹ (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

⁵⁰ *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

⁵¹ *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Revised ed. (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1989).

seriously challenged traditional Pentecostal theology, thereby forcing Pentecostalism to defend itself academically.

The measured response accorded these challenges has been the most detailed and comprehensive *apologia* given to date by the Pentecostal movement. Further, Pentecostals have engaged the cherished texts of Acts that they use to support their theology of Spirit-baptism. Four in particular are commonly used: Acts 2 (Pentecost); 8:4-25 (Simon the magician); 10:44-46 (Cornelius); and 19:1-6 (Ephesian disciples). The interaction as presented below is invaluable for understanding not just what Pentecostal theology is declared to *be*, but for a deeper appreciation of how doctrine is derived from the texts so often quoted, and how Pentecostalism answers the most serious hermeneutical and theological questions concerning these texts.⁵² While the restatement of Pentecostalism's key beliefs is nothing new, their ability and desire to defend their beliefs on the academic playing fields is a recent development.

Pentecost: Acts 2

At issue in this passage is the purpose and meaning of the Spirit's outpouring on the day of Pentecost. It is of special importance to Pentecostals, for it is the passage from which they are named. Scholars are divided as to whether Luke intended the Pentecost outpouring to be a soteriological or charismatic function of the Holy Spirit. On the one side are those who believe that for Luke, Pentecost was an empowering, but was *primarily* initiatory.⁵³ Pentecost marks the opening of the next age in Luke's salvation history; the age of the church, which is the age of the Spirit. Pentecost is a "watershed in salvation-history, the

⁵² This is the most significant advance over Classical Pentecostals, who simply preferred to state that the texts were clear: The baptism occurred after conversion on the key occasions, and on each occasion, the chief evidence of this was tongues. Hermeneutics and serious exegesis were usually omitted.

⁵³ Wm. Atkinson, "Pentecostal Responses to Dunn's 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit': Luke-Acts," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 6 (1995): 92.

beginning of the new age and new covenant, not for Jesus this time, but now for his disciples."⁵⁴ Others, such as John R.W. Stott, emphasize four features of Pentecost: 1) It was the final saving act of Christ; 2) It equipped the disciples charismatically for their mission as witnesses; 3) It ushered in the age of the Spirit; and 4) It was the first revival, an unusual visitation by God to the whole community.⁵⁵

Pentecostals tend to understand Pentecost in terms of the charismatic empowering of individuals who, because of their faith in Christ, were already believers. Robert Menzies challenges Dunn's assertion that the Pentecostal bestowal of the Spirit is the means by which the disciples enter into the New Covenant, and that it is "primarily initiatory, and only secondarily an empowering."⁵⁶ He suggests that Luke consistently portrays the Spirit as the source of prophetic activity, inspired speech, and special insight. He also observes that the striking parallels between Jesus' pneumatic anointing at Jordan and that of the disciples at Pentecost suggest that Luke interpreted the latter in terms of the former: Pentecost was for the disciples what the Jordan was for Jesus.⁵⁷ "The logical corollary is that at Pentecost the Spirit came upon the disciples in order to enable them to be effective witnesses."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Dunn, *Baptism*, 40.

⁵⁵ *The Spirit, the Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1990), 60-61. Stott further suggests that the continuing tensions between charismatics and non-charismatics stem from a failure to recognize all four elements of Pentecost. He acknowledges Stronstad's emphasis on the vocational aspect of the gift of the Spirit, but feels he "overstates his case" by arguing that according to Luke's theology, the coming of the Spirit was neither for salvation nor sanctification. n.l

⁵⁶ Dunn, *Baptism*, 54. See also M. Turner, "The 'Spirit of Prophecy' as the Power of Israel's Restoration and Witness," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I.H. Marshall and D. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 327-348, who emphasizes Luke's understanding of the charismatic presence of the Spirit as necessary for the 'salvation' of Israel, that is, her messianic restoration. Turner maintains that the charismatic gift of the Spirit is regarded by Luke as occurring normatively in conversion-initiation.

⁵⁷ C.H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, notes four literary features which Luke duplicates in order to tie Jesus' anointing with that of the disciples at Pentecost: 1) both Jesus and the disciples are praying; 2) both accounts place the descent of the Spirit after prayer; 3) both record a physical manifestation; 4) in both accounts the respective ministries are begun with a thematic sermon, appealing to the fulfillment of prophecy. Quoted in Menzies, *Empowered*, 174.

⁵⁸ Menzies, *Empowered*, 174.

Others argue that Luke's usage of the phrase "filled with the Spirit", occurring some nine times, yields several conclusions. First, the gift of the Spirit to the disciples is not an isolated or unique event. It is one of several occasions, both prior to and following Pentecost, when people are filled with the Spirit. Second, being filled with the Spirit is both an individual and collective phenomenon. Third, it is not a once-for-all experience, as the examples of Peter (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31) and Paul (Acts 9:7; 13:9) demonstrate. Finally, filled with the Spirit always describes inspiration of some kind, usually prophetic. Each of these assertions challenges the notion of the Spirit as primarily an initiatory factor.⁵⁹ According to Stronstad, the key to understanding this passage, as well as the rest of Acts, is to appreciate fully, Luke's theology as primarily charismatic - not soteriological. "In general terms, for Luke, the Holy Spirit is not brought into relation to salvation or to sanctification, as is commonly asserted, but is exclusively brought into relation to a third dimension of Christian life - service."⁶⁰

The Samaritans: Acts 8:4-25

The Samaritan case presents a riddle (for everyone except perhaps Pentecostals): despite the belief and water-baptism of the Samaritan converts, they did not receive the Spirit until some time had lapsed. To solve this enigma, scholars have suggested a number of reasons for believing not only that their response and commitment *were* defective, but also that Luke intended his readers to know this. First, the Samaritans responded to Simon without deep discernment. Luke uses the same verb προσέχω (pay attention) of their response to both Simon and Philip, indicating a reaction to Philip's message and miracles of similar undiscerning superficiality. Second, for the Samaritans, kingship was something

⁵⁹ Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, 53-54.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 12. Stronstad's insistence on the charismatic and *not* the salvific is likely a reaction to the long history of interpreting Luke's intentions soteriologically.

special, and they looked for a king who would crush their enemies and exalt the Samaritan people. To the Samaritans, Philip's message could only have been about this kind of king. Third, Dunn makes much of the fact that Simon's belief was πιστεύειν τῷ Φιλίππῳ not ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον. The use of the dative with πιστεύειν, writes Dunn, signifies mere intellectual assent. "This use of πιστεύειν, unique in Acts, can surely be no accident on Luke's part. He indicates thereby that the Samaritans' response was simply an assent of the mind to the acceptability of what Philip was saying"61

Though acknowledging the thesis put forward by Dunn, I.H. Marshall suggests that another view is preferable; namely, that because of the rift between the Jews and the Samaritans, God simply withheld the gift of the Spirit until the apostles from Jerusalem gave their blessing to the salvation of these traditional enemies. With Peter and John's coming, God poured out His Spirit in support of the new believers.⁶² G.E. Ladd suggests that Peter and John, as leaders of the Jewish church, "needed the experience that God was moving toward the Gentile world, for they clearly did not yet have this vision."⁶³ Another possibility is that the point of the passage is to teach precisely the *opposite* of the Pentecostal position. Luke's intent, according to this view, was to teach that Christian baptism and the gift of the Spirit *ought not* to be separated - the apostles arrived purposely to straighten out this unorthodox situation. "The Spirit is temporarily suspended from baptism here 'only' and precisely to teach the church at its most prejudiced juncture, and in its strategic initial missionary move beyond Jerusalem, that *suspension cannot occur*."⁶⁴

⁶¹ Dunn, *Baptism*, 65. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1981), agrees. "There was clearly something defective about both his [Philip's] belief and baptism." 542.

⁶² I.H. Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Commentary Series. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 156-7; In agreement here is F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. I.H. Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 182.

⁶³ *A Theology of the New Testament*, Revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 384.

⁶⁴ Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 178. Italics Brunner's.

Pentecostals have responded to attempts to see this passage in terms other than a subsequent blessing. Regarding the belief that the Spirit was withheld pending apostolic approval, one scholar asks why the same was not done with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).⁶⁵ For some scholars, the main concern has been to show that indeed, the Samaritans were believers prior to their reception of the Spirit. Arrington lists three facts which clearly portray the Samaritans as believers: 1) Their faith was acknowledged as valid by Philip (v.12) and the Jerusalem church (v.14); 2) The Samaritans received Christian baptism. 3) Philip's ministry produced joy.⁶⁶

On the theory that the Samaritans' salvation was defective, Howard Ervin challenges Dunn's assertion that when πιστεύειν is used with the dative, it suggests no more than intellectual assent. He notes that there are over thirty examples in eleven books of the NT where πιστεύειν is used with a dative object.⁶⁷ Dunn wishes to except those statements which refer either to "God" or "Lord", and Ervin thus observes that the only fitting example remaining is Acts 26:27, in which King Agrippa gives intellectual assent to Paul's teaching. Ervin argues that for this text to be used, the experience of the Samaritans must be shown to be commensurable with that of Agrippa. This is clearly not so, for the authenticity of the Samaritans' baptism at the hands of Philip was not called into question by Peter and John, as rebaptism was not required.⁶⁸ The suggestion that προσέχω implies the Samaritans responded to Philip without deep commitment is false, for Luke uses the same in his description of Lydia (16:14), who "gave heed" to what Paul said and was baptized.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Hunter, *Spirit-Baptism*, 83-84.

⁶⁶ *The Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 88.

⁶⁷ H.M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Engaging Critique of James Dunn's "Baptism in the Holy Spirit"*. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984), 28-9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 30.

⁶⁹ Menzies, *Empowered*, 209.

Because the gift of the Spirit is charismatic or vocational and is bestowed upon believers, then the temporal separation between belief and the reception of the Spirit, as is evident in the Samaritan narrative, poses no theological inconsistency or contradiction. The problem is with the presuppositions of the commentators and is not with Luke's narrative.⁷⁰

This type of exegetical analysis is proof of the growing theological maturity of Pentecostal apologetics.

Saul's Conversion: Acts 9:1-19

Again, at issue is whether one can discern in this passage a separation of the soteriological and charismatic work of the Spirit in the three day experience of Saul. Those who deny this possibility generally maintain two separate courses. The first is that Paul was not actually converted on the road to Damascus. Many commentators thus equate Paul's reception of the Spirit with his baptism, preferring to believe that Luke is teaching the essential continuity of Christian initiation.⁷¹ Others suggest the three days are to be understood as one event. Michael Green, one of the most recent proponents of this view, presents a twofold support: 1) Paul decidedly favours one stage in his epistles; 2) Luke demonstrates the unity of the experience by the manner in which he retells the event in Acts 22:10f and Acts 26: 12ff.⁷²

For all of the unique features and players in this passage, Pentecostals maintain that Luke here intended to teach that the charismatic work of the Spirit can be subsequent to initiatory salvation. This conclusion is based on three points. First, one must not impose the non-Pentecostal view of Paul on this Lukan text. An investigation into the Pauline literature suggests that, while Paul did seem to think of the experience as a united event, he nonetheless

⁷⁰ Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, 64-5.

⁷¹ See William H. Willimon, *Acts*. Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 77; Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 190; and Marshall, *Acts*, 172.

⁷² Green, *I Believe*, 134.

left open the possibility that a time sequence could be involved. Second, only those with a sacramental view of water baptism could deny that Paul was converted three days earlier on the road to Damascus. In light of Paul's reputation, something must account for Ananias' use of ἀδελφέ to address Paul when he arrived. Third, Paul's time with Ananias seem to have been for his healing, commissioning, and reception of water and Spirit baptism. Luke's second account in chapter 22 emphasizes only his commissioning and healing, while the third account in chapter 26 highlights only the commissioning. Thus it would seem that in Luke's mind, Paul's conversion did not occur with Ananias, but several days earlier.⁷³

The Ephesian Outpouring: Acts 19:1-7⁷⁴

The majority of discussion surrounding this passage concerns how we are to understand μαθητάς, translated normally as "disciples".⁷⁵ If disciples is understood to mean "Christians," or even "believers," then this implies Luke is writing about a group of Christians who have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Some suggest that though μαθητάς normally does mean "Christians" in Acts, this case is unique, for it is the only time that μαθητάς is not preceded by the article οἱ. When Luke wishes to speak of the whole body of disciples as a single entity, he uses this noun with the article. When speaking of a smaller group he either qualifies his description by referring to "some" of the disciples, or uses a description such as the one we are dealing with, 'τινας μαθητάς'. "Luke's description of the twelve as τινες μαθητάς therefore probably implies that the twelve did

⁷³ Hunter, *Spirit-baptism*, 85. Pentecostals are generally in agreement with this view. See Arrington, *Acts*, 99; Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, 68-69; and Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*, 137-138.

⁷⁴ The reader should note that this discussion follows from the previous chapter describing the teaching and work of Apollos. Though Apollos had "only the baptism of John", he "taught accurately" concerning Christ, which Pentecostals see as instructive in the debate concerning the Ephesian disciples. Unfortunately, the somewhat arbitrary chapter divisions of the King James Version separated these two passages.

⁷⁵ F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Danker, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 121. Gingrich points out that this word " = Christian" in most cases.

not belong to 'the disciples' in Ephesus - a fact confirmed by their ignorance of basic Christian matters."⁷⁶

Other scholars have focused on the description of these men as 'John's disciples.' Though Paul assumes that this was a group of Christian believers, the answers to his questions quickly convince him otherwise. "In answer to Paul's second question, they explained that they had received John's baptism, not Christian baptism. In a word, they were still living in the Old Testament which culminated with John the Baptist. They neither understood that the new age had been ushered in by Jesus, nor that those who believe in him and are baptized into him receive the distinctive blessing of the new age, the indwelling Spirit."⁷⁷ Michael Green states it is "crystal clear that these disciples were in no sense Christians."⁷⁸

Robert Menzies challenges the position that μαθητάς does not mean "Christians" in this case. He notes that Luke also used the relative pronoun τινος with μαθητάς in other places, such as his description of Ananias (9:10) and Timothy (16:1). In addition, Luke deliberately mentions Apollos in connection with the disciples at Ephesus. Apollos' standing can hardly be questioned, for Luke indicates that he had been "instructed in the way of the Lord" and "taught accurately about Jesus" (18:25). Moreover, Apollos' preaching was delivered under the inspiration of the Spirit "ζέων τῷ πνεύματι". Thus Luke connects these disciples with Apollos, highlighting the similarity of their faith in Christ through their baptism of repentance.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Dunn, *Baptism*, 84. He is supported here by Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 207-214; and Donald Guthrie, *NT Theology*, 547.

⁷⁷ Stott, *Acts*, 304.

⁷⁸ Green, *I Believe*, 135. See also Guthrie, *NT Theology*, 547.

⁷⁹ Menzies, *Empowered*, 221-222.

Authors on both sides have agreed that these men were believers. Arrington notes that Luke's use of μαθητάς suggests this to be so⁸⁰, as does F.F. Bruce: "But that these men were Christians is certainly to be inferred from the way in which Luke describes them as 'disciples'; this is a term which he commonly uses for Christians, and had he meant to indicate that they were disciples not of Christ but of the John the Baptist (as has sometimes been deduced from v.3), he would have said so explicitly."⁸¹

A great deal of scholarly ink has been spilled on the proper interpretation of the verb tenses of ἐλάβετε and πιστεύσαντες in verse 2. Again, the discussion surrounds the possibility of conversion without reception of the Spirit. Did Luke intend πιστεύσαντες to be a participle of coincident or antecedent action? Ought we to understand Paul as asking, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit *when* you believed?" or "*after* you believed?" In verse 2, the participle follows the main verb and many thus translate it as coincidental. This is then seen as prejudicing the Pentecostal position by directly linking belief and reception of the Spirit. F.F. Bruce notes, "The clause 'when you believed' renders the Gk. aorist participle πιστεύσαντες the 'coincident aorist participle' which is *doctrinally important*. . . ."⁸²

In the final analysis, it appears that the participle may either be translated as coincidental or antecedent.⁸³ As Bruce has noted, it is doctrinally important how one takes this participle. Accordingly, many scholars insist that it is coincidental. To do otherwise would jeopardize the position that subsequence is not taught in this passage. "While this is a possible understanding of the syntax [antecedent], it is undoubtedly a wrong understanding

⁸⁰ Arrington, *Acts*, 191.

⁸¹ Bruce, *Acts*, 365. Interestingly, H.D. Hunter, a Pentecostal, is convinced from this, the only example of rebaptism in Acts, that these men were not true believers, *Spirit-baptism*, 89.

⁸² Bruce, *Acts*, 358, n.8.

⁸³ The Pentecostals we will survey in response will, of course, take the participle as antecedent.

of the phrase here in its context; it places an unwarranted stress on the 'after' and goes against the constant New Testament association of the Spirit with conversion."⁸⁴

It would seem, however, that some bias exists in this interpretation - commentators are unable to read Acts as a separate work from those of Paul. James Dunn is a good example of this. After describing those who take the participle to be antecedent as having "an inadequate grasp of Greek grammar,"⁸⁵ he quotes a Greek grammar text as saying, "The action denoted by the Aorist Participle may be . . . antecedent to, coincident with, or subsequent to the action of the principal verb."⁸⁶ He concludes: "As most commentators recognize, πιστεύσαντες in 19:2 is a coincident aorist; it is Paul's doctrine⁸⁷ that a man receives the Spirit *when* he believes."⁸⁸ The Ephesians were simply not true Christians, a state which Paul immediately sets about remedying.

With regard to πιστεύσαντες as antecedent or coincidental, some Pentecostals have noted that in verse 6, the aorist participle ἐπιθέντος precedes the principle verb ἦλθε. The laying on of hands is antecedent to the reception of the Spirit. Therefore one might conclude that the participle of verse 2 is antecedent to the main verb in that verse as well. "The Pentecostal doctrine (and experience) is therefore found to be compatible with both the context and the grammar of the passage."⁸⁹ Stronstad believes that the focus of most research

⁸⁴ Marshall, *Acts*, 306.

⁸⁵ Dunn, *Baptism*, 86-7.

⁸⁶ E. de W. Burton, *New Testament Moods and Tenses* [1898], 59f. in Dunn, *Baptism*, 87. What those who understand this participle to be antecedent are lacking is Dunn's theological presuppositions, not a proper grasp of Greek grammar.

⁸⁷ The charge that Dunn has read Luke "with Pauline lenses" could hardly be more substantiated.

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Baptism*, 87.

⁸⁹ Ervin, *Spirit Baptism*, 79-80. When a passage such as this depends so heavily on one's doctrinal position for interpretation, it is inappropriate to suggest that those with differing theological positions from your own possess inadequate language skills. For an excellent discussion of this issue see S.M. Horton, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MI: Gospel Publishing House, 1976), 159-161.

is misguided. "Dunn's interpretation of this narrative demonstrates that he fails to understand either Luke or Paul. [Paul's] question, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' is not in an initiatory or soteriological context. The context is clear from the solution, which is an outburst of tongues and prophecy."⁹⁰ There need not be tension between the indwelling of the Spirit in the life of every believer and an additional experience of receiving the prophetic or charismatic gift of the Spirit.

Excursus - Initial Evidence in Acts⁹¹

The question of whether the tongues-speech of Acts 2 is indicative of an "initial evidence" seems relatively unimportant to many non-Pentecostals. One writer concludes that tongues were not given at Pentecost for any kind of evidence, but rather in a missiological function of spreading the Gospel.⁹² I. Howard Marshall, in his commentary on Acts, fails to deal with the evidence question at all, preferring instead to debate whether the tongues described were in any way similar to those Paul speaks of in I Corinthians 12-14.⁹³

For Pentecostals, the role of tongues as the evidence Spirit-baptism is obvious. It was the one, clear, unmistakable sign that the Spirit of God had fallen on those gathered. There seems to be little need to "exegete" this passage in search of evidence for the Spirit's coming. Pentecostal scholars feel that the place of initial evidence, in this passage at least, could

⁹⁰ Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, 68.

⁹¹ This topic better fits as an excursus to the main point of subsequence. Essentially, while the effort to show the academic maturing of Pentecostalism has been well borne out in the discussion on subsequence, the same cannot be said for Pentecostalism's defense of initial evidence. Robert Menzies acknowledges this directly: "Simplistic arguments from historical precedent . . . have been replaced with approaches that speak the language of modern hermeneutics . . . although this is perhaps not entirely true when it comes to the question of tongues as initial evidence . . ." *Empowered*, 237. This will become clear as the following dialogue unfolds.

⁹² Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 164; also B.V. Gaventa, "'You Will Be My Witnesses': Mission in the Acts of the Apostles," *Missiology* 10:4 (Oct 1982): 413-25.

⁹³ *Acts*, 69-70.

scarcely be much clearer.⁹⁴ The works which do comment on this issue note that tongues was the one manifestation among others (wind, fire) which appears several other times at the occasion of Spirit-baptism.⁹⁵

When considering the Samaritans, F.F. Bruce is the closest to the Pentecostal position when he states, "The context leaves us in no doubt that their reception of the Spirit was attended by external manifestations such as had marked His descent on the earliest disciples at Pentecost."⁹⁶ Others admit that tongues-speaking may well have occurred in Samaria, but further conjecture on the issue goes beyond the text into mere speculation.⁹⁷

Pentecostals lean heavily upon the fact that Simon 'saw' the Spirit had been given. Though it would in fact make more sense for their position had Simon 'heard' the reception of the Spirit, they maintain the evidence mentioned was nothing other than glossolalia. Without bothering to show proof, French Arrington simply states, "Simon saw that the new converts were endowed with the fullness of the Spirit. Their baptism in the Spirit was accompanied by the visible and audible sign of speaking in tongues."⁹⁸

Some Pentecostals find proof of initial evidence in the Acts 9 narrative of Paul's conversion. Most scholars do not comment on the aspect of tongues in this passage, since glossolalia is not mentioned. Others are less hesitant, content to equate Paul's statement in I Corinthians 14:18 "I thank God I speak with tongues more than all of you," with his

⁹⁴ The following works simply list Acts 2 as evidence of the initial evidence doctrine. R.K. Levang, "The Content of an Utterance in Tongues," *Paraclete* 23/1 (1989): 15; "The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," Position Paper of the Assemblies of God, 1981, *Paraclete* 16/2 (1982): 1-3.; A. Reuben Hartwick, "Speaking in Tongues: The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Paraclete* 29/3 (1995): 9.

⁹⁵ Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*, 136; Arrington, *Acts*, 21.

⁹⁶ Bruce, *Acts*, 181.

⁹⁷ See Brunner, *A Theology*, 179; Marshall suggests that other signs, such as immense joy, may have been sufficient evidence of the Spirit's coming for Simon to desire it; the charismatic need not be assumed. *Acts*, 158.

⁹⁸ Arrington, *Acts*, 89. Unfortunately, this type of interpretation is reminiscent of the early Pentecostal's penchant for simply stating conclusions as they believed them, without proof or argument.

reception of the Spirit in this passage. "Since Paul began speaking in tongues at some time, it is logical to assume he began when he was baptized in the Holy Spirit."⁹⁹ Though this kind of analysis may strengthen the Pentecostal's faith in his/her own position, it does little for their credibility among other scholars.

The passage in Acts 10 concerning Cornelius is the Pentecostal's strongest case for initial evidence¹⁰⁰, though as one might expect, non-Pentecostals see nothing in the text to suggest a case as dogmatic as the initial evidence doctrine. At issue is the $\gamma\alpha\rho$ in verse 46: "*For* they heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God."¹⁰¹ Glossolalia is the conclusive proof of the Spirit's coming to those in Cornelius' household. Initial evidence, however, is another matter.¹⁰² "We cannot tell for certain whether the gift of *tongues* was the inevitable accompaniment of the coming of the Spirit; the facts that it is mentioned so infrequently and that Paul thinks of it as a special gift not bestowed on all members of the church indicate that this was probably not an invariable sign"¹⁰³

Pentecostals beg to differ. Time and again they stress that those present "heard them speak with tongues" and this was without doubt, *the* sign that convinced those present that the Spirit had come.

Special interest attaches to the episode at the house of a Roman centurion, Cornelius. There, because of the ingrained prejudice of the Jews against the

⁹⁹ *Initial Physical Evidence*, Position Paper, 3-4. This type of "logical assumption" is based wholly on the presupposition of tongues as initial evidence. With this presupposition, the assumption certainly is logical; without it, it is highly debatable.

¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, although this passage is used in support of initial evidence, few Pentecostals employ it in the debate over subsequence.

¹⁰¹ See Robert W. Grave, "Use of *gar* in Acts 10:46," *Paraclete* 22/1 (1988): 15-18.

¹⁰² For example, Stott notes that glossolalia in *this* instance was the indisputable evidence, but draws no conclusion about any kind of invariable evidence; *Acts*, 192.

¹⁰³ Marshall, *Acts*, 194. Italic's Marshall's. Brunner is even stronger in his rejection of "initial evidence." He claims that tongues-speaking in Acts is "a corporate, church-founding, group-conversion phenomenon, and never the subsequent Spirit-experience of an individual." *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 192.

Gentiles, a convincing evidence was needed. Only one evidence was given to show that these Gentiles had received "the gift of the Holy Spirit." The astonished Jewish believers "heard them speaking in tongues and praising God" (Acts 10:46), exactly as the 120 had done on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4,11). Later when Peter was criticized for going to the house of a Gentile . . . [he] explained that "the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning . . . So if God gave them the same gift . . . as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" (Acts 11:15-17). The next verse shows that the apostles and other Jewish believers accepted the sign of speaking in tongues as the convincing evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit: "When they heard this, they had no further objections" ¹⁰⁴

The story of the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19 provides another example of the pattern of tongues following the reception of the Spirit. Some scholars choose to make little of this fact, stating in a manner similar to Dale Brunner: "That the Ephesian converts here spoke in tongues is merely interesting - nothing more." ¹⁰⁵ Another commentator suggests that Luke depicts the Spirit's coming audibly, in terms of glossolalia, "for the sake of the reader." ¹⁰⁶

For Pentecostals, this is another important example joining Spirit-baptism and tongues. True, the new converts also prophesied, but essential to Pentecostal theology is the pattern established. A quotation from a recently adopted position paper of the Assemblies of God will help make this clear:

In summary then, the Biblical record indicates that speaking with tongues is the only phenomenon mentioned every time details are supplied concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In those cases where details are not given, it is logical to assume that speaking with others tongues accompanied the experience. And the apostles and other Early Church leaders accepted speaking with tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*, 136.

¹⁰⁵ Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 212.

¹⁰⁶ Gerhard Krodel, *Acts*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986) 358.

¹⁰⁷ "The Initial Physical Evidence," 7. Many opponents would disagree, citing, for example, Paul's question in I Corinthians 12:30, "Do all speak with tongues" which is clearly rhetorically negative. Fee suggests that Paul's questions are not theological but practical. "His rhetoric does not mean, 'May all do this?' to which the answer would probably be, 'of course'; but 'are all, do all?' to which the answer is 'of course not'.

Summary

This chapter has traced the development of Pentecostal theological thought from their earliest defenders to contemporary theologians. The growth from naive and prescholarly assumptions to academic maturity, particularly in the discussion of subsequence, has been evident. Pentecostals can no longer be considered scholastically backward and out of touch with modern theological methods. Early Pentecostals were confident that their “plain reading” of the narratives concerning Pentecost, the Samaritans, Paul’s conversion, Cornelius’ house, and the Ephesian disciples, had well-established both the doctrine of subsequence and initial evidence. Contemporary Pentecostals continue to feel that the hermeneutical methods now used on these passages have kept pace with the latest scholarship, and secured their twin doctrines for the future.

Many scholars however, continue to feel that Pentecostals are ‘reaching’ in their defense of their distinctive doctrines. World-renowned, imminent theologians and New Testament scholars have examined the passages used by Pentecostals and, as has been illustrated above, found themselves wholly unable to support the Pentecostal doctrines. How is this possible? How are well-trained, intelligent individuals of Pentecostalism able to examine the same passages as their evangelical counterparts and reach such differing conclusions? Does the answer lie in their presuppositions, their desire to defend Pentecostalism regardless of what the texts may *actually* be intending to teach? Or are non-Pentecostal scholars determined to undercut what may be a valid Pentecostal theology?

God’s Empowering Presence, 194-5. Pentecostal writers tend to distinguish between the private use of tongues for personal edification (under which tongues as initial evidence would fall), and the gift of tongues for use in the congregation. For example, R. Menzies points out that I Corinthians 12:30 must be reconciled with 14:5 (‘I would like every one of you to speak in tongues’) and suggests that the resolution of this conflict is to view 12:30 as speaking to the issue of tongues in the congregation, and 14:5 as dealing with personal use. *Empowered for Witness*, 248-9. Donald Gee agrees with this line of reasoning, suggesting “It is an incorrect application of the Word of God to connect Paul’s remark concerning one of the gifts of the Spirit with the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit. The two subjects are distinct and should never be confused.” *Pentecostal Experience*, 166. See also *Bible Doctrines*, 140-141.

Despite the success with which Pentecostalism has expanded worldwide, their beliefs and theology are still not as well understood as should be the case. Perhaps the answer to the radically differing theology lies in their view of scripture, or in the hermeneutics Pentecostals use to arrive at the doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence. Although Pentecostals have often been charged with using improper hermeneutics, few have taken the time to understand just whether there is *a Pentecostal hermeneutic*, and if so, whether this is responsible for their distinctive doctrines. Chapter 3 continues with a complete examination of the Pentecostal doctrine of scripture, and their hermeneutical practices.

CHAPTER III

Pentecostal Doctrine of Hermeneutics: Classical and Contemporary

Like many of their ancestors,¹ first-generation Pentecostals were strongly literalistic in their interpretation of Scripture. It has been argued that Biblical authority more strongly governs Pentecostal belief and practice than does any of the other values more commonly associated with the movement.² This view of the Bible is largely pre-critical and ahistorical, and has not proceeded from the outcomes of two centuries of scientific biblical criticism. As children of the Reformation, Pentecostals have inherited and strongly reaffirmed the evangelical Protestant tradition of biblical authority, all without the benefit of modern hermeneutics.³

Though the fastest growing segment of Christianity today, Pentecostals have often been criticized theologically. It is argued that the Scriptures are understood inappropriately, and an improper hermeneutic is used to arrive at several of Pentecostalism's "distinctive" doctrines. Is this in fact true? Do Pentecostals understand Scripture differently than other

¹ For a good study on the origins of Pentecostalism see Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*; also H.H. Knight, "From Aldersgate to Azusa"; and Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*.

² Russel P. Spittler. "Implicit Values in Pentecostal Missions." *Missiology* 16 (1988): 418.

³ *Ibid.*

conservative Christians? Is Pentecostal theology different in some respects from other significant evangelical groups because of a different or even incorrect hermeneutic?

To examine the issue properly, this chapter will consider Reformation doctrines of scripture, following with the views of the "fundamentalists", and concluding with the contemporary evangelical community. It will be seen that Pentecostals fall within the Reformation stream of doctrine and share aspects of Fundamentalist and evangelical thought. Their hermeneutic, while originally quite pragmatic, literal, and generally unscientific, has begun to evolve. Essentially, it now reflects their continued acceptance into and interaction with the evangelical world at large, and their own desire to theologize with increased academic integrity. Furthermore, the Pentecostal's willingness to allow experience to assist in their understanding of Scripture may, in those passages which speak of a charismatic life in the Spirit, enable the Pentecostal to grasp the material better than one not possessing this important frame of reference.

The Doctrine of Scripture - Comparative Survey

One method by which we are able to evaluate Pentecostalism's view of Scripture is a comparative study of other well-known and trusted views from the Protestant world. When placed against the teachings of the Reformers of times past, or the Evangelicals of the present, inconsistencies and unorthodox aspects of Pentecostal beliefs about Scripture, should they exist, will quickly become apparent.

The Reformers: Martin Luther and John Calvin

Luther's theology was decidedly Biblical, and implicitly maintained the sufficient authority of that Word for the faith and life of the church,⁴ though his views on Scripture may

⁴ David W. Lotz, "Sola Scriptura: Luther on Biblical Authority," *Interpretation* 35 (1981): 259. Though beyond the scope of this work, further reading on the debate surrounding Luther's theology of Scripture may be found in such works as J. Atkinson, *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1968): 73-81; G.S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press,

seem somewhat paradoxical. For while he considered the Bible to be the "oracles of God" before which humanity and its reason must "doff its cap", he nonetheless held a bold critical freedom in his work.⁵ He was able to analyze the text critically because for him, Biblical authority was derived from a correct understanding of Scripture.⁶

For Calvin⁷, as for Luther, Scripture is the witness to Jesus Christ that God has chosen to give His church for all ages.⁸ Calvin frequently uses phrases that suggest he believed Scripture was dictated from Heaven. "The law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men but dictated by the Holy Spirit."⁹ He was far more likely simply to believe that problematic passages are true than to seek explanations of them.¹⁰ Thus we may say that Calvin held to a theory of verbal inspiration, and as with Luther, interpreted Scripture grammatically and historically, and as literally as possible.¹¹

1956): 72-79; Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. R.C. Shultz, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966): 72-104; and also H.G. Haille, *Luther: An Experiment in Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 59-71.

⁵ Lotz, *Sola Scriptura*, 260.

⁶ Ewald M. Plass, ed., *What Luther Says: An Anthology*, Vol. III, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 1474.

⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J.T. McNeill, trans. F.L. Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) 1.4. 1-3 and 4.23. 1. Further reading on Calvin's theology of Scripture may be found in Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); H.J. Forstman, *Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); and B. Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

⁸ Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, 96.

⁹ Calvin, *Commentary on 2 Tim. 3:16*, Vol 21, 249.

¹⁰ Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, 110-111.

¹¹ "Literally" is used here as opposed to "allegorically," the prevalent Roman hermeneutic at the time. This should not be confused with a literalistic approach, which neither Luther nor Calvin would have supported. Their comments are in refutation of the Roman practice of using allegory heavily, and must be understood as such.

Modern Theological Positions: Fundamentalists and Evangelicals¹²

Fundamentalists believe that all Scripture is inspired by God, as men of old were directed by the Holy Spirit.¹³ They believe strongly in Biblical inerrancy¹⁴ which deems necessary a very literalistic view of Scripture. Believers must avoid an existential, allegorical or symbolic approach to interpretation. No matter how specifically a passage may be addressed to a historic individual or situation, the literal meaning of a text still contains significant truth for believers today.¹⁵

Evangelicals also believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and hold to the Bible as the Word of God.¹⁶ As such, the Scriptures are authoritative in all matters of faith and practice. To accept the authority of Jesus Christ is to accept the same of the written testimony concerning Him, and to accept His own view of the Bible.¹⁷ Indeed, any listing of the features of evangelicalism, no matter how minimalist in nature, will usually include the inspiration and authority of Scripture as a supreme point of faith.¹⁸

In recent years, however, a great deal of debate has sprung up in evangelical circles over the doctrine of inerrancy. Those who deny inerrancy while holding to infallibility¹⁹

¹² A detailed discussion of the rise of Fundamentalism, and its strong views of Scripture may be found in Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), esp. 59-149.

¹³ Norman Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 251.

¹⁴ "Inerrancy is the view that when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible in its original autographs and correctly interpreted is entirely true in all it affirms, whether that relates to doctrine or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences." From P.D. Feinberg, "Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of," In Walter A. Elwell, ed. *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 142.

¹⁵ See Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 117-147.

¹⁶ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 199

¹⁷ James I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 102-104. See also John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (London: Tyndale Press, 1972).

¹⁸ See Paul J. Achtemeier, *The Inspiration of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 98, and David F. Ford, ed., *The Modern Theologians*, Revised ed. (Cambridge: Blackwell Press, 1995), 132-133.

¹⁹ See W. Proctor and J. Van Engen, "Infallibility," In *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 558-559.

often interpret Scripture in a less stringent, less literal manner, giving more thought and attention to the literary forms of the Bible. More freedom is allowed in understanding Scripture as allegory, symbolism, and other "forbidden" approaches.²⁰

The Pentecostal Approach

Pentecostals view Scripture in much the same manner as their brothers and sisters in the Fundamentalist and Evangelical circles. "They have seen Scripture as the inspired Word of God which is authoritative and wholly reliable. The Bible not only represents a witness to God, but also it is the very Word of God."²¹ Hollenweger notes that many groups believe in the dictation theory of inspiration, with a complete passiveness of the human scribe so that every word and thought of the author are God's.²² Many Pentecostals also confess the inerrancy/infallibility of Scripture, which contributes to their understanding of scriptural authority.²³ Ultimately, it is the internal witness of the Holy Spirit that confirms the Bible is the Word of God, brought forth by the Holy Spirit.²⁴

Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutics

What may be said concerning a Pentecostal hermeneutic? What role does this play in the shaping of the Pentecostal distinctives? Are Pentecostal hermeneutical principles in line with other major groups of this century, or significantly different? When discussing a

²⁰ For a good discussion of evangelical hermeneutics see the chapter by J.I. Packer in *Scripture and Truth*; also M. Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation: Perspectives on Hermeneutical Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993).

²¹ Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect", *Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 8 (1996): 67.

²² Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 291.

²³ G.P. Duffield and N.M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 16.

²⁴ Higgins, *Introduction to Theology*, 43.

Pentecostal approach to hermeneutics, it is important to distinguish between the Classical Pentecostals of early in the twentieth century, and their offspring of the last several decades. For as their perception of education and academia changed, so too did their thought and attitude towards hermeneutics.

Roger Stronstad believes Charles F. Parham²⁵ is the "fountainhead" of Pentecostalism. What makes him the Father of Pentecostalism is not the uniqueness of speaking in tongues, but the new hermeneutical/biblical understanding of this experience. "Charles F. Parham bequeathed to the Pentecostal movement its definitive hermeneutics, and consequently, its definitive theology and apologetics."²⁶

Parham's problem regarding the interpretation of Acts arose out of his conviction that Christian experience in the 20th century "should tally exactly with the Bible, [but] neither sanctification nor the anointing that abideth . . . tallied with the 2nd. chapter of Acts."²⁷ Leaving for three days just before New Year's, 1901, he left instructions with the students of his small Bible school to discover what the biblical evidence was of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, so that they might have something concretely biblical to present before the world. When he returned, the students reported with one voice that while other things had occurred in Acts when the Spirit was outpoured, the indisputable proof on each occasion was glossolalia. Eager to prove whether this was true, the students set about in prayer. The next day, the first of these, Ms. Ozman, spoke in tongues after asking for prayer that she might receive the gift of the Spirit.²⁸

²⁵ See J.R. Goff, "Parham, Charles Fox," In *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 660-661.

²⁶ Roger Stronstad, "Trends in Pentecostal Hermeneutics, Part One," *Paraclete* 22.3 (1988): 1.

²⁷ Mrs. Charles F. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement* (Joplin, Mo.: Hunter Printing Co., 1930), 52.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

Thus in the weeks which bridged the Christmas season of 1900 and the New Year 1901, tongues was identified as the biblical evidence of the baptism in the Spirit and was confirmed by contemporary (20th century) experience. *This identification of biblical tongues and contemporary charismatic experience was a "Pragmatic" hermeneutic.* 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. As a result of this codification of Parham's hermeneutics and theology, Pentecostal hermeneutics has existed in an analytical vacuum for the majority of its brief history.²⁹

Classical Pentecostals accepted the Fundamentalist-Dispensational propensity towards complete literalism wholeheartedly.³⁰ The early Pentecostals' "operative principle of interpretation was the conviction that exegesis is best when it is as rigidly literal as credibility can stand" for "when Pentecostals interpreted the Bible in a literalistic fashion, they did so in order to apply it directly to their immediate context."³¹ For the Pentecostal, Biblical authority functions mainly through a hermeneutic of historical precedent.³² "Anything written in the Bible was placed there to guide our lives, and if something occurred in Scripture, we might reasonably expect to witness the same today."³³ Pentecostals understand Scripture to be essentially *descriptive* in function, and not *generative*, as is commonly believed.³⁴

²⁹ Stronstad, "Trends," 3. Italics by the author.

³⁰ F. Arrington, "Dispensationalism", In *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 247-248. See also Gerald Sheppard, "Pentecostals and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship," *Pneuma* 6.2 (1984): 5-33. Sheppard begins to trace the Pentecostal reliance on the Dispensationalists for certain areas of doctrine, but fails to go far enough. His main point is to show how Pentecostals adapted the Dispensational view of the Rapture of the Church for their purposes, as it aligned with their belief in the soon, mysterious coming of Christ for His Church. Yet, Pentecostals refused to accept the Dispensational excesses of ecclesiology. Too little is made of the Pentecostal tendency to follow the Dispensationalists' hermeneutics.

³¹ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 65.

³² G. Fee, "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent - A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 87.

³³ Spittler, *Values*, 419.

³⁴ Scott Ellington, "Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996): 17.

For classical Pentecostal theology, much of the approach to hermeneutics can be found within the anti-intellectualism so prevalent in some aspects of the movement. "Their attitude toward Scripture regularly has included a general disregard for scientific exegesis and carefully thought-out hermeneutics."³⁵ Often, a practical hermeneutic takes the place of a scholarly one, itself symbolizing a sub-conscious rejection of Enlightenment secularism. Early Pentecostals were much more interested in orthopraxy than orthodoxy. "The writing of theological books and articles does not rise naturally among classical Pentecostals. Doing evangelism, on the other hand, is their great strength."³⁶

Walter J. Hollenweger's monumental study of Pentecostals, first published in 1968 opens with these words, "To my friends and teachers in the Pentecostal movement who taught me to love the Bible, and to my teachers and friends in the Presbyterian church who taught me to understand it."³⁷ This telling remark indicates a great deal concerning the classical Pentecostal's view of Scripture and hermeneutics.

Kenneth Archer summarizes the information concerning the Classical Pentecostal view of Scripture with the following four points.³⁸ First, because Scripture is inspired, it is therefore wholly reliable and authoritative. Second, because Scripture is understood as the present Word of God to themselves, the historical distance between modern readers and the text is often not recognized or handled appropriately. Hermeneutics dealt primarily with the immediate context of the individual situation, concerned with what the Word of God had to say to a given problem or issue. Third, their interpretation was theologically based on their "full-gospel" presuppositions of a whole Christology. With Christ as the center of Scripture,

³⁵ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 86.

³⁶ Spittler, "Theological Style," 291. For additional information on the evangelistic thrust of early Pentecostalism see Murray Dempster, ed., *Called and Empowered*; Grant McClung, "Explosion, Motivation, and Consolidation: The Historical Anatomy of the Pentecostal Missionary Movement," *Missiology* 14 (1986): 159; and Gary B. McGee, "Assemblies of God Mission Theology," 166.

³⁷ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, xvii.

³⁸ Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics", 67-68.

multiple interpretations and dimensions of meaning were limited. Fourth, the prime interpreter and preacher was the local pastor. Pentecostal clergy were, for the most part, "lay people who quit their jobs."³⁹ Education was not a priority, and at times was seen as a hindrance.

Contemporary Pentecostal Hermeneutics

Decades have come and gone since the beginnings of Pentecostalism in this century. With them have come new approaches to both intellectualism and hermeneutics. The chiding statement above by Hollenweger has been replaced and updated. He now writes:

Pentecostalism has come of age. It is now possible to be filled with the Spirit, to enjoy the specific Pentecostal charismata and Pentecostal spirituality, to believe in Pentecostal mission, and at the same time to use one's critical faculties to develop them and to use them - as any other charisma for the Kingdom of God.⁴⁰

A Canadian Pentecostal magazine recently featured an article entitled *The Essential Need of Theology*, which argues that Pentecostals must make even greater strides towards theological development. The author, David C. Slauenwhite, Maritimes Superintendent of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, writes,

Waving our Bibles in the air while whipping up a storm of excitement will not produce a spirituality that can survive the realities of life. Hermeneutical hollowness with exegetical excess will set the stage for the eventual embracing of heresy. Ministries with strong revivalistic emphases coupled with weak doctrinal knowledge, with heavy experiential services matched by light biblical teaching . . . create a climate of chaos and confusion.

If only we would bring sound teachers in as quickly as we do sensational miracle workers. If only we chased after expository preaching as much as we do exciting prophecies. If we loved knowledge as much as we lust after miracles, we might not be quite so prone to fall for the deceptions of the hour.⁴¹

³⁹ R.P. Spittler, "Scripture and the Theological Enterprise: The View From the Big Canoe," In R.K. Johnston, ed. *The Use of the Bible in Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985): 75.

⁴⁰ W. Hollenweger, "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992): 7, 9.

⁴¹ *Resource* 12.2 (1997): 6-7.

To be sure, Pentecostalism has become more academic in its defense, and have tended to align themselves recently with evangelicals in their move towards adopting conservative methods of historical criticism.⁴² Yet, a difference remains. For the Pentecostal, Scripture can and does speak to the modern reader. Simply focusing on what the text may have originally meant is not enough. The Pentecostal insists on closing the gap between the two horizons.

A hermeneutic that focuses only upon what the original inspired author meant . . . will not satisfy the requirements of a Pentecostal hermeneutic. The essence of Pentecostalism asserts that the spiritual and extraordinary experiences of the biblical characters are possible for contemporary believers.⁴³

There is then, in contemporary Pentecostal scholars, the continuing tendency towards modern academics while moving away from a hermeneutical system that is heavily slanted towards rationalism, and downplays the role of the Holy Spirit and/or experience.⁴⁴ French Arrington notes, "The real issue of Pentecostalism has become hermeneutics, that is, the distinctive nature and function of Scripture and the roles of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community, grammatical-historical research, and personal experience in the interpretive process."⁴⁵ A fundamental principle for Pentecostal scholars is that "Scripture given by the Holy Spirit must be mediated interpretively by the Holy Spirit."⁴⁶ The Holy Spirit enables the reader to bridge the gap between the ancient authors of Scripture and the present interpreter.⁴⁷

⁴² Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 74.

⁴³ Ibid, 75.

⁴⁴ J.C. Thomas, "Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5 (1995): 41.

⁴⁵ F.L. Arrington, "The Use of the Bible in Hermeneutics," *Pneuma* 16/1 (1994): 101.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 104.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 105. Further thoughts on the role of the Spirit in hermeneutics may be found in Appendix I.

The question then remains, "Do Pentecostals need a distinct hermeneutic to establish firmly their beliefs and practices in Scripture?"⁴⁸ In modern Pentecostalism, the majority of the dialogue among Pentecostal scholars concerns whether there actually exists, or should exist, a distinct Pentecostal hermeneutic. At issue is whether the Pentecostal emphasis upon the Spirit produces a pneumatological hermeneutic resulting in theological distinctives concerning the Spirit's role in the life of the Church and individual believers.

William Menzies proposes that the crux of the hermeneutical issue is actually methodology. He suggests three levels of a Pentecostal hermeneutic. First, is the *inductive* level, itself comprised of three varieties of inductive listening: declarative, implicational, and descriptive. The second is the *deductive* level. Menzies points out that after one has conducted inductive hermeneutics, certain patterns or theological motifs, common either to the whole of scripture or to a particular author, begin to emerge. While not stated specifically in scripture, these patterns and motifs are often essential for understanding the particular nuances of the text. Finally, he describes what he calls the *verification* level. While others chide Pentecostals for their dangerous practice of exegeting out of experience, Menzies argues that it is dangerous to develop theology and hermeneutics from *non-experience*. If a biblical truth is to be promulgated, then it certainly ought to be verifiable and demonstrable in life. When Peter stood on the day of Pentecost and proclaimed "This is that," testimony about the experience, and exposition of Joel's prophecy flowed together, hand in hand.⁴⁹

Howard Ervin, a one-time Baptist turned Pentecostal, suggests a *Pneumatic* hermeneutic, based on the need for an epistemology firmly rooted in biblical faith, "with a phenomenology that meets the criteria of empirically verifiable sensory experience (healing,

⁴⁸ Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 74.

⁴⁹ William Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology: An Essay on Hermeneutics," In *Essays on Apostolic Themes*, Paul Elbert, ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985), 1-14.

miracles, etc.) and does not violate the coherence of rational categories."⁵⁰ A pneumatic epistemology also "provides a resolution of (a) the dichotomy between faith and reason that existentialism seeks to bridge, though at the expense of the pneumatic; (b) the antidote to a destructive rationalism that often accompanies a critical-historical exegesis; and (c) a rational accountability for the mysticism by a piety grounded in *sola fide*."⁵¹ Because Pentecostals allow the experiential immediacy of the Holy Spirit to inform their epistemology, this contact with the pneumatic enlightens their hermeneutics in a way that may be considered beyond the traditional view of illumination.

Pentecostal experience with the Holy Spirit gives existential awareness of the miracles in the Biblical world view. These events are no longer "mythological" (the view of Neo-orthodoxy), but "objectively" real. Contemporary experience of divine healing, prophecy, miracles, tongues, and exorcism are empirical evidence of the impingement of a sphere of non-material reality upon our time-space existence with which one can and does have immediate contact. Awareness of and interaction with the presence of this spiritual continuum is axiomatic in a Pentecostal epistemology that affects decisively its hermeneutic.⁵²

Pentecostals contribute most substantially to hermeneutics in the area of experience and verification. Whereas Classical Pentecostalism tended to distinguish poorly between the horizons of reader and author, contemporary scholars are relying on their own experience to bridge that gap. The debate over whether there is a substantially different Pentecostal hermeneutic is perhaps best viewed as a discussion of how Pentecostalism seeks to contribute to existing evangelical standards of hermeneutics.

Another hot topic among Pentecostals is the question of postmodernism.⁵³ The modern era, ushered in with the Enlightenment, promoted scientific rationalism, humanism, and

⁵⁰ "Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option," In *Essays on Apostolic Themes*, 23.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵³ For an excellent summary of postmodernism, see S. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); G.E. Veith, Jr. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 1994); J.R. Middleton and B.J. Walsh, *Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be*

logical positivism.⁵⁴ The children of modernism often challenged the truth of Christianity on the basis of those cherished presuppositions.⁵⁵ As the twentieth century draws to a close, the assumptions of modernism are being increasingly abandoned. Postmodernism is taking its place. The average person may be shocked by its creed: Truth, meaning, and individual identity do not exist. These are social constructs. Human life has no special significance, no more value than plant or animal life. Relativism reigns supreme. Christianity is again being challenged, but on a different front. Whereas the modern era rejected Christianity because of the difficulty in validating its claims empirically, postmodernism rejects the Christian claim to have *the* truth. Both Christians and modernists believe in truth. Postmodernists do not.⁵⁶

With its abandonment of rationalistic modern principles, some are debating whether Pentecostalism should somehow develop a distinctive hermeneutic in line with the best of postmodern values.⁵⁷ The postmodern way of liberating readers to see for themselves the meaning within a text has a certain ring of truth with Pentecostals. As a missionary movement, Pentecostalism must keep "in touch" with the values and philosophy of current culture. Yet, there remains much about postmodernity which directly contradicts Christian values and teachings. Is it possible to join such a movement with biblical hermeneutics?

(Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1995); and D.S. Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995).

⁵⁴ G.B. Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity* (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 1990), prologue, x.

⁵⁵ See Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 63-69.

⁵⁶ Veith, Jr. *Postmodern Times*, 21.

⁵⁷ For the connection between postmodernism and hermeneutics, see Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity*; George Aichele, et al., *The Postmodern Bible: The Bible and Collective Culture* (London: Yale University Press, 1995); and Loren Wilkinson, "Hermeneutics and the Postmodern Reaction Against 'Truth'," in Gordon D. Fee, et al., *The Act of Bible Reading: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1996).

There appears to be four responses to this dilemma.⁵⁸ 1) Yes, we ought to build a distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic based on postmodern principles, free from rationalistic Evangelicalism. One of the major supporters of this view is Timothy Cargal.⁵⁹ He has argued that not only is there a natural link between Pentecostalism and other experience-oriented religion, but that the link also extends to the rejection of the grammatico-historical hermeneutic by both groups. Although some believe that Pentecostals have in fact moved towards the grammatico-historical method, Cargal notes that in general, the Pastor in the field still relies on traditional pre-critical methods of interpretation. Thus, the Pentecostal scholar could guide the Pastor in this line of interpretation, each striving to make the text as applicable as possible to the present audience.

As a postmodern paradigm increasingly illuminates the thinking of our culture in general, any hermeneutic which does not account for its loci of meanings within that postmodern paradigm will become nonsensical and irrelevant. If for no other reason than that, we must move beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy to explore the possibilities of a Pentecostal hermeneutic in a postmodern age.⁶⁰

2) No - We should reject the postmodern influence and build upon the foundation of an Evangelical hermeneutic. This is in fact what a majority of Pentecostal scholars have, unconsciously at least, been doing. Robert P. Menzies⁶¹ responded to Cargal's article with a resounding "No." First, he asserts that Cargal underestimates the ability of scholars to bridge the gap between the ancient and modern situations of the text. While we cannot gain

⁵⁸ The following categories are from Malcolm Brubaker, "Postmodernism and Pentecostals: A Case Study of Evangelical Hermeneutics," *Evangelical Journal* 15.1 (1997): 39-44.

⁵⁹ "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age," *Pneuma* 15.2 (1993): 163-187.

⁶⁰ Cargal, "Postmodern", 187. In agreement with Cargal here is Gerald T. Sheppard, "Biblical Interpretation After Gadamer," *Pneuma* 16 (1994): 120-135.

⁶¹ "Jumping off the Postmodern Bandwagon," *Pneuma* 16.1 (1994): 115-120.

absolute certainty regarding historical matters, we can nonetheless gain knowledge. Second, the postmodern shift away from the text to the reader may be nothing more than a reactionary move against years of sterile, dry, biblical criticism. Pentecostalism has seen the importance of the readers in the interpretative process for entirely different reasons. Finally, Menzies believes that the influence of Evangelical hermeneutics upon Pentecostalism has been beneficial. The charge that Evangelical hermeneutics has been overly rationalistic is too broad, and without serious support.⁶²

3) We should join Pentecostalism's concerns with traditional hermeneutics. This approach sees the value of the grammatico-historical method, but with Pentecostal concerns that the meaning derived is not stripped of its experiential dimension. The chief proponent here is Roger Stronstad. His work on the charismatic language of Luke-Acts utilizes a critical methodology.⁶³ He believes there are five components to a Pentecostal hermeneutic. 1) Charismatic experiential presuppositions; 2) the pneumatic; 3) genre; 4) exegesis; and 5) experiential verification.⁶⁴ This is a clear wedding together of Pentecostal concerns with traditional evangelical hermeneutics. If the five components are examined clearly, only the fifth is seen to be at all distinctive. While the charismatic presupposition may be Pentecostal, presuppositions themselves abound in every effort at hermeneutics, as do concerns for the pneumatic, genres, and exegesis.

Stronstad feels strongly that Pentecostals have much to offer traditional hermeneutics in the areas of pre-understanding and experiential verification. "The Charismatic experience of the Pentecostal - ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, being led by the Spirit - enables him to understand Luke's record of

⁶² Menzies, "Bandwagon," 117-119.

⁶³ *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

the activity of the Holy Spirit in Acts better than the non-Pentecostal."⁶⁵ Clark Pinnock, in the forward to Stronstad's book *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, writes, "We cannot consider pentecostalism to be a kind of aberration born of experiential excesses but a 20th century revival of New-Testament theology and religion. It has not only restored joy and power to the church, but a clearer reading to the Bible as well."⁶⁶ Stronstad interprets this further:

Charismatic experience in particular and spiritual experience in general give the interpreter of relevant Biblical texts an experiential presupposition which transcends the rational or cognitive presuppositions of scientific exegesis. In other words, [the Pentecostals'] charismatic experience is an experiential presupposition which enables them to understand the charismatic life of the Apostolic church, as Luke reports it, better than those contemporary Christians who lack this experience.⁶⁷

4) We should cautiously proceed to develop a postmodern Pentecostal hermeneutic. Among the supporters of this view is Kenneth Archer,⁶⁸ who feels that if Pentecostalism is to remain the relevant missionary force that it has been, elements of postmodernism are a must. He notes with approval the efforts of some scholars to bring Pentecostal spirituality and theology of the Holy Spirit to bear in their hermeneutical work.⁶⁹ Archer would blend together the postmodern emphasis on the interpreter's context with classical Pentecostal spirituality.

Today some Pentecostals attempt to express themselves with a purely modernistic hermeneutic (the historical-critical method), yet if Pentecostalism

⁶⁵ See Roger Stronstad, "Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics," *Paraclete* 26/1 (1992) 15. Gary Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love*, agrees. See 139-144.

⁶⁶ *Charismatic Theology*, Forward, viii.

⁶⁷ "Experience and Hermeneutics," 17.

⁶⁸ "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect."

⁶⁹ eg. J.C. Thomas, "Women, Pentecostals, and the Bible."

desires to continue in its missionary objective while keeping in tune with its classical ethos, then Pentecostalism must have a postmodern accent; an accent which is both a protest against modernity as well as a proclamation to move beyond modernity; or better, after the modern.⁷⁰

Summary

Throughout this chapter, we have seen that Pentecostalism remains within the realm of traditional Protestant views of Scripture. It has, however, undergone great change in its approach to hermeneutics. Classical Pentecostalism tended to lean towards a Fundamentalist approach, with its literalist, pre-scholarly exegesis of Scripture. Contemporary Pentecostalism differs little from other evangelical groups in its understanding of Scripture, and even in the hermeneutical methodologies used. The degree to which Pentecostals are willing to allow experience, (both as a presupposition and confirmation), to assist in the hermeneutical process, is their greatest difference with other evangelical groups and may prove to be Pentecostalism's most substantial contribution to hermeneutics.

Pentecostal hermeneutics are evolving as their theologians work to accept what is good from the scientific and historical-critical methods, while seeking to preserve the truths that are the hallmark of their movement, gleaned as they were from a very straightforward and honest reading of the Scriptures. Pentecostals are struggling to meet new challenges such as postmodernism, while seeking to engage other scholars in areas which they feel Pentecostalism has something beneficial to add.

An excellent example of this is Gordon D. Fee, a Pentecostal scholar who has used his immense exegetical skills to re-evaluate Pentecostal hermeneutics. Despite his background as a life-long Pentecostal, Fee's suggestions in the area of Pentecostal hermeneutics have been challenging, even threatening, to traditional Pentecostal groups. Though his intentions have been to increase the academic integrity of his own denomination, while preserving the best of their pneumatic emphasis, the resultant clash with Pentecostal

⁷⁰ Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 80.

theologians has been significant. Are Pentecostals able to accept hermeneutical guidelines from the greater evangelical world without threatening their distinctives? Fee's hermeneutical suggestions and the challenge to Pentecostalism are examined in chapter four.

CHAPTER IV

Gordon Fee's Challenge to Pentecostal Theology

When one thinks of Gordon Fee, hermeneutics may come to mind as easily as New Testament studies *per se*, for throughout his career he has engaged the problems of interpretation and exegesis as readily as he has specific issues of biblical theology. When surveying his understanding of a given subject, as is the intent of this work, we must first delve into the hermeneutical guidelines he has set for himself. It will become apparent that with Fee, it is somewhat impossible to separate his theology from his hermeneutics, for in each instance, his theological stance has come from following his own interpretive principles.

Academic Trends in Interpretation

Before examining Fee's proposals in detail, it will be useful to survey recent trends in the hermeneutical world. The aspects of Fee's thought echoed by most other evangelicals will quickly be distinguished from those which are his own contributions to the field. While most of Fee's hermeneutical principles are agreed upon in wider evangelicalism, his effort to apply the principles of authorial intent and historical precedent to Pentecostalism is his greatest legacy.

Since the Reformation, the mainstream of Christian scholarship has focused on historical-critical exegesis. Following the principles espoused during that period, scholars, in a partial reaction to the traditional use of allegory in hermeneutics, began to focus both on

the original language and historical situation of a given text. According to this viewpoint, only after the reader has successfully figured out what *Paul* meant when writing Romans 8, for example, may one claim the right to apply that passage to our situation. The intent of the author, the situation in which s/he wrote, and the range of meanings considered by the original audience are of the utmost importance in determining the correct meaning of any given text.¹

Hermeneutics received a boost in popularity with the 1960's advent of the "new hermeneutic."² Whereas traditional hermeneutics was concerned with the detailed principles of interpretation, the new hermeneutic looks upon this as merely a special problem within the much wider activity of interpretation. Its greatest exponent in the English-speaking world is A.C. Thiselton, who continues to write on the subject.³ Essentially, the new hermeneutic is an existentialist way of reading a text. It presupposes that both the reader and the text dwell in a "horizon" which governs the way in which meaning is understood and appropriated. The further removed a text is from our own horizon, the more difficulty there is in transcending the cultural and historical differences. Considerations such as these have produced concepts such as "dynamic equivalence" in Biblical translation, and "cultural conditioning" in Biblical interpretation, as readers attempt to translate the culturally bound message of the Bible into culturally relevant terms for our generation.⁴

Another influential trend has been the New Criticism, which argued that the usual concern for authorial intent was misguided. Proponents of this view were concerned to

¹ W.C. Kaiser Jr., and Moses Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 235. See also B. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, Revised ed. (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1956), 85-143, for an excellent discussion of this method.

² See J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb Jr., eds., *The New Hermeneutic*, New Frontiers in Theology, Vol. II (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

³ See *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Bible Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997); and *The Two Horizons* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980).

⁴ Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1996), 488-489. Also B. Ramm et al., *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 130-139.

refute the claim that the scientific method alone is able to arrive at the truth. This approach treated the text as an artifact independent of its author, for the original meaning of a given passage may have little relevance to the needs of the modern reader. "The meaning of the text always goes beyond its author, hence understanding is not a reproductive but a productive activity. The subject matter, not the author, is the determiner of the meaning."⁵ In *Interpretation Theory*, first published in 1965, Paul Ricoeur⁶ challenged the notion that text is simply recorded speech, a dialogue placed on paper. In his view, this fundamentally alters the nature of communication, and requires new presuppositions. These include the semantic independence of the text from the intention of its author, and the use of literary genres to provide the code which shapes the way a reader may interpret the text.⁷

The most influential American on the hermeneutical scene of the sixties was E.D. Hirsch,⁸ who ran counter to the trends established by Gadamer and Ricoeur. Based on the work of Emilio Betty, an Italian historian of law, Hirsch popularized the view that the meaning of a literary work is determined by the author's intention. He is best known for the following concepts. 1) The meaning of a passage is whatever the author has willed to convey by a particular sequence of words and signs; 2) The author's truth-intention provides the only genuinely discriminating norm for ascertaining valid or true interpretations from incorrect or false ones; 3) The first objective of hermeneutics is to make clear the text's verbal meaning, not its significance; and 4) The meaning of a text cannot change, but its significance to the

⁵ Kaiser and Silva, *Introduction*, 28-9. For further reading see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method: Elements of Philosophical Hermeneutics*, English trans. (New York: Seabury, 1975; reprint, Crossroad, 1982).

⁶ English trans. (Fort Worth, Tex.: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

⁷ Kaiser and Silva, *Introduction*, 29-30.

⁸ Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). For a good evaluation of Hirsch's method see M.J. Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 19-31.

reader can and does change. If meaning were not determinate, then there would be no fixed norm by which to judge whether a passage was being interpreted correctly.⁹

General Hermeneutical Principles of Gordon Fee

Gordon Fee has been influenced by each of the trends discussed above. While preferring the approach of the older historical-critical method, and the focus on authorial intent by Hirsch, his work nonetheless shows an awareness of the variety of modern approaches to hermeneutics, such as the emphasis on relevance in the New Hermeneutic. His willingness and ability to apply these hermeneutical approaches to Pentecostalism sets him apart from the others. He declares that "one does nothing more important in the formal training for Christian ministry than to wrestle with hermeneutics: the meaning and application of Scripture."¹⁰

The Inherent Ambiguity of Scripture - A Hermeneutical Challenge

Fee maintains that the specific hermeneutical issues faced by evangelicalism lie within its doctrine of Inspiration. He notes that the evangelical commitment to see Scripture as *both* divine and human creates its own set of tensions. The intersection of the divine with the human produces far more ambiguities than some feel comfortable with.

The buck stops there, at the text and its intent, as to what is infallible. God did not choose to give us a series of timeless, non-culture-bound theological propositions to be believed and imperatives to be obeyed. Rather he chose to speak His eternal Word *this* way, in historically particular circumstances and in

⁹ In Kaiser and Silva, *Introduction*, 32.

¹⁰ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, Chapter 2, "The Evangelical Dilemma: Hermeneutics and the Nature of Scripture," 25.

every kind of literary genre. God Himself, by the very way he gave us this Word, locked in the ambiguity.¹¹

In the debate between the natural unity and diversity of the text, Fee opts for what he terms the "radical middle". Our doctrine of Inspiration suggests that Scripture inherently contains ambiguity, accommodation, and diversity, each to varying degrees. Since God chose to give us His Word in this manner, our task is to hold each end of the spectrum - historical particularity and eternity - with equal vigor. While we cannot generate the absolute certainty so sought by the fundamentalists, we can nonetheless move towards a higher level of commonality. The way towards this higher level is found at the crucial point of authorial intentionality - both human and divine. The task of the exegete and theologian is to discover and hear the Word in terms of God's original intent. Only then may we begin to ascertain its meaning for our own historical setting.¹²

The Crucial Issue - Authorial Intentionality

Fee details *why* authorial intent is such a crucial issue, though it causes him the greatest problems when dealing with Pentecostal distinctives, and generates the most tension among evangelicals. An insistence on authorial intentionality provides several benefits. It serves as a corrective, limiting the possible meanings a text might be given.¹³ Authorial intent gives us a way forward to construct our theologies in a truly biblical fashion. It will teach us that apparent contradictions in the text need not always be resolved or harmonized, but may stand together in healthy tension. Unity is found in the diversity.¹⁴

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33. In quotations of Fee, all italics are by Fee. See also G.E. Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, 35-36.

¹³ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, Chapter 3, "Normativeness and Authorial Intent - A Proposal Regarding New Testament Imperatives," 43. As an example, he cites B.B. Warfield's interpretation of "the perfect" in I Corinthians 13:10 as referring to the canon of the New Testament. Since neither Paul nor his audience could have possibly understood the text in this way, it cannot be considered the 'meaning' of this text.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Together with authorial intentionality, Fee is concerned with the manner in which evangelicals treat New Testament imperatives. The dynamic of the gospel and the Spirit must be restored to evangelical hermeneutics. First, the differing degrees and levels of imperatives in the New Testament must be taken more seriously.¹⁵ Second, Fee's commitment to promoting life in the Spirit is clear. "I am urging something much closer to Jesus' own rejection of scribal models of interpretation in Matthew 5 in favour of an interpretation of the Law that is more biblically relational, based on the character of God and the gift of the Spirit."¹⁶ At this level we see the originality of Fee's thought, for while many others have advocated a more grace-centered approach to imperatives, Fee also includes life in the Spirit. One refrains from killing one's brother not because the Law forbids killing, but because as children of God, born of the Holy Spirit, we love one another. Unlike believers under the old covenant, New Testament believers have the empowering of the Holy Spirit to enable them to walk not after the Law, but in the Spirit.¹⁷

Intentionality & Particularity/Eternality

Fee does not refrain from tackling perhaps the most difficult hermeneutical issue of all. The question is: Since God spoke His Word in historically particular circumstances, *how much of the particularity itself is a part of the eternal Word?* If the texts call us to practice hospitality, do we agree that washing feet (the particular) is a part of the eternal (showing hospitality)? It is obvious from the outset that this question is one of the harder for which to

¹⁵ Abstaining from sexual immorality, or clothing oneself with humility, he suggests, are of a different kind and category from the guidelines for the exercise of prophecy and tongues in I Corinthians 14.

¹⁶ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 46.

¹⁷ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 123. See also 97-109 for a fuller discussion. Fee's examples on this, such as tithing, will perhaps disturb some. He declares that tithing cannot be regarded as a Christian requirement, because to do so would be to read the New Testament through legal lenses. Rather, the gospel teaches a generosity that emulates the lavish gift of grace that was bestowed upon us. Evangelicals may here reflect the need for absolute authority that drives many fundamentalists.

proscribe systematically solutions. Fee recognizes this, and uses the role of women in ministry in light of I Timothy 2:8 to put forward some hermeneutical suggestions. Here Fee's hermeneutics may be observed in practice, and the inevitable outcome when these are applied to Pentecostal distinctives understood more fully.

It is undeniable that vv. 11-12 forbid a woman to teach and dominate a man, but it is clear from the whole paragraph that this was only part of the problem, and not necessarily the most significant part. In addition, the greater concern is for women to take their place in society and in the church as befits a woman who professes faith in Christ.¹⁸ Now the difficult question. How do these instructions, with their *ad hoc* nature, apply to the twentieth century? How do we determine the eternal from the particular in this instance?¹⁹ He believes the solution is in recognizing the different types of statements in Paul's letters, each with a variety of intent.²⁰ The difficulty lies with those statements that are hard to categorize consistently, because the eternality of the particulars is nowhere clearly stated, nor understood. Fee's approach, significant for his other work, is to take this passage as a whole and bring to it the companion text of 5:3-16.

This, then, is the point of the whole - to rescue these women and the church from the clutches of the false teachers. Their rescue includes proper demeanor in dress, proper demeanor in the assembly (including learning in all quietness), and

¹⁸ On the rule of widows see Bonnie Thurston, *Widows: A Woman's Ministry in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 1989).

¹⁹ The inconsistencies in modern approaches to these issues are incredible. Fee points out that considerable literature has emerged debating the role of women in ministry in light of vv. 11-12, but not a single piece arguing that the church should care for its widows over sixty-five, as 5:3-16 clearly teaches. *Gospel and Spirit*, 59-60.

²⁰ On one extreme is the example of Paul writing to Timothy (2 Tim.4:13) and asking him to bring his cloak he had left in Troas. None ever consider trying to obey that particular text, simply because the particularity of it is so obvious. On the other extreme are Paul's ethical injunctions in the second person plural. We easily sense that they are somehow eternal - we too should be compassionate, loving, forgiving, and Christlike. Despite writing to a certain audience, there is a latent universality in Paul's intent.

getting married and bearing children (one of the good works in v.10, seen in light of 5:9-10).²¹

When faced with similar passages in Acts, where the eternality of the particulars is difficult to determine, Fee holds to what he believes is the purpose and overall point of the passage. In the Acts 19 narrative, for example, it is to relate the evangelism of the world by the power of the Spirit. His treatment of the Timothy passage well illustrates this approach.²²

As the inconsistencies above demonstrate, many hermeneutical difficulties lie in the manner with which one acknowledges - or fail to acknowledge - the immense role that tradition in terms of denominational heritage, and presuppositions play in the interpretation of Scripture.²³ Fee believes the selectivity of hermeneutics is for the most part related to traditions, not to exegesis. At the innocent level, for example, cultural or ecclesiastical assumptions are often read into a text. When someone from Canada reads Psalm 125:2, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem," and thinks of real mountains, rather than the flat, elevated plain that surrounded ancient Jerusalem, this has occurred.²⁴ Fee notes the incongruity of exegetes who argue vigorously for the eternal validity of I Cor. 14:34-35 concerning the silence of women, but treat all else in the chapter, including the last injunction against prohibiting glossolalia, as historically particular. "Only prior commitments to one's

²¹ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 59. Cf. A.A. Trites, "Women in Ministry – A New Testament Perspective," *The Atlantic Baptist* (April 1, 1987): 211-214; and Alan Padgett, "Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:8-15 in Social Context," *Interpretation* 41:1 (January, 1987): 19-31.

²² "It simply cannot be demonstrated that Paul intended I Timothy 3:11-12 as a rule in all churches at all times. In fact, the occasion and purpose of I Timothy . . . suggest otherwise. I would argue, therefore, that the answer to our hermeneutical question lies in the area of our obedience to the ultimate concern of the text, even if at times the particulars are not carried over to the 'letter'." *Gospel and Spirit*, 59.

²³ One need only refer to Rudolph Bultmann's now-famous essay on whether it is possible to do presuppositionless exegesis, and his resounding "No" to that question. See "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" In *Existence and Faith, Shorter Writings of Rudolph Bultmann* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1960): 289-96.

²⁴ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, chapter 5, "Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and the Role of Tradition," 71. When one reads the texts that speak of the Lord's Supper and thinks of an individual cup and wafer, passed along to individuals who sit facing each other's backs, and tacked onto the end of a preaching service, it has occurred also.

tradition could possibly allow for such hermeneutical inconsistency."²⁵ Finally, tradition may lead us to ask specific questions of the text which are not otherwise legitimate. These questions then lead us towards the kind of hermeneutical posture to which we are predisposed. For example, to go to the text of Acts asking, "What is the evidence of Spirit-baptism?" may be asking a question of the text that it was not written to answer. The answer found, of course, can scarcely be the proper one.²⁶

Summary

Fee opts for the radical middle in the hermeneutical challenge associated with an inherent ambiguity of Scripture. This middle ground is the determination of authorial intent - both human and Divine. With this is his insistence on a Spirit-centered approach to New Testament imperatives, and a constant awareness of the impact of tradition upon one's hermeneutics. These three principles are the foundation for Fee's reflection on Pentecostal hermeneutics and theology.

Hermeneutics and Pentecostal Theology

With Fee's hermeneutical principles in hand, one is now prepared to examine his theology on Spirit-baptism, particularly as it relates to his own denomination, the Assemblies of God. For though Fee claims to be Pentecostal in every regard, he nonetheless takes

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 74. Fee illustrates this further. "I have had similar interest in reading the reviews of the recent commentary on I Corinthians, which for the most part turned out to be rather positive. But in those parts of reviews where even favourable reviewers must offer words of caution to their readers, the two places where I have been challenged most frequently are on some observations I make about church order in I Corinthians, or lack thereof, and about the charismatic phenomena. It will surprise no one that the reviewers who have taken exception to the matters of church order are Anglicans and Lutherans, while Dispensationalists to a reviewer bemoaned my handling of chapters 12-14. 'But alas,' one of them wrote, 'Dr. Fee is also a Pentecostal.' And then he went on to point out all the things wrong with my point of view, none of which, interestingly enough, were exegetical points, and all of which were based on his prior, unquestioning commitment to his own hermeneutical tradition." A list of the reviews of *Gospel and Spirit* and *Empowering* may be found in the Bibliography of this work.

²⁶ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 75.

considerable exception to the stated form of two of their key (some would argue distinctive) doctrines: the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a subsequent act following conversion; and the declaration that the evidence of such baptism is speaking in tongues.²⁷

Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent

Pentecostals admit to basing their theology of subsequence and initial evidence on historical precedent as found in Acts. Not that they are alone in this approach: the practice of infant baptism is made normative on the basis of historical precedent from church history, as is the required celebration of the Lord's Supper each week, or month. This hermeneutical issue, whether from Scripture or church history, is not unique to Pentecostals, but is found in many Christian groups. With specific regard to Pentecostal theology, we must ask exactly how the book of Acts is the Word of God, and thus inquire further as to how we are to decide which of the practices recorded in Acts are to be regarded as normative for believers today.

The genre of the book must be taken seriously. Acts is historical narrative, and it was within this arena that much of the scholarly debate with Pentecostalism first took place. Many have argued that one must distinguish between *didactic* and *historical* portions of Scripture, and that the didactic portions have primary importance for the formation of Christian doctrine. For example, Donald Guthrie declares, "We may observe at once that this

²⁷ For those who may not recall the official wording of the AG position, it is stated as follows in Articles 7 & 8 of the "Statement of Fundamental Truths," *Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth General Council of the Assemblies of God* (Miami Beach, Fla., August 12-16, 1973) 102:

7. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church . . . This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). . .

8. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (I Cor. 12:4-10,28), but different in purpose and use.

evidence from the book of Acts does not provide us with any reflection on the theology of the Spirit. It is wholly concerned with his activity. . . . The theological exposition of the doctrine of the Spirit did not fit into Luke's purpose in Acts, but comes to fuller expression in the epistles."²⁸ Second, it was declared that what is clearly descriptive history in Acts must not be translated into normative experiences for the ongoing church.²⁹ Fee does not deny that theology abounds in Luke's work. Rather, he simply pleads for one to remember that Luke cast his theology in historical narrative, and for anyone concerned with good hermeneutics, this must be taken seriously.³⁰

The key to determining what may be didactic within a framework of historical narrative is, as seen for Fee above, the role of authorial intent.

Although Luke's "broader intent" may be a moot point for some, it is a defensible hypothesis that he was trying to show how the church emerged as a chiefly Gentile, worldwide phenomenon from its origins as a Jerusalem-based, Judaism-oriented sect of Jewish believers, and how the Holy Spirit was ultimately responsible for this phenomenon of universal salvation based on grace alone.³¹

This understanding of Luke's primary intent has significant implications for Fee's theology as a Pentecostal. For example, when discussing the conversion of Cornelius, he

²⁸ Guthrie, *NT Theology*, 548.

²⁹ See, for example, Clark Pinnock and Grant Osborne, "A Truce Proposal for the Tongues Controversy," *Christianity Today* 16 (Oct. 8, 1971): 6-9; John R.W. Stott, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1964), 8; and Anthony Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 23-24.

³⁰ *Gospel and Spirit*, 90. Pentecostal scholars are quick to point out that there is renewed recognition of Luke as a theologian. I.H. Marshall's, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970; revised ed., Downers Grove: IVP, 1998) has been called "An important shift in evangelical thinking." See R.P. Menzies, "The Distinctive Character of Luke's Pneumatology," *Paraclete* 25 (1991): 20. Also significant is *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I.H. Marshall and D. Peterson (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998). Marshall writes, "Luke was entitled to his own views, and the fact that they differ in some respects from those of Paul should not be held against him at this point. On the contrary, he is a theologian in his own right, and must be treated as such." *Historian and Theologian*, 75. W.W. Gasque, in his masterful *A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1975; reprint 1989), includes two chapters on Luke the Theologian, pp. 136-163 and 251-305.

³¹ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 91.

notes that this falls in line with Luke's intention. The historical narrative concerning Cornelius matches Fee's speculation on Luke's intent, for this is the account of a Gentile, whose conversion is directly arranged by the Holy Spirit, through one of the Jerusalem apostles. "Whatever else one gleans from the story, whether it be the place of visions in Christian guidance (!) or the nature of Christian conversion, such gleanings are *incidental* to Luke's intent. This does not mean that what is incidental is false, that it has no theological value; it does mean that God's word for us in that narrative is primarily related to what it was intended to teach."³²

In what is of supreme importance to Pentecostal hermeneutics and theology, Fee outlines three specific principles regarding hermeneutics and historical narrative. Essentially, these are as follows. 1) Authorial intent is the chief factor in determining normative values from narratives. 2) That which is incidental to the primary intent of a narrative cannot have the same didactic value as the intended teaching, though it may provide insight into the author's theology. 3) For historical precedent to have normative value, it must be demonstrated that such was the specific intent of the author. If the author intended to establish precedent, then such should be regarded as normative.³³ As anyone familiar with Pentecostal hermeneutics and theology will quickly realize, the preceding "guidelines" commence the challenge of the Pentecostal position for subsequence and initial evidence, for both are based on the assumption that Luke intended to teach these doctrines from the related narratives in Acts. Pentecostals have responded forcefully, yet creatively, to Fee's guidelines. Their response is the subject of chapter five, below.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 92.

In general, Fee believes Christian theology may be divided into three (or four)³⁴ categories: 1) Christian theology (what Christians believe); 2) Christian ethics (how Christians ought to behave); and 3) Christian experience or practice (what Christians do in terms of religious practices). These must be further defined in terms of primary and secondary importance, depending on whether they are derived from imperatives, or incidentally by analogy or precedent.³⁵ Astutely, he notes that almost everything Christians derive from Scripture by way of precedent is in the third category, Christian experience or practice, and always at the secondary level. This is not to say that secondary statements are unimportant; we simply cannot treat them as identical to primary statements based upon clear imperatives.³⁶

Fee wades further into the debate with his fellow Pentecostals:

The doctrine of a baptism in the Holy Spirit as subsequent to conversion and accompanied by tongues seems to belong to the secondary level of doctrinal statements in my third category. That believers are to be (or keep) filled with the Spirit, that they are to walk and live in the Spirit is at the primary level and normative. When and how one enters the dimension of Christian experience, although not unimportant, is not of the same "normative" quality, because the "when and how" is based solely on precedent and/or analogy.³⁷

³⁴ This was one of the few changes from *Gospel and Spirit* to *How to Read the Bible*, published several years later. Its impetus came from a specific challenge by R. Stronstad that the last category must be divided into two. More detail on this in chapter five.

³⁵ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 93. See also *How to Read*, 106-108, for the same material rephrased for the layperson. By way of example, in the first category, we might consider the deity of Christ primary; how the two natures concur in unity is secondary. That Scripture is the inspired word of God is primary; the precise nature of inspiration is secondary. With respect to Christian ethics, general maxims such as love for one's enemy, and unlimited forgiveness are primary; concrete principles and application for specific situations are secondary.

³⁶ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 93.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

With these general observations and principles in view, he offers the following specific principles for the use of historical precedent.³⁸

1) The use of historical precedent as an analogy by which to establish a norm is never valid in itself. Such a process (drawing universal norms from particular events) produces a *non sequitur* and is therefore irrelevant.

2) Although it may not have been the author's primary purpose, historical narratives do have illustrative and, sometimes, "pattern" value. It should be noted, however, that especially in cases where the precedent justifies a present action, that the precedent does not establish a norm for specific action. A caveat is in order here: for a biblical precedent to justify a present action, the principle of the action must be taught elsewhere, where it is the primary intent so to teach.

3) In matters of Christian experience, and even more so of Christian practice, biblical precedents may be regarded as repeatable patterns - even if they are not to be regarded as normative.³⁹

Fee directly engages Pentecostal distinctives and historical precedent. He maintains that one is unable to prove authorial intent in the "patterns" of Pentecost, Samaria, Paul, and Ephesus. It is simply not possible to show that Luke *intended* to teach an experience of the Spirit as subsequent to conversion.⁴⁰ For Fee, even the case of the Samaritans, which he believes *were* true Christians before their reception of the Spirit, is not intended to teach subsequence. For Luke, the real evidence of Christian experience was the reception of the

³⁸ It is important that these be listed out in detail, just as Fee wrote them, for it is on these principles that he has drawn much of the fire from his Pentecostal colleagues. Often the issue concerns the actual wording used. For the sake of later clarification, we offer these principles verbatim.

³⁹ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 94-96. The repeatable character of certain practices or patterns should be guided by the following considerations: a) The strongest possible case can be made when only one pattern is found, and when the pattern is repeated within the New Testament itself. b) When there is an ambiguity of patterns, or when a pattern occurs but once, it is repeatable for later Christians only if it appears to have divine approbation or is in harmony with what is taught elsewhere in Scripture. c) What is culturally conditioned is either not repeatable at all, or must be translated into the new or differing culture.

⁴⁰ On the other hand, one might respond with the equally correct assertion that is also impossible to prove that Luke *did not* intend to teach subsequence from these patterns. The difficulty with demanding proof of authorial intent is that it attempts to place the burden of proof on one viewpoint and not the other.

Spirit. What he is teaching in this narrative is the validation by the Jerusalem leaders of the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem.⁴¹

The Essence of Pentecostalism

Upon discovering that Gordon Fee does not subscribe to either subsequence or initial evidence,⁴² the twin doctrines cherished by many Pentecostals as the true doctrinal essence of the movement, one may be drawn to inquire as to exactly *how* Dr. Fee still considers himself a Pentecostal? The answer lies essentially in Fee's definition of the essence of Pentecostalism and the Pentecostal experience.⁴³ His attempt to articulate his understanding of what it means to be Pentecostal demonstrates his own strong commitment to Pentecostalism:

⁴¹ This is widely agreed upon as Luke's intent for this narrative. With Fee on this are George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 383-4; L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series Vol.5 ed. D. Harrington. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 150-153; Krodel, *Acts*, 164; Bruce, *Acts*, 182-3; Stott, *The Spirit, the Church and the World*, 187; and Marshall, *Acts*, 157-158.

⁴² The question of whether tongues is the initial evidence of Spirit-reception Fee dismisses as a "moot point," and thus discusses it very little. Because tongues is seen as a repeated pattern in Acts, many Pentecostals have argued that it is *the* pattern. Fee disagrees. "To insist that it is the only valid sign seems to place too much weight on the historical precedent of three (perhaps four) instances in Acts." Fee does not thereby downplay the role of tongues. In "Tongues - Least of the Gifts? Some Exegetical Observations on I Corinthians 12-14," *Pneuma* 2/2 (1980): 3-14, he argues forcefully that Paul values tongues highly for personal edification. His most recent comment on the issue, in *God's Empowering Presence*, maintains this viewpoint, suggesting that personal edification is in no manner wrong, and is in fact viewed very favourably by Paul, an avid tongues-speaker himself. pp. 890 & 218-219.

⁴³ In personal conversation with Dr. Fee by the author, this question was posed. Some, such as Wm. Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," 1-3, view the tying together of tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit-baptism as a subsequent event, as the essence of Pentecostalism. Fee was asked how he could still consider himself a Pentecostal, when he disagreed with statements 7&8 (above) of their fundamental truths. He replied that he told the Assemblies of God, "I cannot support the language used to articulate this, but I support what you *mean* by what you have written." At issue is the language used. To this author, he offered the following: "I do not throw out initial evidence, I throw out the language, because it is not biblical, and therefore irrelevant. From a reading of Luke and Paul I would expect people to speak in tongues when they are empowered by the Spirit. The reception of the Spirit is most commonly evidenced by speaking in tongues. It is very normal. I expect people to be empowered by the Spirit for witness. For most people this will be a subsequent experience, because they will have become Christians without realizing that this is for them." Gordon Fee, interviewed by author. December 5, 1997.

In thus arguing, as a New Testament scholar, against some cherished Pentecostal interpretations, I have in no sense abandoned what is essential to Pentecostalism. I have only tried to point out some inherent flaws in some of our historic understanding of texts. The essential matter, after all, is neither subsequence, nor tongues, but the Spirit himself as a dynamic, empowering presence; and there seems to me to be little question that our way of initiation in that - through an experience of Spirit-baptism - has biblical validity. Whether all *must* go that route seem to me to be more moot; but in any case, the Pentecostal experience itself can be defended on exegetical grounds as a thoroughly biblical phenomenon.⁴⁴

If one was to interview Christians from all sectors of Christianity, and ask them to describe Christian conversion and Christian life, the most noticeable feature of their definitions would be the general lack of reference to the dynamic, active role of the Spirit.⁴⁵ Exactly opposite is the New Testament view. For the early church, the Spirit was an eschatological reality, the clear evidence, the sure sign, that the coming age had dawned, and that God had set the future of Israel in motion, with the coming of the Messiah. The Spirit was not some kind of addition to the Christian life, to be called upon in certain times, and ignored in others. He is the *sine qua non*, the essential ingredient of Christianity. Without the Spirit, one cannot be considered a Christian. For Paul, the Spirit was the down payment on future reality, the means by which one could even remotely hope to live the Christian life. For Luke, the Spirit was the eschatological fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The Spirit *is the key* to all that is New Covenant. Even for Jesus, God as He is, the Spirit was the key to his truly human life. With Christ, the power of the Spirit had come to usher in the new age of grace. It is with this understanding that we must approach the outpouring on the day of Pentecost. It is with this understanding that we must view Pentecostalism, and its insistence on life in the Spirit.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ "The Issue of Subsequence and Separability," in *Gospel and Spirit*, 111.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People God*, 84-95.

Fee argues, as have many before him, that the Spirit was the chief element, the "primary ingredient" of this new existence.

For early believers, it was not merely a matter of getting saved, forgiven, prepared for heaven. It was above all else to receive the Spirit, to walk into the coming age with *power*. They scarcely would have understood our Pentecostal terminology - "Spirit-filled Christian." That would be like saying "Scandinavian Swede." They simply did not think of Christian initiation as a two-stage process. For them, to be Christian meant to have the Spirit, to be a "Spirit-person." To be "spiritual," therefore, did *not* mean to be some kind of special Christian, a Christian elitist (except perhaps at Corinth, where that was their failure). For them, to be spiritual meant to be a Christian - not over against a nominal (or carnal, etc.) Christian, but over against a non-Christian, one who does not have the Spirit.⁴⁷

For Luke, Paul, and the rest of the New Testament writers, this concept of the Spirit as *the* element in conversion was proclaimed.⁴⁸ Nowhere in the New Testament does one read anything close to "Be saved, and then filled with the Spirit." To early Christians, conversion *meant* being filled with God's Spirit.⁴⁹ But Fee goes further. In the early church, the Spirit was not someone believed in or about; he was experienced, powerfully, in the life of the church. "For the earliest believers life in Christ meant life in the Spirit, and that meant life characterized by power, not simply by some quiet, pervasive force. The coming of the Spirit had phenomenological evidence; life was characterized by a dynamic quality, evidenced as often as not by extraordinary phenomena."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 114.

⁴⁸ This is where Fee parts company with several of his Pentecostal critics. While they maintain that this was without doubt the view of Paul, they believe Fee is, as Hollenweger said of Dunn, "Reading Luke with Pauline lenses." See chapter 5, below.

⁴⁹ Nearly all New Testament scholars are in agreement with this. See, for example, Stott, *The Spirit, the Church, and the World*, 156-8; Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 384-5; Bruce, *Acts*, 182; Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 537-8; Green, *I Believe*, 76-77; Dunn, *Baptism*, 68; and G.W.H. Lampe, *God as Spirit: The Bampton Lectures, 1976* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 75.

⁵⁰ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 115. See also *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*, 174-5.

Summary

Based on Fee's principles, Pentecostals may say the following about their experience. In the New Testament, the presence of the Spirit was the chief element in Christian conversion and in the Christian life. In Acts, as well as in Paul's churches, the Spirit's presence involved a charismatic dimension normally associated with the reception of the Spirit. Although speaking in tongues may *not* have been normative, it *was* normally expected to accompany Spirit-baptism in the early church. Modern believers, many of whom have not experienced a charismatic dimension to their conversion, may still (on the basis of the New Testament pattern), experience such a dimension of Christian life. This includes speaking in tongues, for it was the repeated expression of the dynamic dimension of the coming of the Spirit. If the Pentecostal may not say one *must* speak in tongues, the Pentecostal may surely say, why *not* speak in tongues? It does have repeated biblical precedent, it did have evidential value at Cornelius' household (Acts 10:45-46), and - in spite of much that has been written to the contrary - it does have value both for the edification of the believer (I Cor 14:2-4) and, with interpretation, for the edification of the church (I Cor 14:5, 26-28).⁵¹

The unfortunate omission of this valid, biblical dimension of Christian life from the life of the church is the backdrop against which we must understand the Pentecostal movement, deeply unsatisfied with life in Christ without life in the Spirit. Though their timing may have been off, what they sought to recapture for the church was not.

That this experience was for them usually a separate experience in the Holy Spirit and subsequent to their conversion is in itself probably irrelevant. Given their place in the history of the church, how else might it have happened? Thus the Pentecostal should probably not make a virtue out of necessity. At the same time, neither should others deny the validity of such experience on biblical grounds, unless, as some do, they wish to deny the reality of such an empowering dimension of life in the Spirit altogether. But such a denial, I would argue, is

⁵¹ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 98-99. Also helpful are Fee's *Corinthians*, 569-713; and *Empowering*, 863-868, 886-890.

actually an exegeting *not* of the biblical texts but of one's own experience in this later point in church history and a making of that experience normative. I for one like the biblical norm better; at this point the Pentecostals have the New Testament clearly on their side.⁵²

Conclusion

Fee's contributions to hermeneutics, both for Pentecostalism and the Christian world in general, are significant. Rarely does one read material so concerned to integrate the practical with the theoretical, the 'exegesis' with the 'spirituality.' For Fee, the inherent tension in Scripture can be alleviated only through the discovery of authorial intent. This focus, however, seriously challenges the traditional Pentecostal practice of relying on perceived patterns in Luke's narratives. In addition, Fee's non-typical views concerning the core of Pentecostalism have been highly objectionable to those holding to subsequence and initial evidence as the essence of the movement. For Pentecostals, the opportunity to interact theologically with Fee's proposals has been a goldmine of self-discovery and provoked a new awareness of their own hermeneutical issues.

Self-discovery and examination, however, can be a painful process. His suggestions on the use of historical precedent, the importance of authorial intent, and his statements concerning those doctrines which Pentecostals consider sacred, have elicited a serious response from his fellow Pentecostals. Many believe Fee has simply sold out to common evangelical hermeneutics. Nevertheless, Fee's hermeneutical principles cannot be taken lightly, for they represent some of the best in recent evangelical thought. Other Pentecostals have responded with their own hermeneutical principles, particularly for the interpretation of Acts. Fee's importance can be measured in the detailed attention given him from within the Pentecostal movement, and the efforts by Pentecostals to address each of his concerns in turn. Chapter five continues with the Pentecostal response to Fee.

⁵² Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 119.

CHAPTER V

Pentecostal Critique and Fee's Response

As might be expected, Pentecostal scholars have responded definitively to the hermeneutical and theological challenges put forward by Fee. This chapter will examine the Pentecostal response to Fee, noting convergent and divergent views. It is important to realize that this debate, essentially begun by Fee with a 1972¹ article on historical precedent, is just over twenty-five years old. While much has been written on the subject, few books have been published, leaving most of the material available only in journal form. In addition, the lack of qualified Pentecostal scholars has resulted in less of a Pentecostal response than one might expect. While many Pentecostals have written on the topic, only three scholars have taken Fee's challenge seriously and provided appropriate responses: William Menzies, long-time Pentecostal scholar and Professor; Roger Stronstad, Academic Dean at Western Pentecostal Bible College (Clayburn, B.C.); and Robert P. Menzies, Professor at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (Baguio, Philippines). In each section, Fee is given opportunity to respond to his critics.² Three issues in particular have been raised: 1) authorial intent and

¹ "The Hermeneutics of Historical Precedent," first published in 1976 (Grand Rapids: Baker), was originally written for the 1972 meeting of the Society of Pentecostal Studies.

² The exception here will be Robert Menzies, to whom Fee has not responded. When asked about this in an interview with this author, Fee replied that a response would have drawn him much further into the debate, for which he has neither the time nor passion. "By the time Bob published his thesis I had moved on to so many other projects that I simply abandoned the hermeneutical give and take...I had read only enough of Menzies to know that ... under the pressure of time [I wasn't] able to handle it adequately." Gordon D. Fee, interview by author, 27 January 1998, electronic mail.

the essence of Pentecostalism; 2) Fee's categories of Christian theology; and 3) historical precedent. The astute reader will note that neither response to Fee includes much detailed discussion on initial evidence. Perhaps the authors assume that just as Fee's hermeneutical proposals rule out the evidence with the subsequent experience, so too their arguments allow for both. It is inescapable, however, that the authors prefer to deal hermeneutically with subsequence.

Authorial Intent and the Essence of Pentecostalism

That Luke had specific theological intentions when writing his narratives is highly likely. Determining what his intent might have been remains one of the biggest issues separating Fee and other Pentecostal scholars. Fee's contention is that genre seriously affects biblical interpretation, and further, when narratives are used to derive theology, specific authorial intent must be shown. He does not therefore allow the critical passages of Acts to be used to establish normative patterns. Pentecostals recognize this, and get straight to the point:

If one can demonstrate that Luke did not intend to convey a theological message by his narratives, he has at that point effectively undercut the possibility of a clear Pentecostal theology. Pentecostal theology is dependent on a hermeneutical methodology which takes seriously the theological intention of Luke. Acts must be more than an interesting glimpse into the life of the early church. It must be more than mere historical resource. Since the only access we have to Spirit-baptism initiation experiences are mediated to us through the descriptive mode, and that limited to Acts, we are heavily indebted to Luke-as-theologian.³

Fee's hermeneutics raise several important questions. Who determines authorial intent: Pentecostals or non-Pentecostals? Who determines what is primary and what is secondary? Who is authorized to adjudicate between Pentecostals and their opponents as to whether or not Luke may teach 20th century Christians about their experience of the Holy

³ Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," 7.

Spirit? Many Pentecostals believe Fee's hermeneutics muzzle the important passages of Acts, leaving him in no position to answer the above questions. Though Fee's work challenges the tendency to allegorize, moralize, and/or spiritualize historical narratives, as a whole it must be rejected.⁴

In focusing on Luke's theological intent, Fee consistently employs a basic presupposition: in the New Testament, the presence of the Spirit was the chief element in Christian conversion. Whereas others addressed Fee on his hermeneutical principles *per se*, Robert Menzies challenges the notion that Luke shares Paul's pneumatological emphasis in his writings on the Spirit's function. If Luke's basic intent in relating the activities of the Spirit is charismatic and not soteriological, the Pentecostal case concerning authorial intent in historical narratives is much stronger.

Fee's work played an important role in the theological development of Pentecostalism since the 1970's. He clearly argued that Pentecostalism could no longer rely on 19th century interpretive methods. But Menzies maintains that this message is no longer relevant. Pentecostals have replaced their outdated hermeneutics with approaches that speak the modern hermeneutical language. Fee's critique of Pentecostal hermeneutics, updated in 1991, now fails to address today's crucial question: "Does Luke, in a manner similar to Paul, present the Spirit as the source of new covenant existence?"⁵ For Menzies the answer is "No."

I would suggest that the pneumatologies of Luke and Paul are different but compatible; and the difference should not be blurred, for both perspectives offer valuable insight into the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit. Clearly Paul has the more developed view, for he sees the full richness of the Spirit's work. . . . Paul attests to both the soteriological and the prophetic (as well as charismatic)

⁴ Stronstad, "The Biblical Precedent for Historical Precedent," in *Paraclete* 27/2 (1993): 11.

⁵ *Empowered for Witness*, 239. This question is the crux of Menzies' work, and is answered in the negative through 200-plus pages of argument and exegesis. Although the specific proofs supporting the claim are outside the scope of this work, we will nonetheless explore the results and impacts of his thesis. The interested reader may find a brief summary of his research in "The Distinctive Character of Luke's Pneumatology," *Paraclete* 25/3 (1991): 17-30.

dimensions of the Spirit's work. Luke's perspective is less developed and more limited. He bears witness solely to the prophetic dimension of the Spirit's work, and thus he gives us a glimpse of only a part of Paul's fuller view. Nevertheless, Luke, like Paul, has an important contribution to make. He calls us to recognize that the church, by virtue of its reception of the Pentecostal gift, is a prophetic community empowered for a missionary task. In short, not only are the pneumatological perspectives of Paul and Luke compatible, they are complementary: both represent important contributions to a holistic and harmonious biblical theology of the Spirit.⁶

For Menzies, Luke's intent is clearly subordinate to the question raised above. If his description of a 'distinctive' pneumatology for Luke is correct, then Luke's intent to teach a Spirit-baptism as distinct from conversion is, he believes, easily demonstrated. "One need only establish that Luke's narrative was designed to encourage every Christian to receive the Pentecostal gift. And, since Luke highlights Pentecost as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning an outpouring of the Spirit upon 'all flesh' (Acts 2:17-21), this appears to be self-evident."⁷

Finally, Fee has been charged with 'selling out' the essentials of Pentecostalism. After all, one who subscribes neither to the doctrine of subsequence nor initial evidence, and yet claims to be a Pentecostal, will face some disbelief.⁸ Some suggest Fee has simply reached for a hermeneutic acceptable to the evangelical world. His reluctance to employ the concept of *normative* when describing charismatic phenomena associated with Spirit baptism leaves one with an 'impoverished' Pentecostal theology. "The use of *normal* in this

⁶ Menzies, *Empowered*, 241.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 239. For Fee's failure to respond publicly to Bob Menzies, see n. 2 above. In private conversation, Fee offered the following. He agrees that Luke's primary interest is in the Spirit, and His missiological rule. It is less on initiating experiences than on the role of the Spirit in the Church. The soteriological dimension is not his focus. Luke *assumes* the soteriological dimension. Fee does not believe that he reads Luke with Pauline lenses, anymore than he does in I Peter, or John, where both assume the reception of the Spirit is what makes one a Christian. It is a thoroughly N.T. point of view. "I do let Luke speak for himself. He just isn't saying what they are saying he says. If you read Luke on his own terms, the two statements in the AG [Assemblies of God] wouldn't exist." Interview by the author, 5 December 1997.

⁸ For Fee's response, see n.42 of chapter four, above.

connection 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."⁹

The obvious result of this reductionism is a willingness to permit *repeatability* of patterns, but not *normativity*. Hence, speaking in tongues associated with Spirit baptism may be *normal*, and even desirable, possibly, but it cannot be proclaimed as a *normative* model. Hence one is sorely pressed on exegetical grounds . . . if this be true, to establish a clear doctrine of either subsequence or tongues as accompanying Spirit baptism. This reductionist point of view . . . is somewhat short of a thorough-going Pentecostal theology [and] is apparently a position held today by a number of evangelicals.¹⁰

Fee's belief that his proposals should not impact the essentials of Pentecostalism has also come under fire. To some, Fee's message is theologically indistinguishable from the other nemesis of Pentecostal theology, James Dunn. His repudiation of Pentecostal theology leaves him with nothing new to offer to the theological world, and challenges the Pentecostal understanding of their own Spirit-baptism experience at its deepest level. Fee agrees with most non-Pentecostals in affirming that Spirit-baptism is equated with conversion, though he does insist that the charismatic, empowering dimension is lacking, and should be restored. For Robert Menzies, this still undercuts crucial aspects of Pentecostal theology:

When the Pentecostal gift is confused with conversion, [the] missiological (and I would add, Lukan) focus is lost.

The bottom line is this: If Fee is right, Pentecostals can no longer proclaim an enabling of the Spirit which is distinct from conversion and available to every believer, at least not with the same sense of expectation, nor can Pentecostals maintain that the principal purpose of this gift is to grant power for the task of mission. To sum up, the doctrine of subsequence articulates a conviction crucial for Pentecostal theology and practice: Spirit-baptism, in the Pentecostal sense, is distinct from . . . conversion. This conviction, I would add, is integral to Pentecostalism's continued sense of expectation and effectiveness in mission.¹¹

⁹ "Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," 10. Italics Menzies.

¹⁰ Ibid, 9. Italics Menzies. Timothy Cargal, *Pentecostals and Hermeneutics*, agrees. "In one of the first responses by Pentecostals to these challenges, Fee essentially conceded the case by joining didactic value with authorial intent." 183.

¹¹ "Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," 9.

Fee's Response¹²

Fee has responded with some clarification. He concurs on the charismatic nature of Luke's writings, and that his primary concern was charismatic and not soteriological. It is not 'theology' in the larger sense that concerns him when discussing Acts, but the concept of 'didactic' as it is related to the question of establishing Christian norms. He believes that part of the problem lies in his usage of 'norms' and 'normative.' By 'normal', Fee understands that this is the way it was in the early church. The dynamic, empowering dimension of life in the Spirit was a normal, expected, recurring experience. Precisely because it was so 'normal', it was presupposed; there was no compulsion to talk about it at every turn. By 'normative', however, he means something which must be adhered to by all Christians at all times and in all places, if they are truly obedient to God's word. It becomes a matter of obedience, no questions asked.¹³

He acknowledges the concern that this transition, however, from 'normative' to 'normal' waters down the Pentecostal position. Fee disagrees with the assertion that "Repeatability is hardly a preachable item."¹⁴ He points to the millions of believers worldwide who have and are experiencing the Pentecostal reality of dynamic life in the Spirit, many of whom have never heard of either subsequence or initial evidence.¹⁵ He concludes:

Precisely because I understand this dimension of life in the Spirit to be the New Testament norm, I think it is repeatable, and should be so, as the norm of the later church. Where I would tend to disagree with my tradition in the articulation of

¹² With the republication of the two key articles from 1976 and 1985 in 1991, Fee included a brief postscript in *Gospel and Spirit* containing his response to Wm. Menzies and R. Stronstad.

¹³ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 102.

¹⁴ Menzies, "Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," 10.

¹⁵ Gordon Fee, Interview by author, 5 December, 1997.

this norm is when they use language that seem more obligatory to me than I find in the New Testament documents themselves.¹⁶

Categories of Christian Theology

Roger Stronstad, in particular, has taken issue with Fee's three-fold classification of doctrinal statements: 1) Christian theology (what Christians believe); 2) Christian ethics (how Christians ought to behave); 3) Christian experience or practice (what Christians do in terms of religious practices). He believes that Fee is guilty of "a confusion of categories" when he places the experience of Spirit baptism, and the Pentecostal explanation of it, into the third category. According to Stronstad, Spirit-baptism is not something Christians 'do'; rather, it is an experience. The third category ought to be spiritual experience, with a fourth category needed for Christian practice. The essence of this argument is the hope that the hermeneutics appropriate for Christian practice somehow do not apply to Christian experience. By challenging the placement of Spirit-baptism into Fee's third category, Stronstad hopes to by-pass the more difficult of his hermeneutical guidelines. Thus Fee's entire hermeneutical scheme, suggested for the category of Christian practice, may not apply to the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit-baptism.

As a spiritual experience it is akin to, say, the spiritual experience of being born again. Both the experiences of Spirit-baptism and of being born again are experiences in which God causes something to happen to the person. In neither case is it something that Christians do. . . . Consequently, the principles which apply to [the category of] . . . Christian practice, are irrelevant for this new category, spiritual experience.¹⁷

Fee's Response

Fee's use of three and not four categories, was "more descriptive than definite." While Stronstad correctly observed that there is a fundamental difference in spiritual

¹⁶ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 103.

¹⁷ Stronstad, "Biblical Precedent," 4-5.

experience and Christian practice, Fee acknowledges he put them together because he perceived the hermeneutical issues to be very similar for each category. Whether or not this is actually true remains open for further examination and dialogue. Fee admits that he might well be wrong in that assumption. His main concern was not to establish a hermeneutical axiom, but to make the hermeneutical observation that most differences among Christians occur in this third (and fourth) category.¹⁸ Neither Fee nor Stronstad actually examines what differences, if any, occur hermeneutically between the two categories. Therefore Stronstad's insistence upon four categories continues to be a moot point.

The Merits of Historical Precedent

Fee maintains that Pentecostals employ the key passages in Acts on the basis of historical precedent alone. For historical precedent to function with didactic merit, Fee argues it must be taught elsewhere in scripture. Herein lies the sore spot between most Pentecostal scholars and Fee. No other part of scripture teaches subsequence or initial evidence. Thus, for Pentecostals, Fee has undercut their theology at the root.

Ultimately, this methodology means that Jesus, or Paul, or Peter, or John, may instruct the contemporary Christian, but that Luke, because he chose to write historical narrative, neither intended to instruct the church nor will be allowed to instruct the contemporary church, whatever his intention might or might not have been.

It is a monumental irony that Luke, the author of 25 percent of the New Testament, is allowed no independent status among the recognized teachers in the New Testament by Reformed hermeneutics and so-called scientific exegesis.¹⁹

Robert Menzies accurately captures the essence of Fee's dilemma concerning how the normative aspects of Luke's narrative may be clearly identified. "Unless we are prepared to

¹⁸ "Response to Roger Stronstad's 'The Biblical Precedent for Historical Precedent'," In *Paraclete* 27/2 (1993) 12.

¹⁹ "The Hermeneutics of Lukan Historiography," in *Paraclete* 22/4 (1988), 11.

choose church leaders by the casting of lots, or are willing to encourage church members to sell all of their possessions, we cannot simply assume that a particular historical narrative provides the basis for normative theology."²⁰ Fee's concern is thus legitimate. His solution is to tie historical precedent to authorial intent. On the basis of this, Fee has rejected the Pentecostal formulation of their theology, though he maintains the validity of their experience. The younger Menzies agrees with Fee on this point and has instead focused his attention on the charismatic theology of Luke, with the promotion of the charismatic thus intrinsically implied in any discussion of Lukan intent.

Others take a different approach, suggesting that the hermeneutical 'rules' laid out by Fee border on the arbitrary and that care must be exercised to avoid limiting the theological enterprise.²¹ Stronstad argues that Fee's three principles for the use of historical precedent are "fundamentally flawed." In particular, he takes issue with the first of the principles²², and gives three examples from Acts illustrating the use of historical precedent by the early church for a variety of purposes, including the establishment of norms.

The first biblical example is at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry. He anticipates the skepticism of the people when He visits Nazareth, and declares that "No prophet is welcome in his hometown." (Luke 4:24). He then appeals to Elijah (Luke 4:25-26) and Elisha (Luke 4:27), both of whom turned away from their own community to minister to others. Thus, on the basis of the historical precedent of Elijah and Elisha, Jesus left Nazareth and went down to Capernaum (Luke 4:30). Luke also reports Jesus' use of historical precedent when the disciples are charged with Sabbath violations, namely, the picking and eating of wheat on the Sabbath (Luke 6:2). Jesus defends His disciples on the precedent set by David when he and his companions were hungry and ate the consecrated

²⁰ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 237.

²¹ "Methodology of Pentecostal Theology," 10. Italics Menzies.

²² "The use of historical precedent as an analogy by which to establish a norm is never valid."

bread, lawful only for the priests (Luke 6:4). Historical precedent is used at the so-called Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, when the Apostles were deciding the fate of Gentile Christians. On the basis of Peter's vision concerning the Gentiles, the Apostles decide that God's purpose is met in making the Gentiles His people. Further, their decision to refrain from insisting upon Gentile circumcision, establishes a normative doctrine in the church.²³

Despite his arguments against the validity of Fee's dictums, Stronstad recognizes his predicament:

The impasse in this debate is that whereas it is possible to expose the flaws in Fee's hermeneutic of historical precedent, it is impossible to prove that there is a biblical precedent for historical precedent. In other words, although it is possible to demonstrate that there are examples in the Book of Acts where the church used historical precedent to establish a norm, it is impossible to prove that Luke intended for his readers to interpret his narratives by the same principle. It is impossible to prove this because Luke never tells his readers to do this.²⁴

Stronstad concludes that the validity of the use of biblical precedent must either commend itself as self-evident, or it does not. Pentecostals operate on a hermeneutic which affirms that normative beliefs and practices may properly be derived from narratives on the basis of historical precedent. Though often criticized for this approach, other New Testament scholars tacitly agree.²⁵ The real issue for Stronstad then, is not whether Pentecostals are justified in using historical precedent hermeneutically, but whether they have done so correctly.

²³ Stronstad, "Biblical Precedent," 6-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁵ He quotes J. Ramsey Michaels, "There is nothing wrong in principle with deriving normative beliefs and practices from narratives." From "Evidences of the Spirit, or the Spirit as Evidence? Some Non-Pentecostal Reflections," In *Initial Evidence*, Gary McGee, ed. 203. See also G. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, (Downers Grove, IVP, 1991), 153; and Marshall, *Historian and Theologian*, 75.

Fee's Response

Fee responds by confessing that in all of the criticism directed towards his articulation of things, he has failed to find another hermeneutical approach that "took me by the hand and showed me how one goes about doing this - that is, establishing something normative on the basis of historical precedent alone."²⁶ Regarding the criticism of his first principle, he notes that the key word for him in that principle is "analogy." His only point was that anything based on analogies is sure to fail hermeneutically when establishing norms, for they open up too many possibilities.²⁷ As for Stronstad's pointed questions concerning exactly who had the authority to decide authorial intent, Fee has two suggestions. First, scholars must work to discover whether Luke actually *had* a doctrinal/theological imperative in his narratives, with regard to repeating the specifics. Second, with the evident diversity of patterns with Acts itself, how does one determine which are normative? If Luke's concern and intent was to provide patterns for the establishment of normative doctrine, Fee wonders, how do we explain his failure to narrate similar events in the same way? Luke's fondness for great variety as he reports the experience of the early believers leads Fee to conclude that the establishment of normative patterns was not his chief objective.

I would not want to say that Luke did *not* intend us to understand the baptism of the Spirit to be distinct from and subsequent to conversion, intended for empowering, and always evidenced by speaking in tongues; I am simply less convinced than my Pentecostal forebears that Luke did so intend. And chiefly because, even though this pattern can be found in three (probably four, perhaps five) instances, it is clearly not expressly narrated in this way in every instance. Although I am quite open on this question, I do not find . . . the kinds of criteria that help me to think otherwise.²⁸

Fee wholeheartedly agrees that Jesus justified and defended his and other's actions on the basis of historical precedent. He also supports Stronstad's use of his third illustration, the

²⁶ Fee, "Response to Stronstad," 11-14.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁸ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 103-104.

Gentile mission in Acts. Where then do they differ? In the difference between defending one's actions, and establishing a norm. It is certain that Jesus defended the right of His disciples to pluck grain on the Sabbath from historical precedent. But did He thereby establish a norm, for all generations following? Jesus did move from his hometown to another location on the basis of the historical actions of two Old Testament prophets. Did He thus establish a norm, that we must do the same? In both cases, the answer is undoubtedly negative.²⁹

All of this to say, then, that I am an advocate of the "biblical precedent for historical precedent"; I always have been, and undoubtedly always will be. My roots are deep within restorationism, after all. But on the issue of "biblical precedent as historical precedent for establishing what is normative" - as I understand that word - I need more dialogue with the larger Pentecostal community, not with the aim of scoring points in the debate, but with the aim of helping me to understand so that I would be able to articulate such as perspective with personal integrity within my own present historical context.³⁰

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated the considerable challenge to Pentecostalism put forward by Gordon Fee, and examined the Pentecostal response. It has traced the historical and theological development of their distinctive doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence. With the writings of John Wesley, a sanctifying experience of the Spirit subsequent

²⁹ "Response to Stronstad," 13-14. Charles Holman, in another response to Stronstad, agrees. Further, he notes that the third example used, of the Gentile mission, is only valid because it meets certain finely stated criteria. He questions what criteria Stronstad would offer to distinguish between historical precedent that is intended to serve as a norm, and that which is not. "It does us no good to perceive Luke as a theologian and then be unable to arrive at criteria by which his historical narrative becomes authoritative for us in experience and practice." Holman suggests consideration be given to: 1) the broad literary structure of a document; 2) the consistent recurrence of themes; 3) the place of emphasis such themes occupy in the document as a whole; 4) the distinction between subthemes and the more prominent themes and the relation of the two. "A Response to Roger Stronstad," 11-14.

³⁰ Fee, "Response to Stronstad," 14.

to conversion became widely believed and taught. The Holiness Movement captured the language and thrust of this teaching and promoted the connection between sanctification and Spirit-baptism the world over. Throughout the end of the 19th century, various social and theological factors combined to shift the emphasis on this experience from sanctification to empowerment. By the dawn of the twentieth century, both popular and academic teachers had prepared the minds of many to understand the Azusa experience wholly in terms of empowerment.

Classical Pentecostals accepted this interpretation openly, and boldly proclaimed the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as an empowering for witness, the clear evidence of which was glossolalia. The earliest Pentecostals felt little need to defend their beliefs academically, nor did they involve themselves with scholarly hermeneutics. Partially in reaction to the prevalent liberal scholasticism of the time, many were wary of intellectualism and formal training. The truths which they espoused were “clearly evident” through a “plain reading of Scripture.” Education at the hands of mankind was considered far less useful than the daily guidance of the Holy Spirit.

While their essential belief system has changed very little, contemporary Pentecostalism has matured theologically and hermeneutically. Pentecostals continue to hold with conviction the doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence, although they now defend their theology in the wider arena of scholarly opinion. The earlier distrust of academics is gradually being replaced by an appreciation for the formal study of theology. The latest hermeneutical procedures are employed as Pentecostals seek to maintain academic integrity, while preserving what is felt to be the essence of Pentecostalism. This marks an important

shift in a movement once known for shunning academia and intellectual approaches to faith. Without losing their distinctiveness, Pentecostals are slowly gaining academic recognition.

In this process, no name figures larger than that of Gordon Fee. A Pentecostal by heritage and by choice, his exegetical work has won acclaim throughout the scholarly world. His insistence on determining authorial intent, combined with his hesitance in employing historical precedence to establish norms of Christian behaviour, has created a unique challenge to traditional Pentecostal theology. Fee maintains that at the heart of Pentecostalism is its emphasis on life in the Spirit. While he will not defend the doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence as stated, he nonetheless insists that this in no way affects the essence of Pentecostalism.

Pentecostals have responded forcefully to Fee's challenge. They have taken considerable exception to Fee's use of authorial intent and historical precedence. In each case, they have argued with some success for their own view of these issues, employing far more sophisticated and scholarly arguments to their cause than had been the case with their forefathers. Fee's response to each of these rebuttals has been included. Though many of these issues will be resolved largely on the basis on theological presupposition, the fact this debate has occurred is significant in demonstrating Pentecostalism's increased academic interests.

Fee's writings have been some of the most significant challenges to Pentecostal theology to date. Recognizing the ambiguity inherent in a document divinely inspired, yet given in historically particular circumstance, Fee has sought to alleviate this uncertainty. Following the lead of Hirsch, he has proposed that authorial intent is the foundation upon which we must build other interpretive approaches to Scripture. This has essentially

sidelined the Pentecostal position, for it is difficult, even impossible, to show that Luke intended his narratives to teach a subsequent Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Certainly Luke sought to portray the Christian life as Spirit-centered and controlled, but little beyond that can be determined.

Fee has challenged the Pentecostal use of historical precedence to establish norms for Christian behaviour. Although historical precedence in Scripture may certainly have 'pattern value,' Fee believes that when establishing normative practices for Christians, authorial intent must be demonstrated, or the practice must be taught elsewhere where such intent is clear. Again, this seriously damages traditional Pentecostal teachings. It is the pattern of four or five narratives in Acts where Luke appears to show a subsequent experience of the Spirit, evidenced by tongues, upon which Pentecostals have built their theology. By requiring proof of authorial intent, or support from another writer where such intent is clear, Fee has strongly challenged core Pentecostal beliefs.

Gordon Fee has sought to redefine the essence of Pentecostalism, as he looks forward to the future of the movement. Though he will not argue for subsequence and initial evidence as outlined by many Pentecostals, his calls for a return to the New Testament view of 'life in the Spirit' are provocative and substantial. Fee believes this recapturing of the charismatic empowering for witness is the core of the modern Pentecostal movement. While Pentecostals are justified in their efforts to restore what has been lost of this essential facet of Christianity, their dogmatism surrounding the timing and evidence of such an experience is, in Fee's opinion, unfortunate.

With regards to the debate between Gordon Fee and his Pentecostal colleagues, a few things are apparent. First, rebuttals such as Stronstad's, bemoaning the use of three categories of Christian doctrine, and showing Jesus' use of historical precedent, have fallen flat. Although Fee was willing to allow that there could well be a fourth category, Stronstad's belief that the hermeneutical rules would be different for a category of spiritual

experience accomplished little, for he failed to detail exactly what these differences were. Fee convincingly showed the difference between Jesus' *justification* of actions by historical precedent, and the establishment of a *normative* activity.

Second, the charge that Fee's concerns are seriously outdated does not apply either, since the question of what criteria one uses to distinguish between various historical events for the establishment of Christian norms has not been answered. The senior Menzies' appears to accept his son's thesis at face value, and has now shifted the debate to the pneumatology of Luke. Scholars are still faced with an unanswered question regarding the use of historical precedent.

Third, other scholars, when faced with an inability to answer Fee's most basic question, have circumvented the issue by focusing on the charismatic theology of Luke. Even with an assumption that they have successfully proven their case, and that for Luke, there is a logical distinction between the reception of the Spirit soteriologically, and the charismatic empowering for witness, it is unreasonable to assume that for Luke, the empowering of the Spirit is chronologically separate as well. And it would appear that this is the foundation of the doctrine of subsequence, the belief in question. A *logical* distinction is one thing - a purposely intended *chronological* difference quite another.

Finally, however, the expressed concern regarding the 'arbitrary' nature of Fee's hermeneutical principles has merit of its own. The notion that Luke, the author of over 25 percent of the New Testament, must have a supporting voice from another author because of his preference for narratives, seems unrealistic. Surely historical narratives have theological value apart from corroborating evidence in other parts of scripture. A larger question, succinctly stated by Stronstad, remains. "Who determines authorial intent? Who determines what is primary and what is secondary? Who is qualified to adjudicate between Pentecostals and their opponents concerning the proper interpretation of historical narratives, and the relevant norms?" Fee has offered suggestions for further work on the topic, but the question itself, the crucial question for Fee's hermeneutical proposals, remains unanswered.

In the end, it would appear that Fee's work, as per his original intent, has been quite successful. His goal was to stir up debate within the Pentecostal community, causing them to ask the hard questions of their own theology and hermeneutics that were seldom addressed. Though many Pentecostals seem to have mistakenly engaged Fee as though he had presented concrete dogmas, his desire for increased self-examination within the movement has been facilitated.

While much of Fee's work in this area has been borrowed from those specializing in hermeneutics, there remains an originality in his writings. Few other scholars of his stature concern themselves so readily with the link between spirituality and academia. His efforts to bring his hermeneutical abilities to bear upon the issues of Pentecostalism are evidence of his desire to see theologians live and work within the framework of 'life in the Spirit.' This is commendable.

The goal of this thesis was to examine the impact of Fee's challenge upon Pentecostalism. Fee is to be commended for encouraging the present self-examination among Pentecostals, and promoting the serious interaction Pentecostalism has had with scholars from other theological traditions. It has been clearly shown that Pentecostals are coming of age theologically and academically, due in large part to the self-examination forced upon them by Fee's proposals. Pentecostals themselves, as evidenced by their response to Fee, are employing a variety of apologetical methods in support of the traditional Pentecostal theologies. Traditional hermeneutics are, even for the Pentecostal scholar, dispensable as new methods of supporting the old theology become available. No longer is it necessary to insist that a plain reading of Acts inescapably leads to a Pentecostal conclusion, as other approaches are taking the place of a literalistic hermeneutic. Fee's role in this transformation is substantial, and should not be overlooked.

On the essence of Pentecostalism, Fee will be proven correct. He has maintained that the essence of Pentecostalism is not in the manner in which Articles 7&8 of their

Fundamental Truths are stated. This somewhat 'wooden' outline of their beliefs has been driven as much by a fear of losing their distinctiveness as sound theological reasoning. The essence of Pentecostalism is rather their passion for the moving and direction of the Holy Spirit in their lives. It is their openness to the moving of the Holy Spirit in whatever charismatic or non-charismatic form He might choose. As Fee has argued, the wording of their beliefs to include subsequence and initial evidence can itself limit the Spirit of God.

While He applauds Pentecostals for the manner in which they have helped promote the Holy Spirit and His work, he believes a less dogmatic approach to pneumatology would be more beneficial. Though it has been asserted that "repeatability is hardly preachable," the great revivals the world over, many of which are charismatic in nature, suggest Fee is on track. It is evident that one may enjoy a charismatic experience without traditional Pentecostal hermeneutics or theology. The issue is essentially the language used. The New Testament model itself is thoroughly pneumatic. Fee believes there is no need to use the old Pentecostal terms to describe what the New Testament reports time and again. It is simply enough, as Pentecostals have done, to try and recapture this model of life in the Spirit. No new dogmas are needed.

On behalf of his own heritage, Fee encourages Pentecostals to seek diligently the presence of God and leading of His Spirit, as energetically and unashamedly as did their forebearers. Gordon Fee has looked ahead and described the future of Pentecostalism should it continue to grow and mature theologically. According to Fee, a rewording of their statement of faith to reflect a new theological awareness will not kill the essence of Pentecostalism - a failure to live daily in the Spirit will. Whether Pentecostals are eventually able to accept this admonition from one of their own, remains to be seen.

Suggestions for Further Research

As Fee has demonstrated, the hermeneutical debate concerning the proper interpretation of Acts will not be solved easily, nor quickly. Fee's proposals, built upon the

authorial intent of Luke, are strong, tried, and tested. The Pentecostal proposal regarding the charismatic intentions of Luke is also sound, researched, and promising. As with the debate surrounding other contested issues, much comes down to the precommitments one brings to the theological table. Though in an age so full of modern confidence and the need for certainty this verdict may be disappointing, it cannot be otherwise where humanity is involved. In the following areas, however, further study may help dissipate some of the present uncertainties.

1) As the doctrine of inspiration is re-examined, one would do well to inquire as to the degree which it permits the various authors of scripture to differ, not in their essential doctrine, but in their *emphasis* of doctrinal variants. Paul and Luke may each understand the advent of the Spirit as both soteriological *and* charismatic, while Paul assumes the latter and describes the former, just as Luke assumes the salvific effect of the Spirit and describes His charismatic empowering

2) Clearly, much work needs to be done on the issue of employing historical precedent for use in establishing normative Christian practices. In agreement with Fee, this author also confesses that throughout this research, no one has yet "taken me by the hand" and shown clearly the method by which one is able to distinguish those precedents in scripture which are to be considered normative, and those which are not. While this may be considered a strength of Fee's position, it is also an inherent weakness. As others have observed, it is somewhat impossible to 'prove' with certainty Luke's intent when reporting the key passages of Acts. This is of crucial concern, for although most Christian groups do not employ the specific historical examples that Pentecostals are so fond of, normative teachings based on precedents abound in every facet of Christianity. More work is needed on the use of historical precedent when establishing norms of Christian belief and practice.

3) Stronstad and others have proposed that any hermeneutic ought to include experiential verification. Again, on a broader level, most evangelicals wholly support the notion of the trustworthiness of the Biblical witness. Promises to the believer as recorded in

Scripture can and should be appropriated with the full assurance of faith. Further work needs to be done on the extent to which this experiential verification ought to interact with hermeneutics in general. For example, when discussing aspects of theology such as grace, or the effectiveness of prayer, experiential verification is vitally important. On the other hand, subjects such as Heaven, or eschatology, cannot be verified personally by each individual involved in hermeneutics. These topics must wait for future verification. Yet, it is essential that theologians are involved hermeneutically with such topics. Those who study hermeneutics on a daily basis ought to recognize the role of experience in their interpretive work. While it is undoubtedly important, its place within hermeneutics it yet to be determined.

4) Greater study needs to be conducted on the role of the Holy Spirit in hermeneutics.³¹ As the interest in pneumatology and hermeneutics continues to grow, scholars should strive to understand just how it is that the believer is enabled, by the Holy Spirit, to understand the things of God. Does the Spirit affect an individual intellectually as well as spiritually? Is our historical-critical treatment of the text enhanced by the work of the Spirit, or unaffected? This study can only result in a positive and better balanced understanding of Scripture for all concerned.

5) Few would challenge the suggestion that an individual of Jewish background, living in present-day Israel, would enjoy a sensitivity to the themes and nuances of the Old Testament that a Western gentile could not. Many scholars today, however, would bristle at the suggestion that those possessing the charismatic experience are somehow enabled to see with greater clarity, and understand with increased sensitivity, the writings of Luke regarding the works and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Yet scholars from many walks of Christianity have also maintained that one who is a believer has an edge (in evaluation, if not cognitively) in the interpretation of Scripture over one who is not, simply because Scripture is replete with

³¹ An appendix on that topic is included in this work as a small contribution to that endeavor.

spiritual matters. John Calvin intoned, "The Word of God is like the sun shining on all to whom it is preached; but without any benefit to the blind. But in this respect we are all blind by nature; therefore it cannot penetrate into our minds unless the internal teacher, the Spirit, make way for it by His illumination" ³² Without help from the Holy Spirit, unbelievers are at a loss in discernment. Bernard Ramm declares, "If the natural or carnal mind is enmity with God, only a regenerate mind will be at home in Scripture The first spiritual qualification of the interpreter is *that he be born again*." ³³

Investigation ought to be made into whether those who have experienced the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit have a similar advantage in the interpretation of those passages describing the charismatic. The experience of the Spirit's gifts would surely give an individual greater insight into the teaching of Scripture concerning the *charismata*. The extent to which this is true awaits further research.

³² Calvin, *Institutes*, III. ii. 34.

³³ Ramm, *Interpretation*, 12-13, italics Ramm's; See also Calvin, *Institutes*, I.vii. 4-13; Kaiser and Silva, *Hermeneutics*, 167-8; and Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 340-1.

APPENDIX I

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics

The authority of Scripture is held by evangelicals to be fundamental to the Christian faith. Before doing theology, one must recognize the unrivaled nature of Scripture, and acknowledge the role of God the Holy Spirit in its formation. Everywhere debated however, is the method by which the theologian or lay person is to interpret the Word of God. What hermeneutic is to be used? As has been shown in the preceding thesis, conservatives disagree considerably on this, and much work has been done in search of a proper procedure for interpretation.

Throughout this discussion a vital element has largely been lacking. Though most begin their work on hermeneutics by affirming the role of the Holy Spirit in the creation and transmission of Scripture, few scholars, including Gordon Fee, find it necessary to include a detailed description of the Spirit's role in illumination. This essay will explore the reasons for the deficiency of discussion concerning the function of the Holy Spirit in hermeneutics, and will then discuss why the involvement of the Spirit is inherently necessary. Finally, an attempt will be made to understand how the Holy Spirit aids us in interpreting the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics: A Deafening Silence

When beginning research on the role of the Spirit in hermeneutics, one soon discovers a frustrating paucity of material on the subject. A recent article in the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* postulates the correct method of hermeneutics from a Pentecostal perspective, but scarcely mentions the role of the Spirit.¹ Clark Pinnock notes that a scholar such as Gordon Fee can write a book entitled *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*, and say nothing about the Spirit's role in interpretation.² Fred H. Klooster comments, "The illumination of the Holy Spirit is regularly mentioned in the theological literature; yet detailed discussion of this subject is rare."³

To what can this neglect be attributed? Various explanations have been put forward. Bruce Waltke suggests that the Enlightenment "with its emphasis on unaided human reason and the scientific method, saw no need for supernatural enlightenment for the accurate interpretation of the Bible."⁴ Pinnock submits two others. First, liberal scholars have long been interested in illumination and the "second horizon" of Thiselton.⁵ They gravitate towards reader-focused interpretations, and are generally not concerned with the dangers of subjectivism. In reaction to this, evangelicals focused strongly on historical exegesis, to the almost total negation of the reader's interpretative role.⁶ In addition, the rationalism so prevalent in our society since the Enlightenment translates into a preference for static

¹ Arden C. Autry, "Dimensions of Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Focus," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993): 29-50.

² Clark Pinnock, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1992): 7; G.D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991).

³ E.D. Radmacher and R.D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 451.

⁴ Bruce K. Waltke, "Exegesis and the Spiritual Life," *Crux* 30 (1994): 29.

⁵ A.C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

⁶ Pinnock, "The Work of the Holy Spirit," 8-9.

propositions. "It leads us to treat the Bible as a code book rather than a more flexible case book. When the Bible is approached as a code book, the Spirit cannot open it up. No room is left for that. Our cultural presuppositions tend to distort the true purpose of the Bible and the nature of its text."⁷

Why Must the Holy Spirit be Involved?

Regardless of the manner in which we envisage the Holy Spirit to have inspired Scripture, we must nonetheless agree that He *did*. The work of the Spirit did not end, however, when the last letter of the New Testament had been written. Surely He was at work throughout history, guiding those who 'formed' the canon, and ensuring the proper transmission of the Bible from the original autographs to our present-day copies.⁸ But what ought to be said concerning the role of the Spirit today? It is still proper to speak of an original and a contemporary inspiration of the Spirit, of his "breathing" in relation to the writing of Scripture, and with regards to the reading of Scripture. As Wesley wrote, "The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it [the Bible] but continually inspires those who read it with earnest prayer."⁹

As important perhaps as asking "how", which is dealt with below, is the inquiry of *why* we ought to consider the Spirit's role. Truly, the help of the Holy Spirit is imperative for a correct interpretation of Scripture. Five reasons will be given and explained, though there are undoubtedly more.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ For an excellent discussion see F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IVP, 1988).

⁹ John Wesley, *Notes Upon the New Testament*, quoted in Clark Pinnock, "The Role of the Spirit in Interpretation," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36 (1993):493.

a) The Nature of the Bible

First, we must contemplate the nature of Scripture itself. The Bible is a spiritual book which was 'God-breathed'. We are able to truly believe that it is such without the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to its authenticity.¹⁰ John Calvin, reacting against the Roman teaching of ecclesiastical testimony wrote:

Let it therefore be held as fixed, that those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; that Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. For though in its own majesty it has enough to command reverence, nevertheless, it then begins to truly touch us when it is sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.¹¹

b) God's Self-Revelation

Second, within the pages of Scripture, God has chosen to reveal Himself. The Bible is therefore a holy book, and one which is not naturally understood by mankind.¹² "*The nature of the Revealer...demands that the exegete has proper spiritual qualifications. God has hidden Himself in Scripture and must sovereignly show Himself to us. We cannot make God talk through the scientific method.*"¹³ French Arrington states, "Scripture given by the Holy Spirit must be mediated interpretively by the Holy Spirit."¹⁴ James Packer notes that evangelicals have often failed to realize the full significance of the Spirit's role in enabling a believer to understand the Scriptures.¹⁵ If the intent of Scripture is the self-revelation of

¹⁰ For an excellent discussion of this view, see Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

¹¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol.I. ed. John T. MacNeil. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) 1:72.

¹² Milne, 47.

¹³ Waltke, 34.

¹⁴ French Arrington, "The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals," *Pneuma* 16.1 (1994), 105.

¹⁵ J.I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D.A. Carson and J.D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 348.

God, we cannot expect to gain a true understanding of Scripture without the Spirit, who is to "lead you into all truth."¹⁶ Luther noted that "Scripture is the sort of book which calls not only for right reading and preaching but also for the right Interpreter: the revelation of the Holy Spirit."¹⁷

c) The Depravity of the Reader

Third, mankind is as inherently sinful as the Bible is naturally holy. The depraved nature of the human subject must be acknowledged. Paul's words to the Corinthians are instructive on this point. "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."¹⁸ Bruce Waltke comments:

Because of our innate depravity our minds have been darkened (Rom. 1:18-22; Eph. 4:17-18; I John 2:1). We suppress the truth (Rom. 1:18), and we aim to justify our behaviour, including our unbelief and unethical conduct (Prov. 14:12; 16:26). Satan continues to deceive us with half-truths, calling into question God's goodness and truthfulness (Gen.3). Sin has destroyed our ability to do right (Rom. 7:13-25). We must come to the text with a pure conscience. Thus, apart from God's regeneration and the work of the Holy Spirit we cannot hear the text clearly.¹⁹

d) Transformation of the Individual Believer

Fourth, the goal of the text is to transform the lives of the readers. Inspired Scripture without the Spirit will remain a dead letter, and is useless in accomplishing this goal.²⁰ "The

¹⁶ John 16:13.

¹⁷ Ewald M. Plass, comp., *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 76.

¹⁸ I Corinthians 2:14.

¹⁹ Waltke, 33.

²⁰ Pinnock, "The Work of the Spirit," 5.

goal of the Spirit as he works within our lives shedding light on the Word is to deepen our friendship with God. We do not read the text out of mere historical interest but for the purposes of transformation, in order that the Scriptures might become a revelatory text for us. The Spirit must be at work for this to happen."²¹ The Spirit is the One in whom the text of Scripture comes alive for present day believers. Without His work, lives will remain unchanged, for the power of the Word cannot be separated from the constant work of the Spirit in the life of each individual. "It is the transformative action of the Holy Spirit which persistently intrudes on Christian experience and prevents our interpretations from becoming simply a process of reading our own needs and wants into the text and hearing only what we want to hear."²²

e) Transformation of the Church

Finally, the Scriptures were given for the uplifting and furtherance of the Kingdom of God. God did not leave the Church without help when Christ left the earth, but sent the Comforter to be with His people. "Through pointing the church back to her very life-breath, through the promotion of spiritual renewal, through reminding the church of the "God-breathed" nature of the Bible, and through working signs and wonders, proponents of Holy Spirit renewal may be aiding the church in her quest to understand and apply Biblical truth in a fundamental way."²³ Pinnock rightly observes that evangelicals need to reappropriate two notions of Scripture that are often stressed in Orthodox and Catholic circles: 1) The Bible is the book for the people of God and 2) the Church is the normal locale of illumination - even

²¹ Pinnock, *"The Role of the Spirit,"* 493.

²² Scott A. Ellington, "Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996): 22.

²³ Larry Hart, "Hermeneutics, Theology, and the Holy Spirit," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 14 (1987): 63.

for Protestants. "Scripture originally arose from the life of the community and was meant to be interpreted in the ongoing life of that community."²⁴

How Does the Holy Spirit Aid in Illumination?

Having noted the importance of the Spirit's work in our hermeneutics, reflection on exactly how He is involved is in order. Though the writing on this has been extremely limited, some scholars have dared to speculate, and we offer their suggestions.

French Arrington presents four ways in which interpreters rely on the Holy Spirit:

- 1) Submission of the mind to God so that the critical and analytical abilities are exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; 2) a genuine openness to the witness of the Spirit as the text is examined; 3) the personal experience of faith as a part of the entire interpretive process; and 4) a response to the transforming call of God's Word.²⁵

Each of these is indirectly connected to one of the situations described above, detailing the necessity of the Spirit's involvement.

Another author suggests the work of the Holy Spirit in our interpretation of Scripture transpires as follows. First, He is concerned with the intellectual work of exegeting the original languages of ancient texts. Understanding a passage of Scripture in order to see what it might have to say both to the reader and to the hearer can often be difficult, mentally laborious work. We are renewed mentally and spiritually as He works with us, giving us strength for our task.²⁶ "Exegesis puts one into the vestibule of truth. The Holy Spirit opens the door."²⁷

²⁴ Pinnock, "The Role of the Spirit," 495.

²⁵ Arrington, "Use of the Bible," 105.

²⁶ John Goldingay, *Models of Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 188.

²⁷ Russell P. Spittler, "Scripture and Theological Enterprise," in *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options*, ed. R.K. Johnston (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 76.

Second, as has been noted above, the minds of humanity have been darkened. Humanity has been affected by the Fall, and no longer possesses the mental purity and holiness to discern and understand the Word of God clearly. The spiritual Word is foreign to us. The Holy Spirit opens our minds to receive the things of God. II Corinthians 3 suggests that "only readers made competent by the Spirit can throw back the veil and perceive the sense of Scripture; those who have not turned to the Lord who is Spirit are necessarily trapped in the script, with minds hardened and veiled."²⁸ The Spirit both renews minds to understand, and sparks insight that the essential significance of the text for today might be determined.²⁹

The Spirit is vitally important in the exercise of the *charism* that expounds how the ancient Word is to be presently lived. That Scripture intends to transform the community of God is without question. The Holy Spirit enables both the one who preaches and they who listen to receive the Word of God, and identify what Scripture signifies for them. Preaching is essentially the task of interpreting a text correctly, determining the relevant message for the believer today, and delivering that to the people of God. Without the Spirit, the sermon will be "mere antiquarianism".³⁰

Finally, it may be useful to note the attempt to derive some insight into the role of the Holy Spirit in our hermeneutics from the five 'paraclete sayings' of John's gospel. In John 14:16-17 Jesus makes the connection between love and obedience, noting the Spirit is given to enable His followers to live lives of obedience. No doubt the Spirit also empowers believers today to obey those things in Scripture which we might rather overlook! Chapter 14 and verse 26 states that the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples and remind them of everything that Jesus taught them. Surely He does the same today, bringing Scripture into

²⁸ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* 148, quoted in Goldingay, 188.

²⁹ Goldingay, 188.

³⁰ *Ibid.* cf. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985) 135-136.

the remembrance of believers in the most urgent times and situations. The Spirit is given to testify to the disciples concerning Jesus (15:26-27). Who among us can say that we do not need fresh revelation respecting the work of Christ in our own lives, and further help in testifying of Christ to others? John 16:7-11 tells us that when He comes, the Counselor will convict the world of sin. Through whom will He do this, if not through His disciples? True enough, the Spirit's conviction will be felt directly on the heart of every person. But as believers, our search for personal holiness will be reflected outward to those who are seeking, convincing and convicting them of their own sin. Finally, the words of John 16:12-15 promised to all disciples the presence of the Spirit, who would lead and guide them into all truth. What more could the interpreter ask for?³¹ Though the above suggestions on how the Spirit aids us are exactly that - suggestions, they are nonetheless helpful for a more complete understanding of His role in our work.

Conclusion

In this essay the important connection between Scripture and the Spirit of God has been clearly shown. Active both in its inception and transmission, the Spirit has ensured that the Word of God, the testimony to the Incarnate Christ, has been written down and preserved for all generations. As scholars and interpreters of Scripture in the twentieth century, we need to be ever cognizant of the integral role the Holy Spirit has already had in the texts of Scripture. But further than that, we must acknowledge the cardinal link between the Author of the Scriptures we study, and the illumination of their meaning, which can only come from Him. Without the Holy Spirit working in our lives and our hermeneutics, we are blind and truly unable to ever grasp the truths contained in scripture.

³¹ For the full discussion of the five paraclete sayings of John see Mark J. Cartledge, "Empirical Theology: Towards an Evangelical-Charismatic Hermeneutic," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996): 121-125.

APPENDIX II

Gordon D. Fee - *List of Publications*

I. Publications

A. Books (authored)

- Papyrus Bodmer II (P⁶⁶): Its Textual Relationships and Scribal Characteristics* (Studies and Documents 34; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1968), 152 pp.
- Corinthians: A Study Guide* (Brussels: International Correspondance Inst., 1979), 268 pp.
- How to Read the Bible for all its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, with Douglas Stuart (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 232 pp. [Translated into Spanish, French, Portugese, Polish, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, Croatian, Swedish, German] (Second edition; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 265 pp.)
- New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 154 pp. [Translated into Spanish, Korean] (Second, revised edition; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 194 pp.)
- 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 262 pp.
- 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (New International Biblical Commentary; Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 332 pp. [a revised edition set to the NIV]
- Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New International Commentary on the NT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 880 pp. [translated into Spanish, Eerdmans, 1994]
- Gospel and Spirit: Issues in NT Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 143 pp.
- The Text of the Fourth Gospel in the Writings of Origen*, with Bart D. Ehrman and Michael Holmes (NTGF 3; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 499 pp.
- Studies in the Theory and Method of NT Textual Criticism*, with Eldon J. Epp (Studies and Documents 45; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 414 pp.
- God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 967 pp.

Paul's Letter to the Philippians (New International Commentary on the NT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 528 pp.

Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 208 pp.

B. Books (edited)

New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis - Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger (Oxford: U. Press, 1981), 444 pp. (with Eldon J. Epp)

SERIES: *The New Testament in the Greek Fathers*

1. Bart D. Ehrman, *Didymus the Blind and the Text of the Gospels* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986), 288 pp.

2. James A. Brooks, *The New Testament Text of Gregory of Nyssa* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), 267 pp.

C. Pamphlets

The Disease of the Wealth and Health Gospels (Costa Mesa, CA: God's Word for Today, 1980), 22 pp. [repr. Beverly, MA: Frontline Publishing, 1985]

Images of the Church (Messiah College Occasional Papers 8; Grantham, PA: Messiah College, 1984), 29 pp.

Anden och Ordet: förhållandet mellan spiritualitet och exegetik (Orebro Missionsskolas Skriftserie Nr 11; Orebro Missionskola, 1995), 25 pp.

D. Journal Articles (Refereed Journals)

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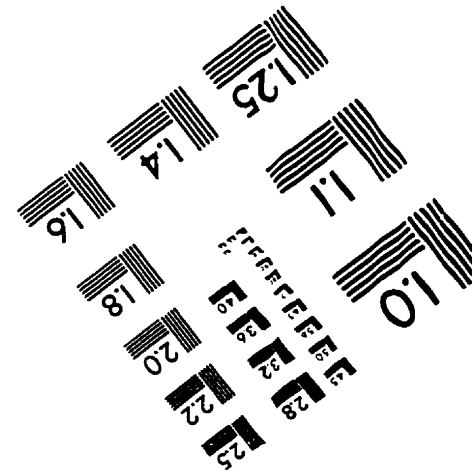
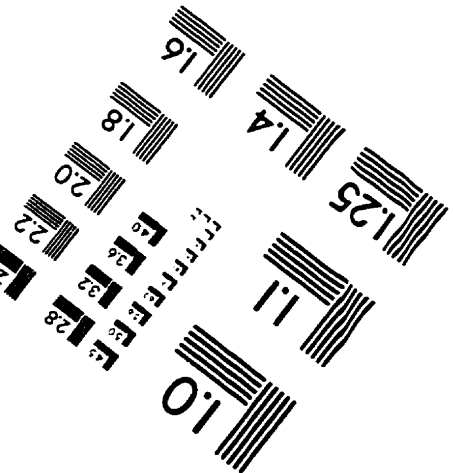
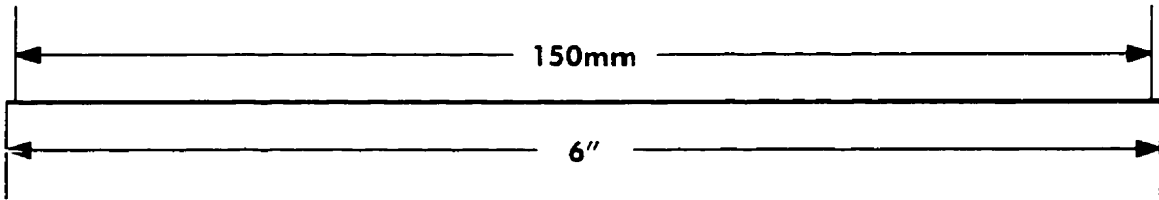
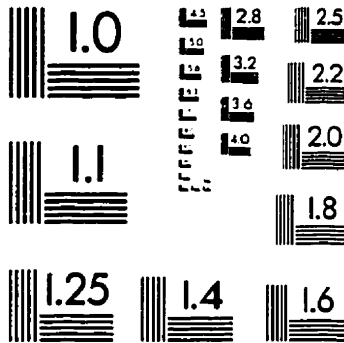
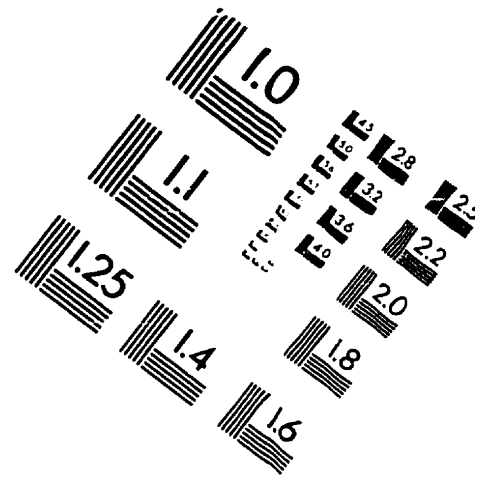
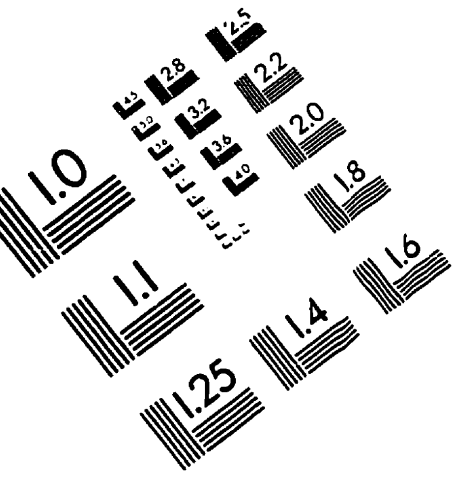
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