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Cultivating a Pentecostal Ethos

Jeremy Wallace, D.Min.¹

Looking Back, Thinking Forward

I have found myself reflecting on a peculiar, yet common, phenomenon: when we're young we spend a considerable amount of time thinking about and dreaming of the future, what life will be like when we are "older." Our focus is heavily upon things which are to come. Yet the older we get we find ourselves thinking more about life as it was in the days of our youth. The proverbial "good old days," when demands upon us were fewer and, in the minds of many, we were able to live a generally carefree life.² The more I ponder this, the more I wonder how many of us simply underappreciate our present context, where we are at in the here-and-now of our lives. It seems that we are prone to either dwell on the past or dream future hopes. With four children of my own, I wonder, from time to time, what their childhood experience is like. Is it like mine? Is it better or worse than mine was? They may tell me they enjoy their lives, but part of me always wonders what their experience is *really* like compared to my own.

Encountering Pentecostalism

I grew up in a devout Christian home, one whose Christian experience came out of a Baptist tradition and was firmly evangelical. In my late adolescence, however, we migrated into the Foursquare family. Looking back at my childhood, I marvel at how blissfully unaware I was concerning the diversity of Christian traditions around us and which have existed throughout history. For a substantial portion of my childhood I didn't know there existed such a thing as different Christian denominations. Gradually I began to notice different sets of groups self-identifying as Christian, the likes of which included Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others. I would eventually come to hear of a group of Christians called Pentecostals, and having visited a thriving Foursquare church I encountered Pentecostal Christianity firsthand. What a marvel it was. To put it mildly, I was more than enthusiastic to join such a lively, joyous Christian tradition. When I answered the call of God on my life and set off for University my view of The Church entered a new, expansive appreciation when I was required to take a Church History course. First off, I have a deep appreciation for history and, as long as I can remember, I always have. You can imagine, therefore, how fascinated I was to hear of the unfolding story of the Church over the past two-thousand years, including seismic events such as the "Great Schism" between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communions in 1054 A.D., the Protestant Reformation triggered by Martin Luther in 1517 A.D., and of course the Pentecostal

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² I fully recognize that for many the days of their youth were tumultuous, difficult, and to be quite honest, best left unremembered.

revival of Azusa Street in 1906 A.D. The magisterial work of Justo Gonzalez' two volume history of the Church, *The Story of Christianity*,³ opened up a new world, revealing to me the panorama of our history as the Body of Christ—the good, the bad, and at times, the exceedingly ugly. Instantaneously, I became adamant to do two things: (1) dedicate myself to the study of Church history, and (2) do my best to avoid committing the blunders of the past committed by the Church! I did not want to repeat the failures brought about by my brothers and sisters in Christ in previous generations. As the adage goes, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it,”⁴ and I was certain I did *not* want to repeat it. At this point I should note another work; one by W. David Buschart. His *Exploring Protestant Traditions: An Invitation to Theological Hospitality*,⁵ would prove to be very helpful in clarifying the historical development of many denominations, along with the broader divergence between eight major Christian traditions.⁶ This work was useful in helping me to appreciate my own Pentecostal tradition, especially the place the Foursquare church holds in Pentecostal history.

Foursquare's “Pentecostality”

When we examine the pentecostal nature of the Foursquare church, we usually speak of it in at least one of three primary senses: (1) Foursquare is pentecostal in terms of its *historical origination*. Our founder, Aimee Semple-McPherson, espoused a “Foursquare Gospel” amidst the burgeoning growth of the Pentacostal movement in the early twentieth-century. (2) Foursquare is Pentecostal in terms of our *ethos*—that is, in terms of our theological and doctrinal convictions. (3) The Foursquare Church is Pentecostal in terms of its *practice*. Pentecostal phenomena—the likes of which include Spirit-baptism, glossolalia, divine healing, miracle-working, etc.—are some of the defining features that are consistently evidenced within our shared ecclesial praxis. We must face, however, the challenging reality that every denomination faces. It is the gap which exists between what is our “stated theology” (what we *say* we believe) and our “embedded theology” (what we *demonstrate* we believe by our behavior). Put plainly, there will always be a tension between the two, and each generation must be mindful of this tension and vigilant in our efforts to close the gap between our stated and embedded theologies, bringing them closer and closer together.

³ Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1984), Eleventh Printing, 2010.

⁴ The general consensus today is that this aphorism is accredited to George Santayana. Its original form is stated thus: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” See Nicholas Clairmont, “*Those Who Do Not Learn History Are Doomed to Repeat It. Really?*” at Bigthink.com. <https://bigthink.com/the-proverbial-skeptic/those-who-do-not-learn-history-doomed-to-repeat-it-really> (accessed June 22, 2020).

⁵ W. David Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions: An Invitation to Theological Hospitality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006).

⁶ Buschart provides an overview of the historical development and central beliefs represented in the Reformed, Lutheran, Wesleyan, Baptist, Anglican, Anabaptist, Pentecostal and Dispensational traditions.

Logos, Pathos, Ethos

When one studies the development of education in the West, the classical education of the Ancients prioritized something called the *trivium*⁷ which consisted of three primary subjects: grammar, dialectic,⁸ and rhetoric. Once students mastered these subjects they were deemed fit to move on to the *quadrivium*:⁹ the study of the stars (Astronomy), shapes (Geometry), numbers (namely, Mathematics), and sounds (ie. Music). According to the Greeks, a person (or group) would be judged, evaluated, and known by their *logos*, by their *pathos*, and by their *ethos*.¹⁰ In fact, when applied to the art of ancient rhetoric and persuasion, it was Aristotle who taught that there were three modes of persuasion and that each of the modes directly correlated with a person's *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*. Suffice it to say, every movement is evaluated on similar criteria. The Foursquare movement is no different. She has been and always will be evaluated in terms of her shared professions, beliefs, and character, not to mention the fruit she produces. The executive committee of the Foursquare Scholars Fellowship (FSF) desires to publish issues on topics which will help us, as a Foursquare constituency, to refine our professions, beliefs, and character, thereby enhancing the fruit we produce. In this, we desire to glorify the risen Lord.

Quadrum 3.1

Let us now turn our focus to the current issue. Early on, the FSF Executive Committee shared an interest in the topic of “*cultivating a Pentecostal ethos*.” In point of fact, before *Quadrum* 1.1 was even published, the desire and commitment to focus one of our issues on the present topic was in place. Concerning the present issue, we were delighted to work with Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, who was generous to provide us with an article as a guest contributor. His outstanding work as a scholar is widely known and we are grateful for his contribution to this issue. A version of the article he submitted to *Quadrum*, entitled “Pentecostal Identity – Pentecostal Ethos,” first appeared as “Pentecostal Identity” in *Pentecostals in the 21st Century: Identity, Beliefs, Praxis*, published by Cascade Books (Eugene, OR) in 2018. Special thanks go out to Wipf & Stock for granting the Foursquare Scholars Fellowship permission to publish this article in *Quadrum*. We hope you find it compelling. The second article in this issue was written by Andrew (“Ike”) Shepardson. His piece, “An Outline of a Pentecostal Ethos: A Critical Engagement with James K.A. Smith,” highlights distinctive beliefs and practices of Pentecostals in general, but specifically seeks to address “adulterations and misappropriations” of biblical pentecostalism in response to Smith’s “five elements of a pentecostal worldview.” Next, John Telman’s “A Biblical Rationale for Ethnic Inclusiveness” seeks to demonstrate that, although God had a unique, covenantal relationship with

⁷ Linguistically, *trivium* is a compound Latin word comprised of *tri*- (“three”) and *via* (“way” or “road”), describing a converging point of three roads.

⁸ Known better today as the study of “logic.”

⁹ As above, yet denoting where four roads (or paths) converge together.

¹⁰ It should be clarified here that a person's (or group's) *logos* referred to their *words*, their *pathos* referred to their *state of mind*, and their *ethos* denoted their *character*.

the nation of Israel, this in no way negated God's desire to include all nations into right relationship with Him. Thus, the case is made that the qualified relationship with Isreal did not omit Gentiles from His salvific plan. Next, Guillermo Puppo applies socio-rhetorical analysis and sociological studies to examine how the dominant Egyptian culture reacted to the emergence of leaders from a minority culture (Israel). On behalf of the FSF executive committee, we hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Quadrum*.

Pentecostal Identity – Pentecostal Ethos¹

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Ph.D²

Introduction

In response to his own question about what is the meaning of “time,” St. Augustine famously responded that in case no one asks it, he knows what “time” means, but should someone ask him to define it, he does not know (book 11 in his *Confessions*). I wonder if something similar applies to the issue of defining Pentecostal identity. Other Christians certainly have a fairly accurate intuition of what Pentecostalism is—notwithstanding many misconceptions! On the other hand, when asked to give a definition, they might be at their wit’s end. Not only that, but it seems to me that perhaps most Pentecostals themselves feel the same kind of dilemma. Every Pentecostal (I guess!) possesses a fairly accurate idea of what makes one “Pentecostal.” Yet when asked what Pentecostalism is—apart from the standard “Spirit-baptism” and “charisms”—they may not be well prepared to respond, particularly in our current times when there are crowds of other Christians who similarly speak of Spirit-baptism and in whose lives charismatic gifts seem to be at work. (Just think of the vast and wide Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement whose membership with over 100 million adherents surpasses that of any single Protestant denomination!)

Hence, the question of Pentecostal identity is not a simple one. It is complex and includes various facets and viewpoints. At the same time, it is an extremely important topic as it has implications for both Pentecostals’ spiritual life and other Christians’ perceptions of the distinctive features of this youngest Christian family.

In this essay, I will first seek to define Pentecostalism on the basis of its distinctive spirituality. Thereafter, in order to specify in some detail what kind of distinctive spirituality Pentecostalism is, I delve into the topic of “Full Gospel,” the shorthand for Christ-centrism in faith and spirituality. Following is a look at the importance of the worship service for understanding Pentecostal identity: it is namely in liturgy, prayers, and praise, in which Christ is encountered through the Holy Spirit, that the distinctively Pentecostal spirituality is manifested. Finally, before a short conclusion, the Pentecostal conception of the Holy Spirit and Spirit-baptism with a view to identity receive a focused discussion.

¹ This essay has been published before as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “Pentecostal Identity,” in *Pentecostals in the 21st Century: Identity, Beliefs, Praxis*, ed. Corneliu Constantineanu and Christopher J. Scobie (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 14-31. Copyright permission has been granted. That essay depended heavily on previous publications: “Free Churches, Ecumenism and Pentecostalism,” in *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission*, ed. Amos Yong (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), ch. 4; “Identity and Plurality: A Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspective,” *International Review of Mission* 91, no. 363 (October 2002): 500–504; “Pentecostalism and Pentecostal Theology in the Third Millennium: Taking Stock of Contemporary Global Situation,” *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts*, ed. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), xiii–xiv.

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Charismatic Spirituality as the Key to Defining Pentecostal Identity

While nothing like a uniform definition of Pentecostalism exists, a helpful orientation to the complex topic is provided by the terminology adopted by *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*,³ the standard and most authoritative source of knowledge about Pentecostalism. Its typology divides it into three interrelated categories. The first category is “(Classical) Pentecostal” denominations such as the Assemblies of God or the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, owing their existence to the famous Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California, in 1906 (and in Topeka, Kansas, few years earlier). Most of the European Pentecostal movements—many of which, particularly in the former Eastern Europe, are known under the nomenclature “Apostolic Church”—belong to the first category even when a direct link to the said American revivals is lacking. (My homeland Finland serves as an illustration: its roots and birth are independent from American Pentecostal bodies in the sense that the movement, similarly to other Nordic countries, were established by local leaders rather than international ones; yet, the inspiration and prompting came from contacts with Azusa Street Pentecostals.) The second category is “Charismatic movements,” Pentecostal-type spiritual movements within established churches (the largest of which is the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal). The third category is “neo-Charismatic” movements, some of the most notable of which are the Vineyard Fellowship in the United States, African Initiated Churches, and the China House Church movement, as well as an innumerable number of other independent churches and groups all over the world). Numbers-wise, the Charismatic movements (about 200 million) and neo-Charismatics (200–300 million) well outnumber Classical Pentecostals (75–125 million).

Even after this clarification of various categories under the nomenclature “Pentecostal-Charismatics,” there is a lot of diversity within each category, including the first one. The diversity within worldwide “Pentecostalism” has to do with two dimensions: the cultural and the theologico-ecumenical. Pentecostalism, unlike any other contemporary religious movements, spread across most cultures, linguistic barriers, and social locations.⁴ Related to this is the theological and ecumenical diversity, which simply means that there are several more-or-less distinct Pentecostalisms. Thus, speaking of Pentecostalisms (in the plural) would be valid; but for the sake of convenience the singular form is usually preferred. How different in ethos, manifestation, and to some extent in theology are, for example, Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea—the world’s largest church with more than one million adherents—from the African American (Black) Pentecostal churches of the US South from the small Pentecostal congregations in any European country, and so on. Even concerning Pentecostalism in Europe, there are vast differences among, say, the Pentecostal Church of Finland (my homeland) which displays heavy influences from Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox traditions, British Pentecostal movements (Assemblies of God and

³ Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, rev. and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

⁴ The diversity is well documented. For an up-to-date account, see e.g., the annual statistic lists in the January issue of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* compiled by David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson.

Elim), which are deeply indebted to American influences, and say, Pentecostal movements in Romania (with the largest number of adherents of all European countries), which finds itself in a Roman Catholic and Reformed environment. And so forth.

In other words, the question of what makes Pentecostalism—that is, what is a Pentecostal identity?—is a notoriously difficult one.⁵ There are a number of reasons for the difficulty in addition to those mentioned above. Unlike, say, Lutheranism or Roman Catholicism, Pentecostal identity is not based on creeds or shared history. This is not to say that Pentecostals have no written statements of faith. In fact, they do. But even the oldest ones are very young when compared to traditional churches, and they are far less detailed in their stipulations. Nor can Pentecostal identity be based on ecclesiastical structures since one can find the whole repertoire of them from the most local-church autonomous models (Scandinavia) to Congregationalist (Continental Europe and England) to Presbyterian (Caucasian Pentecostals in the USA) to Episcopal (Black Pentecostals in the USA and elsewhere), among others.

Consequently, most theological observers of Pentecostals⁶ prefer nowadays a criterion for identity that is centered on spirituality rather than history, creedal statements, or church structures.⁷ To be more precise: the most distinctive feature of Pentecostalism is Christ-centered charismatic spirituality going back to the classical “Full Gospel”⁸ template in which Jesus is perceived as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, Baptizer with the Spirit, and the Soon-returning King.⁹ Spirituality, thus, is the key to “defining” Pentecostal identity.

Walter J. Hollenweger, the most well-known analyst of Pentecostalism, has for decades insisted on its spirituality as the most distinctive feature of Pentecostalism. Unlike many others, he argues that the early years of the movement, which were characterized by intense spiritual experiences and charismatic gifts, are not necessarily to be taken as the “childhood” of the movement out of which it should grow, but rather the defining period of identity formation. The

⁵ For details, see Kärkkäinen, “Free Churches, Ecumenism and Pentecostalism.”

⁶ The pluralization of Pentecostalism is intended here.

⁷ Daniel Albrecht (*Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 28) speaks of an “underlying or core spirituality” among various types of Pentecostals. Harvey Cox, the informed observer of Pentecostalism from Harvard University, is onto something significant in claiming that Pentecostals have a distinctive way of constructing reality and that it has influenced their understanding of mission and social concern. Cox posits that at the heart of the Pentecostal movement is a restoration of what might be termed “primal spirituality.” Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1995), 81ff. Cox also speaks about “primal piety” (99ff.) and “primal hope” (111–22) in relation to distinctive Pentecostal spirituality.

⁸ The term “Full Gospel” derives from American Pentecostalism in which, in the 1940s or so, an influential movement under that nomenclature emerged, particularly among Christian businessmen but not limited to them. That nomenclature, however, has much wider attestation in Pentecostal history. Its roots go back all the way to the very beginnings of Pentecostalism when movements such as the Foursquare Gospel arose. That classical movement (which nowadays is known globally as the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel) began to speak of the core of Pentecostal preaching and belief in terms of the “Full Gospel” as outlined above.

⁹ A definitive study of the main motifs of “Full Gospel” is Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987).

first decade of the movement, says Hollenweger, forms the heart, not the infancy, of Pentecostal spirituality. Features such as orality of liturgy; narrativity of theology and witness; maximum participation at the level of reflection, prayer, and decision-making in a community characterized by inclusion and reconciliation; inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship; and a holistic understanding of the body-mind relationship reflected in the ministry of healing by prayer—these were all formative in the beginning of the movement.¹⁰ For Hollenweger, thus, Pentecostalism represents a religious movement *sui generis*, “a new confession,” which cannot be reduced to Fundamentalism, Evangelicalism, or even to Protestantism as such.¹¹ It was brought into existence, not by rational theological analysis, but a sudden outpouring of the Spirit. Experience was first, then came doctrine. This was well captured in the statement called “Essence of Pentecostalism,” which sought to define the basic identity of Pentecostalism:

It is the personal and direct awareness and experiencing of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which the risen and glorified Christ is revealed and the believer is empowered to witness and worship with the abundance of life as described in Acts and the Epistles. The Pentecostal experience is not a goal to be reached, not a place to stand, but a door through which to go into a greater fullness of life in the Spirit. It is an event which becomes a way of life in which often charismatic manifestations have a place. Characteristic of this way of life is a love of the Word of God, fervency in prayer and witness in the world and to the world, and a concern to live by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹²

Another way of formulating the importance of spirituality to Pentecostal identity is with reference to distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutics. This is done by the American Pentecostal theologian Kenneth J. Archer, who speaks of the “Pentecostal Story as a Hermeneutical Narrative Tradition”:

The Pentecostal community is a distinct coherent narrative tradition within Christianity. Pentecostal communities are bound together by their charismatic experiences and common story. The Pentecostal narrative tradition is one embodiment of the Christian metanarrative. Yet, because the Pentecostal community understands itself to be a restorational movement, it has argued that it is the best representation or embodiment of Christianity in the world today. This may sound triumphalist; yet, Pentecostals, like all restorational narrative traditions of

¹⁰ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 551; idem, “After Twenty Years’ Research on Pentecostalism,” *International Review of Missions* 75 (January 1986): 6. So also Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 14, 47.

¹¹ Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 265.

¹² Cited in Kärkkäinen, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat: Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972–1989)*, *Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft* 42 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1998), 50–51.

Christianity, desire to be both an authentic continuation of New Testament Christianity and a faithful representation of New Testament Christianity in the present societies in which they exist. Of course, the understanding of what was and should be New Testament Christianity is based upon a Pentecostal understanding. Moral reasoning, which includes biblical-theological interpretation, is contextualized in the narrative tradition of the Pentecostal community. Pentecostals will engage Scripture, do theology, and reflect upon reality from their own contextualized communities and narrative tradition.¹³

“Full Gospel”: A Christ-Centered Spirituality

Against common assumptions, then, the center of Pentecostal spirituality and theology is not the Holy Spirit but rather Jesus Christ. Yes, Pentecostals love to speak of the Holy Spirit and to highlight the work of the Spirit in personal and church life. The Holy Spirit, however, is not the center of their message or preaching any more than it was that of the New Testament Christians: early followers of Christ did not go out to preach the Holy Spirit as Savior and Lord but rather Jesus Christ. Pentecostalism is therefore first and foremost a Christ-centered movement.¹⁴ If one attends a Pentecostal church meeting, the name of Jesus will be heard over and over again in prayers, praise, and sermons; “Holy Spirit” is mentioned far less often.

This is exactly what Donald Dayton, in his seminal work *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*,¹⁵ has argued. According to Dayton, Pentecostals ought to understand themselves through a paradigm involving several theological factors. The four he identifies were present in a slightly different form in the American Wesleyan/Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century, but they were reconfigured in Pentecostal thinking and used in a powerful way in the form that Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the Foursquare Church, one of the oldest and largest Pentecostal bodies, popularized them: Jesus was understood to be Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Divine Healer, and Coming King. To these were added still one aspect, rooted in the Holiness Movements from which Pentecostalism came and, consequently, Pentecostals were known as “Full Gospel” Christians. This Full Gospel consisted of five theological motifs:

1. Justification by faith in Christ
2. Sanctification by faith as a second definite work of grace
3. Healing of the body as provided for all in the atonement

¹³ Kenneth J. Archer, “Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 26, no. 1 (2004): 40–42.

¹⁴ For a fine account of key themes and orientations in Pentecostal spirituality, see Russell P. Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Burgess and van der Maas, 1096–1102. In the past, a typical way of dismissing Pentecostals in terms of deprivation theory was the norm among sociologists of religion, often with little or no firsthand knowledge of the movement itself. For a balanced critical discussion, see Albert Miller, “Pentecostalism as a Social Movement,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996): 97–144.

¹⁵ Dayton, *Theological Roots*.

4. The premillennial return of Christ
5. The baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues

A look at any Pentecostal doctrinal manual shows that these four or five motifs are at the core of theological developments (that in turn are supposed to authentically reflect the underlying spirituality). Yet, as in any movement, Pentecostalism employs the categories of the five-fold Gospel in a creative and not always constant way. Typically, the distinctive features, especially Spirit-baptism and charisms, healing, and eschatology, receive separate treatments.¹⁶ Justification by faith is either assumed or mentioned in passing except for those Pentecostal movements—such as the one in my homeland, Finland, a predominantly Lutheran land—where it belongs to one of the key doctrines embraced.¹⁷ Holiness is another topic, widely debated among early Pentecostals (depending on their relation to preceding Wesleyan Holiness Movements¹⁸), which either is taken for granted (closely related to the typical Protestant two-stage soteriology, as a next step from justification¹⁹) or allocated a separate treatment. Take, for example, the book recently produced by British Pentecostals titled *Pentecostal Perspectives*.²⁰ There are chapters on Spirit-baptism, eschatology, as well as healing and exorcism. The topics of justification and sanctification do not receive separate treatments even though they are assumed. Interestingly, a chapter on revelation and the Bible has its own locus, reflecting the strong emphasis on biblical authority among Pentecostals, linked with the close relationship in the early decades with the Fundamentalist movement (which, ironically, otherwise resists the core Charismatic spirituality of Pentecostalism).²¹

So, if Christology rather than pneumatology is at the center of Pentecostalism, we have to say that the common criticism of the movement as an enthusiastic “Spirit-movement” is not accurate. Rather, Pentecostal spirituality is embedded and anchored in an encounter with Christ as Christ is being depicted in His manifold role of Justifier, Sanctifier, Baptizer with the Spirit, Healer of the Body, and the Soon-Coming King. Christ is being encountered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am aware that at times the term “Full Gospel” is used by Pentecostals in a way that borders on ideology, the implication being that other churches’ gospel is not as “full” or as complete. While

¹⁶ A good example is the widely used Pentecostal manual in the United States written by two leading Foursquare theologians: Guy P. Duffield and N. M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983).

¹⁷ Juhani Kuosmanen, *Raamatun opetuksia* (Vantaa: RV-Kirjat, 1993), 88–96; Mauri Viksten, *Terveen opin pääpiirteitä* (Vantaa: RV-Kirjat, 1980), 70–74.

¹⁸ For starters, see Dayton, *Theological Roots*, chs. 2, 3.

¹⁹ For basic orientation to Pentecostal soteriology, see W. J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), ch. 19.

²⁰ Keith Warrington, ed., *Pentecostal Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998).

²¹ For an enlightening analysis of the uneasy relationship between Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism, see Gerald T. Sheppard, “Pentecostalism and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 6, no. 2 (1984): 5–34.

this kind of implicit critique was no doubt in mind by those who coined the term, in its best theological sense it is an attempt, rather, to identify the basic elements of a biblical gospel. As such, it needs to be heard both as a legitimate self-identification and a call to other churches to pay attention to what Pentecostals perceive to be forgotten or lost parts of the gospel.

So far, my analysis of the core themes of Pentecostal spirituality has strongly reflected Euro-American roots. There is no denying that the Azusa Street²² and thus American influence has been determinative in the inauguration of Pentecostalism even when its Black (African American) contributions are properly acknowledged. Yet it is also a fact that various Pentecostalsisms of the world—as established above, there is a need to speak in the plural because of the sheer diversity of Pentecostalism²³—represent significantly different, yet not totally unrelated, spiritual movements from their Western counterparts. While indigenous and local Pentecostalsisms are flourishing all over the world, a lot of work is yet to be done in terms of recording their relation, on the one hand, to the roots of the movement and, on the other hand, the ways they are critiquing and expanding Pentecostalism.²⁴

“Meeting with the Lord”: A Profile of Pentecostal Worship Services²⁵

We have established so far that at its core Pentecostalism can be defined in terms of spirituality that is Christ-centered and that a major way Pentecostals seek to encounter Christ is the worship service. Let us deepen our analysis of Pentecostal spirituality by looking at the importance of liturgy and worship. In the words of the researcher of Pentecostal spirituality and ritual, Daniel

²² For an authoritative account see Cecil M. Robeck, *Azusa Street: Mission and Revival* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006). This book is the first fruit of a massive, meticulous study project on the origins of Pentecostalism in Southern California and beyond.

²³ For a recent discussion of emerging global Pentecostalsisms, see Allan H. Anderson and W. J. Hollenweger, eds., *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Note the statement by C. M. Robeck, “Taking Stock of Pentecostalism,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15 (1993): 45: “Pentecostals are multi-cultural . . . if for no other reason than that they are found around the world,” he argues, and therefore he, among others, suggests that we need to speak of Pentecostalsisms rather than Pentecostalism (as a single phenomenon).

²⁴ For a helpful beginning, see Allan H. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). The main challenge faced by theological analysts of Pentecostalism is that despite the rapid growth of academic theology and theologians in the past two or three decades, still so much of Pentecostal spirituality exists in oral or other nondiscursive forms, especially from the early formative years and in traditions outside the West. The comment by J. Hollenweger, however, is a healthy reminder to us: Taken seriously this offers a real possibility of discovering a methodology of theology in an *oral* culture where the medium of communication is—just as in biblical times—not the definition, but the description; not the statement, but the story; not the doctrine but the testimony. . . . Whoever denies that one can do proper theology in these categories will have to prove that the Bible is not a theological book. Our way of doing theology is a culturally biased form (yet necessarily so, in our culture!). There are other equally relevant forms of doing theology. Pentecostalism offers raw materials and elements for such an alternative methodology.” W. J. Hollenweger, “Charisma and *Oikumene*: The Pentecostal Contribution to the Church Universal,” *One in Christ* 7 (1971): 332–33.

²⁵ This section is taken primarily from my “‘Encountering Christ in the Full Gospel Way’: An Incarnational Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 37, no. 1 (2007): 9–23.

Albrecht,

In a very real sense the Sunday services of . . . [Pentecostal] churches are designed to provide a context for a mystical *encounter*, an experience with the divine. This encounter is mediated by the sense of the immediate divine presence. The primary rites of worship and altar/response are particularly structured to sensitize the congregants to the presence of the divine and to stimulate conscious experience of God. . . . The gestures, ritual actions, and symbols all function within this context to speak of the manifest presence.²⁶

The centrality of the worship service as the place of meeting with the Lord for Pentecostals is not diminished by the obvious fact that its forms vary greatly because of cultural and historical reasons. Whereas in the beginning of the movement even in the United States and Europe and currently in numerous churches in the Global South very charismatic, non-structured, and enthusiastic worship patterns are common, most liturgies in the Global North (Europe and the United States, particularly the former) nowadays differ only slightly from other Protestant and Evangelical styles. A visitor to a typical Pentecostal worship service on Sunday morning in my homeland does not necessarily see much difference from services in other Free Churches, say, Baptists or Methodists. It has to be added, however, that at its very core Pentecostal spirituality and worship employs “bodily” and “kinesthetic” features in which raising the hands, bodily movement, touching (for example on the forehead of the sick person in the prayer for healing), and similar aspects communicate what the Catholic tradition would call the “sacramental principle” (that the divine appears in the body or the physical) and what in the wider theological sense could be called “an incarnational principle.” The whole body, not only the mind, is part of the encounter with the Lord. To put it in another way, for Pentecostals “worship” is another way of saying “presence of God.”²⁷

Related to the centrality of the longing for meeting with the Lord is the centrality of spiritual experience.²⁸ While *experience* is a loaded term in contemporary theology, it is absolutely impossible to understand Pentecostal spirituality and the Full Gospel apart from this category. Elsewhere, I have recently argued that the worship service with its expectation of this encounter is the structuring principle of Pentecostal spirituality:

²⁶ Daniel E. Albrecht, “Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking through the Lens of Ritual,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 14, no. 2 (1996): 121.

²⁷ Albrecht, “Pentecostal Spirituality,” 109.

²⁸ For the centrality of experience in the spiritual life, see the important works by the Jesuit Donald L. Gelpi, no stranger to Charismatic Spirituality (while not part of the movement itself), *Experiencing God: A Theology of Human Emergence* (New York: University Press of America, 1987) and *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994). From a Lutheran perspective with a view to Lutheran Charismatics, see Markku Antola, *The Experience of Christ’s Real Presence in Faith: An Analysis on the Christ-Presence-Motif in the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal* (Helsinki: Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft 43, 1998), ch. 2.

The stress on experience can of course at times lead to overemphasis on emotionalism. However, it still is the case that even to begin to understand this spiritual tradition, speaking of experience is essential. . . . Spontaneity and openness to the leading of the Spirit characterize church life. Even where worship services are being planned, the focus is on being open to the leading of the Spirit. Therefore, those who come to worship prepare themselves by praying to God for his manifestation. . . . Encounter with God is the central feature of the Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality. The goal of the sermon is not only to share spiritual teaching; the ultimate goal of a Pentecostal sermon, similarly to prayer and praise, is an authentic and fresh meeting with the Lord. This is of course not unrelated to the emphasis on experience. A typical Pentecostal worship meeting culminates in the altar call where people are being invited by the preacher to come forward to be prayed for in order to meet with the Lord, be it about becoming a believer, healing a sickness, or getting help with finances.²⁹

Expectation of and prayer for divine healing is a powerful way of encountering the Lord, the Healer in the power of the Spirit.³⁰ As the Pentecostal New Testament scholar from Great Britain, Keith Warrington, notes, “The prime motivational force has . . . been the fact that Jesus healed, and the record of the Gospels that he healed all who came to him. Jesus is seen to be the paradigm for the contemporary Christian.”³¹ This holistic Pentecostal worldview, by “its belief in and experience of the paranormal,” can legitimately be called an “alternate *Weltanschauung* for our instrumental rational modern society.”³² While Pentecostals do not usually resort to the language of sacramentality, the sacramental principle of embodiment—Word becoming flesh in the incarnation—is clearly operating here.³³ The healing and restoring power of the Spirit as experienced in the encounter with Christ the Healer is the hallmark of this holistic spirituality. With all its anti-

²⁹ V.-M. Kärkkäinen, “Vapaakristillisyyys, helluntailaisuus ja baptismi,” in *Teoksessa Kirkkotiedon kirja: Ekumeeninen johdatus kirkkojen oppiin ja elämään*, ed. Pekka Metso and Esko Ryökäs (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2005), 312 (my translation).

³⁰ For a fascinating, delightfully critical theological look at the topic of healing, including abuses of healing practices among some Pentecostal healing preachers, see Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, ch. 18.

³¹ Keith Warrington, “Healing and Exorcism: The Path to Wholeness,” in *Pentecostal Perspectives*, ed. K. Warrington, 147. For the influence of the divine healing movements of the nineteenth century on Pentecostalism, see Dayton, *Theological Roots*, ch. 5.

³² Timothy B. Cargal, “Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 2 (1993): 163.

³³ There have been attempts by some Pentecostal theologians to find commonalities between Pentecostal spirituality, especially its emphasis on *glossolalia*, speaking in tongues, as a way of “securing” the divine presence and sacraments as “signs” of the divine presence. While there are some connecting points, I also think the differences are so dramatic that at the most one can only point to some common underlying motifs behind *glossolalia* and, say, the Eucharist. See further, Frank Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 1 (1993): 61–76.

sacramental mindset, there are times when especially at the Eucharistic table there is an expectation of being touched by the healing power of Christ.³⁴

Other ways of meeting with the Lord are being appreciated and sought for among Pentecostals such as empowerment with spiritual gifts in order to be equipped for service and witnessing as well as in one's prayer life. For the purposes of this article, however, enough has been said of the underlying core motif in Pentecostal spirituality that reflects the Full Gospel. While it can easily degenerate into an exercise in individual piety, from the beginnings Pentecostalism has been a thoroughly communal spirituality. The paradigm of the early church as recorded especially in the book of Acts—the favorite book of Pentecostals—is communal in orientation.³⁵ What the Reformed theologian Michael Welker of Heidelberg says about the importance of communion in a biblical theology of the Spirit can easily be applied to the Pentecostal emphasis on community:

The Spirit produces a new unanimity in the people of God, frees the people from the consequences of the powerlessness brought about by their own “sin,” and raises up the life that has been beaten down by oppression. . . . In all the early attestations to the experience of God's Spirit, what is initially and immediately at issue is the restoration of an internal order, at least of new commitment, solidarity, and loyalty. The direct result of the descent of God's Spirit is the gathering, the joining together of people who find themselves in distress. The support of their fellow persons is acquired; a new community, a new commitment is produced after the descent of the Spirit.³⁶

So far, this article has emphasized the centrality of Christology and charismatic spirituality as the key for defining Pentecostal identity. That pneumatology may not be the focus of Pentecostalism, on the other hand, is not to undermine its importance. It just has to be placed in perspective. Let us reflect briefly on the nature and role of the Holy Spirit and pneumatology for Pentecostalism. That discussion will also give occasion to say something more of Spirit-baptism, the most well-known—and often widely debated—claim of Pentecostalism. Since another essay in this collection delves into many details of the topic, let it suffice to be brief here and highlight the importance to understanding Pentecostal identity.

³⁴ This motif was discussed in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue. See Kärkkäinen, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat*, 397–406.

³⁵ This was widely discussed in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue. The third round of talks concentrated on the topic of *koinonia*. It was also part of the fourth quinquennium when missionary implications of *koinonia* were discussed. See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Ad ultimum terrae, Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue 1990-1997*. Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 117. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999), 109–13 especially.

³⁶ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 52, 57.

Holy Spirit and Spirit-Baptism³⁷

As is well known, Pentecostals love the book of Acts. The reason is simply that it tells the story of the first Christian churches having been born as a result of the Pentecostal pouring out of the Spirit. The promise in Acts 1:8 was taken literally by Pentecostals and believed to be happening “here and now”: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (RSV). What is significant about this Pentecostal experience and expectation of the Spirit was succinctly captured in the beginning of the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue in a Pentecostal position paper: “It may hardly be gainsaid, that the Pentecostal revivals of the present century have taken the *koinonia* of/with the Holy Spirit out of the cloistered mystical tradition of the Church, and made it the common experience of the whole people of God.”³⁸

Speaking of the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and individual Christians was of course nothing novel in the history of Christianity. What was dramatically novel was Pentecostals’ claim not only that all Christians, men and women, poor and rich, educated and uneducated, white and black, should expect the empowerment by the Holy Spirit, but that it is the *normal* mode of typical Christian life! Hence, we can speak of this Pentecostal expectation as a form of democratization and reconciliation: not only is there access to God and “holy things” for all men and women, but also access to ministry and leadership. It is not about education, status, or wealth, but about the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

This is what Pentecostals call “empowerment” and was named “primal spirituality” by the noted observer of global Pentecostalism, Harvard theologian Harvey Cox. With this term Cox refers to the largely unprocessed central core of humanity where an unending struggle for a sense of destiny and significance rages. For Cox, Pentecostalism represents a spiritual restoration of significance and purpose to lift people from despair and hopelessness.³⁹ Cox considers this emphasis on “primal spirituality” evident in the contemporary (postmodern) world—as well as among Pentecostals in the Global South—as the key to Pentecostalism’s dramatic expansion.

Whereas for most other Christians the presence of the Spirit is just that, *presence*; for Pentecostals, the presence of the Spirit in their midst implies *empowerment*.⁴⁰ While this empowerment often manifests itself in spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophesy, or

³⁷ This section is based on my two essays “‘The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh’: Pentecostal Testimonies and Experiences of the Holy Spirit,” in “Lord and Life Giver: Spirit Today,” *Concilium* 4 (2011): 78–86; and “Pentecostal Pneumatologies in the Matrix of Systematic Theology,” in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 289–313.

³⁸ Howard M. Ervin, “Koinonia, Church and Sacraments: A Pentecostal Response,” Pentecostal position paper read at the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue in Venice, August 1–8, 1987 (unpublished), pp. 8–9.

³⁹ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 81. See also my “‘The Re-Turn of Religion in the New Millennium’: Pentecostalism and Postmodernities,” *Swedish Missiological Themes* 95, no. 4 (2007): 469–96.

⁴⁰ In this distinction, I am indebted to the Benedictine Catholic expert on Pentecostal-Charismatic movements, Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB.

healings, it is still felt and sought for by Pentecostals even when those manifestations are absent. The main function of the Pentecostal worship service is to provide a setting for an encounter with Jesus, the embodiment of the Full Gospel (as outlined above) to receive the (em)power(ment) of the Spirit. As important as sermons, hymns, and liturgy are, they all take second place to “meeting with the Lord,” as they put it.

Pentecostalism has thus offered a grassroots challenge to established churches and theologies, especially those endorsing the so-called cessationist principle, which holds that miracles or extraordinary charismata ceased at or near the end of the apostolic age. Often ridiculed for emotionalism, Pentecostals introduced a dynamic, enthusiastic type of spirituality and worship-life to the contemporary church, emphasizing the possibility of experiencing God mystically.

While the experience (rather than doctrine) came first,⁴¹ a novel and disputed doctrinal understanding of Spirit-baptism emerged in the early years of the movement. While never uniformly formulated nor followed by the worldwide movement, it is only fair to say that for the large majority of Pentecostals, this view came to be known as the “initial physical evidence.” This simply means that Pentecostals expect an external sign or marker of the reception of Spirit-baptism, namely, speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*). Pentecostals claim this doctrine comes from the book of Acts and from contemporary experience. Theologically the initial-evidence doctrine functions “sacramentally”: it is an external confirmation of the inner grace received from God’s Spirit. Pentecostals do not, of course, call it “sacramental,” nor do they necessarily affirm the connection.⁴²

Other gifts of the Spirit such as prophesying, prayer for healing, and works of miracles are enthusiastically embraced and sought for by Pentecostals. Belief in the capacity of the Spirit to bring about healing, whether physical or emotional/mental, is one of the hallmarks of Pentecostalism. In this, Pentecostals echo the postmodern insistence on a holistic understanding of the body-mind relationship. A related belief is the capacity to engage in “spiritual warfare” and exorcise demonic spirits, if necessary. This is a significant part of Pentecostal spirituality, especially in the Global South.⁴³

With all of this said, however, it is interesting—and ecumenically important—to note that typically Pentecostal *doctrines* of the Holy Spirit (writings on pneumatology) fairly closely follow typical Protestant lines. Yet they also are compelled to bring in their own distinctive contribution, namely, the dynamic and charismatic nature of the Spirit’s ministry. Amos Yong summarizes it well:

⁴¹ Jean-Daniel Plüss, “Azusa and Other Myths: The Long and Winding Road from Experience to Stated Beliefs and Back,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 2 (1993): 191.

⁴² See Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign,” 61–76.

⁴³ See further, Opoku Onyinah, “Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Contemporary Africa: Ghana as a Case Study,” ch. 10 in *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts*, ed. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

In Pentecostalism, as in most conservative, traditionalist, and evangelical Christian traditions, the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit as divine person continues to prevail. Yet Pentecostals go beyond many of their orthodox Christian kindred to say that the Holy Spirit continues to act in the world and interact personally with human beings and communities. In this tradition, then, there is the ongoing expectation of the Holy Spirit's answer to intercessory prayer, of the Spirit's continual and personal intervention in the affairs of the world and in the lives of believers even when not specifically prayed for, and of the Spirit's manifestation in the charismatic or spiritual gifts (as enumerated by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:4–7). Of course, amidst all that occurs in Pentecostal circles are some rather fantastic accounts . . . and discerning between the valid and the spurious is not always easy. Pentecostals face the tension of (on the one hand) accepting a rather traditional supernaturalistic worldview along with at least some of the more embarrassing claims that come with it resulting in their being excluded from scholarly or academic conversation, or (on the other hand) attempting to reinterpret Pentecostal testimonies within a more naturalistic framework so as to be able to proceed acceptably with rigorous scientific inquiry into Pentecostal spirituality and experience.⁴⁴

In other words, on the one hand, Pentecostal theological works follow the traditional doctrine of the Holy Spirit and Trinity and usually employ categories and terms borrowed from others. On the other hand, Pentecostals go beyond the established contours of traditional theologies and push the boundaries of pneumatology based on their distinctive spirituality as described above.

Concluding Remarks

After the first century of its existence, Pentecostalism faces a number of important theological tasks, including putting in writing a coherent doctrine of its own. Part of that work is also the continuing clarification of Pentecostal identity. That is important for two main reasons: first of all, for Pentecostalism itself. Only that spiritual movement which begins to understand who she is, is able to (re-)define in ever-changing contexts what the key issues for survival and flourishing may be. A movement without the sense of self-identity may easily drift into “strange waters” and find itself stuck with debates that are foreign to it. Second, the clarification of identity is needed in order to communicate clearly to other Christians—and non-Christians—who they are. Particularly concerning spiritually enthusiastic movements such as Pentecostalism, there are a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings. It is not good for the movement's future to let others define who they are.

⁴⁴ Amos Yong, “‘The Spirit Hovers over the World’: Toward a Typology of ‘Spirit’ in the Religion and Science Dialogue,” *The Digest: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Foundational Questions* 4, no. 12 (2004): n.p., http://www.metanexus.net/digest/2004_10_27.htm (accessed 21 August 2006).

We have to be patient and give time to a young movement such as Pentecostalism to work on its identity, theology, and spirituality. Even older traditions such as Lutheranism or the Reformed churches after several hundreds of years of reflection still continue the task. In that continuing work, the role of non-Western Pentecostalism (from Asia, Africa, and Latin America) will be defining, for the third millennium as the epicenter of Christianity has already moved there. Most Pentecostals of the world are found elsewhere than in Europe and United States and therefore we must look to “Majority-World Pentecostals” to help us understand what Pentecostalism is and who we are.

Developing and Maintaining a Pentecostal Ethos

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Ph.D.¹

“Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever.” This is the quintessential Pentecostal text. Aimee Semple McPherson regularly appealed to this verse, one that emphasized all that she believed about her Lord. As Sister listened to or read the sermons preached by many pastors in her day, she concluded that their message was irrelevant to the millions of ordinary people who needed relief from their sin, their fears, their infirmities, and the stresses of everyday life. The sermons preached by these pastors had little to do with the needs of the teeming masses that she met, day after day. Her response to these preachers came in the form of a simple rhetorical question. “Is Jesus Christ the Great ‘I AM,’ or Is He the Great ‘I Was’?”²

Aimee’s question was aimed at those who believed that God no longer worked in the ways described in the Bible, those who would demythologize the biblical text to exclude the miraculous, and those who searched, but failed to find a historical Jesus who could still life’s storms such as we face in the current COVID-19 pandemic. It hit fundamentalists, liberals, and modernists alike. To her, this text from Hebrews 13:8 contradicted all of their claims. This text spoke of the continuing ability of Jesus Christ to save the lost, heal the sick, and empower the powerless, while pointing to Jesus as the unrivaled, eternal King who would soon return for those who followed Him. These four points became the cornerstones of her “Foursquare Gospel”, and they were guaranteed, she contended, because Jesus Christ has not changed. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

From her perspective, the fundamentalists who limited what Christ could do in the present “dispensation”, as well as the liberals and modernists, like many deconstructionists in our own day, preached a powerless message that defied the claims of this important biblical text. In the sermon to which her question became the title, Sister caricatured their messages as they made their appeals to the masses.

... We will tell you of the wonderful power Christ ‘used’ to have, the miracles He ‘used’ to perform, the sick He ‘used’ to heal. Tis a graphic and blessed history of those things which Jesus did almost 1900 years before you were born. They happened far, far away across a sea, which you have never sailed in a country, which you have never seen, among people you have never known.³

Such a “Gospel”, she complained, was irrelevant to those who needed answers to their everyday needs here! Now! Today! What the people needed to hear, she maintained, is a Gospel that tells of an ever dependable and unchanging Christ. They need “a Christ who lives and loves and

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² Aimee Semple McPherson, *Divine Healing Sermons* (No city: Aimee Semple McPherson, circa 1921), 11-22.

³ Aimee Semple McPherson, *Divine Healing Sermons*, 11-12.

answers prayer today”, a Christ whose power knows no limits, a Christ who does not change but is just the same today as He was yesterday, a predictable Christ who they could depend upon to be the same tomorrow. In this ever-changing world, they need to hear of Jesus Christ, whose name is, “I AM”, the Incarnate One, who is faithful to all generations and capable of meeting needs *today*.

If we are to pattern the ongoing life of the Church as one that exhibits a Pentecostal ethos, that is, a Pentecostal character or spirit, it must begin with the understanding that Jesus Christ is the “I AM” in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). The Greek word *ekklēsia*, which we translate as “Church,” comes from the verb *kaleō*, which means, “to call”. Jesus had called his disciples and told them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their **cross** daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).⁴ Today, we are the people who Jesus has called to follow Him. Each of us has been called to become members of His Church. We have been called into the fellowship of God’s Son (1 Cor. 1:9), called to be saints (1 Cor. 1:2), called to live lives worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1), and ultimately, we have been called to receive the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).

As Jesus submitted to John’s baptism in the Jordan River, all four Gospel writers tell us that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove.⁵ The New Testament scholar, David Hill, notes that Jesus understood “his baptism...as his call to ministry and his endowment with authority and the (prophetic) Spirit to carry out that ministry in which the Kingdom becomes a present reality in history”.⁶ The Father acknowledged Him as His beloved Son, and from that time on, Jesus was full of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit then led (Luke 4:1) or drove (Mark 1:12) Jesus into the wilderness, where over a period of forty days, Satan tempted Him. Having overcome Satan’s temptations, Jesus returned from the desert in “the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14).

Mark recorded that Jesus then began to minister in various synagogues throughout Galilee, “proclaiming the good news (*evangelion*) of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news’” (Mark 1:14-15). After some days, Jesus came to his hometown, Nazareth, where he was invited to speak to the local synagogue congregation.

It is at this point, where Luke provides a substantial account of Jesus’ first recorded sermon. It, too, is a Pentecostal sermon based upon an Old Testament text. Jesus stood before his family, friends, and neighbors, in the synagogue of Nazareth, and he unrolled the scroll to the passage he wanted. His sermon text came from the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2. He began to read the words,

¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

⁴ All Bible quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version* unless otherwise specified.

⁵ Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34

⁶ David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* New Foundations Theological Library (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 50.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.⁷

When Jesus had completed the reading, Luke tells us that he rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and then sat down to deliver his message. It was simple enough. "Today," he announced, "this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). If Jesus had not said another word, He had said enough. He had announced that He was the Anointed One, the one who was full of the Spirit of whom Isaiah the prophet had foretold centuries before. By reading the remainder of Isaiah's words, however, He described what His Spirit-filled life would entail. It would be a life of proclamation. He was called to proclaim "Good News" to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to proclaim recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim freedom to the oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

In this way, this Lukan passage became paradigmatic for all that Jesus would say and do throughout His earthly ministry. The primary ministry that Jesus brings is a prophetic one, one in which He has been anointed by the Holy Spirit to proclaim a number of important realities that amounted to "Good News".⁸ Luke's reading is fully consistent with his understanding of "prophetic pneumatology", an important theological contribution to the developing theology of the early Church as Luke opens up our understanding of the work that the Holy Spirit does in and

⁷ What Luke has recorded is not exactly what one finds in Isaiah 61:1-2, though it is a close approximation, especially to the version found in the Septuagint. Isaiah 61:1-2 reads as follows:

¹ "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
He has sent me to bring good news **to the oppressed,**
to bind up the broken hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn.

Luke omits the clause that Jesus has been sent "to bind [or heal] the brokenhearted". Jesus apparently ended His recitation from Isaiah by reading only Isaiah 61:1 followed by the first clause of 61:2, "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor". According to Luke's rendition, Jesus did not go on to read about the day of the Lord's vengeance, nor did He read about comfort to those who mourn. In addition, Luke includes as part of the quotation, words from Isaiah 58:6, "to let the oppressed go free". **He also substitutes the word "poor" for the word "oppressed".**

In the synagogue at Nazareth, it is very likely that Jesus read the text of Isaiah 61:1-2 exactly as He found it in the Isaiah scroll. Luke has provided a redacted text that is fully consistent with Isaiah's prophecy, but which now makes the point that Luke wishes his readers to understand about the ministry of Jesus. The primary ministry that Jesus is bringing is a ministry of proclamation, a prophetic ministry.

⁸ Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* JPTSupp 16, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 38; Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London, England: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 55.

through Jesus and then, in and through His Church.⁹ We, too, are called to proclaim “Good News” to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to proclaim recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim freedom to the oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. In the same way, those of us who have the fullness of the Spirit are called to a prophetic ministry.¹⁰

Jesus’ claim that Isaiah’s prophecy finds its fulfillment in the fact that God has anointed *Him*, points also to the fact that this anointing will function in the same way for all who He has called to follow Him and are led by and filled with the Holy Spirit. “Like Jesus, the church depends on the Holy Spirit. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit does the Church continue the works and words of Jesus”.¹¹ The Apostle Peter understood this when he preached to Cornelius and his household. He began his address to Cornelius, by recounting Jesus’ sermon in Nazareth. He told Cornelius that the “message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:38-39). Peter continued his presentation, explaining that he had witnessed all that Jesus had done. He concluded by informing Cornelius that Jesus had commanded him, as well as others, to proclaim this same “Good News” (Acts 10:42-43).

The fact that Jesus understood His Spirit-anointed ministry to be the working out of Isaiah’s prophecy is one thing, but does it go beyond Jesus? Keith Warrington, a member of the Elim Pentecostal churches in Great Britain and Ireland, holds that Jesus’ ministry was unique, and as such, it does not provide a template for His followers. He writes,

Jesus is often viewed as a model for all believers to emulate with the help of the Spirit; it needs to be borne in mind that the mission of Jesus was different to that of believers. Thus, rather than hope to imitate Jesus in his ministry, believers should seek to fulfil their individual God-given objectives with the help of the Spirit who partnered Jesus in the achievement of his.¹²

⁹ Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* JPTS 6 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991, 1994), 145-156.

¹⁰ There is often confusion on the nature of prophecy within Pentecostal churches. Literally, a person who proclaims the words that the Lord gives him or her prophesies. Preaching is not the same as prophecy, though prophecy can be preached. 1 Peter 4:10-11 begins, ¹⁰“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift (*charisma*) each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God;...so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.” See, Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “A Pentecostal Perspective on Prophetic Gifts,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 23:1 (2020), 109-137.

¹¹ James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 69.

¹² Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*, 52-53.

There is no question that Jesus' ministry was unique. He alone provided for our salvation through his death and resurrection. Yet, Pentecostal scholars such as Roger Stronstad, a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, make a compelling argument in the opposite direction.

Just as the anointing of Jesus (Luke 3:22; 4:18) is a paradigm for the subsequent Spirit baptism of the disciples (Acts 1:5; 2:4), so the gift of the Spirit to the disciples is a paradigm for God's people throughout the "last days" as a charismatic community of the Spirit, a prophethood of all believers (Acts 2:16-21).¹³

French Arrington, a longtime Church of God (Cleveland, TN) professor agrees with Stronstad's reasoning and treats it under the title "A Model for Later Outpourings of the Spirit".¹⁴ The Assemblies of God scholar, Robert Menzies, who argued for the significance of a "prophetic pneumatology" in Luke, has concluded that, "Luke's portrayal of Jesus' pneumatic anointing, which anticipates the experience of the early church, is consistent with his prophetic pneumatology".¹⁵

Thus, according to Peter as he spoke to Cornelius, Jesus' Spirit-anointed ministry extends through Him to us. It finds expression in the Great Commission. Most often, we cite the account of that Commission that Matthew gives. In Matthew's version, Jesus begins with His claim that, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." He then commands His disciples to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). The significance for our present discussion is that Jesus, the anointed One, possesses *all authority*, and it is because He possesses such unlimited authority that He can now command His followers to "Go"! They do not go alone, however, for Jesus promises that He will *always* go with them until the very end.

Importantly, the longer ending of Mark's account offers a slightly different, but equally significant rendition of this Commission. Mark tells us that Jesus charged His disciples to "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). His command to "Go" holds implications that go far beyond the nations, for the whole of creation is here included. While the earliest New Testament manuscripts do not contain these verses, these verses do appear in very ancient sources that are fully consistent with the words and deeds manifested by

¹³ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 8-9.

¹⁴ French L. Arrington, *Encountering the Holy Spirit: Paths of Christian Growth and Service* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2003), 126-127.

¹⁵ Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 156 and 143. Menzies bases this argument on his assertion that "In short, rather than pointing to the uniqueness of Jesus' experience of the Spirit, Luke's description of Jesus as πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου [full of the Holy Spirit] indicates that he regarded Jesus' experience at the Jordan as the moment at which 'he was filled with the Spirit' – the moment at which Jesus, like the early church, was empowered to carry out his divinely appointed task".

Jesus throughout His life.¹⁶ Furthermore, for centuries the Church accepted these words as having canonical status, before more critical approaches to the study of biblical texts emerged, especially in the Nineteenth Century. This version of the Commission says nothing about making disciples; it simply shows Jesus ordering His followers to proclaim the “Good News” to all creation!

While Pentecostals seldom think about this approach to the Great Commission, it seems to be fully consistent with God’s *desire* through Christ to reconcile all things to Himself (Col. 1:20). Recently, participants in the international dialogue between the World Communion of Reformed Churches and Pentecostals offered the following affirmation together.

God’s plan of redemption embraces all humanity and all creation (Mk 16:15; Gen 12:1-3; Isa. 49:6; 52:7-10; John 3:16; 12:32; Col. 1:19-20; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 5:9). Because salvation relates to all of life, mission is best understood as an all-encompassing life ministry, an invitation to life in Christ. “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10). In other words, the mission of God is holistic and comprehensive; it takes care of the totality of life – including human life and that of all creation. This means that salvation has individual, communal, and cosmic dimensions. To emphasize one over the others leads to serious errors in our understanding of salvation and in the way we conduct mission. Salvation is a spiritual reality that impacts life as a whole.¹⁷

Significantly, in Mark 16, Jesus promises that when those whom He has called follow His directions, certain “signs” will appear. People who believe the “Good News” will receive salvation. They have Jesus’ permission to appeal to or rely upon the authority He has given to them. By using the Name of Jesus Christ, “they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18). In this version of the Great Commission then, we find at least two of “Sister’s” four points.

Whenever people receive the proclamation of “Good News”, we see Jesus Christ in the position of Savior. Through those who lay hands upon the sick, we see Jesus Christ as Divine Healer. A church that exhibits a Pentecostal ethos is challenged to trust God for the healing and wholeness that comes through Christ Jesus, and to ministers that healing and wholeness to others in the Name of Jesus Christ, that is, by His authority, as the occasion arises (Jeremiah 32:27; Exodus 15:26; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:16-17; James 5:14).

¹⁶ The earliest Fourth Century manuscripts, $\aleph$ and B, omit Mark 16:9-20. These verses appear in the Fifth Century manuscripts, A and C. William B. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, SNTS 25 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974, examines the textual history of these verses.

¹⁷ “Called to God’s Mission: Report of the Third Round of the International Dialogue between Representatives of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders: 2015-2020,” ¶ 14.

Mark's account of the Great Commission, however, seems to suggest even more. Jesus is the Anointed One. Jesus is the One who possesses all authority on earth and in heaven. Yet it appears that without ever mentioning the Holy Spirit, Mark's account suggests that the Holy Spirit has anointed those who obey Him, to do, as John later notes, even "greater works" than those that Jesus had done (John 14:12). Jesus essentially promises that He will pass along to those who willingly follow Him, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, for He will ask the Father to send the Paraclete to them (John 14:16), thereby empowering them for works of ministry that go beyond a simple verbal proclamation. He promises that empowered, they will cast out demons, discern and overcome the snares of the enemy depicted by snakes and deadly poison, and speak in new tongues. All these things are consistent with the Pentecostal notion of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Just as Jesus, the great "I AM" continues to minister throughout the world today, so too, does His Church. The Church is not a static structure or an institution, it is the dynamic, living, Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12; Rom. 12:4-5), which has been sent into the whole world to proclaim the "Good News" both in word and through its actions. It is comparable to a living body with its many parts or members, each of whom plays a specific or unique role. These members are the one "People of God" (1 Pet. 2:9). Christ expected the Church to live and work as one body, as one people, with all of us working *together* with Christ's one purpose in mind, for He alone is head of the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18).

This requires the followers of Jesus to recognize and accept the diverse nature of the Church, and be willing to participate fully in the Church that includes all people regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender, class, previous condition of servitude, or level of education (Galatians 3:26-29). The apostles made it clear that we must make every effort to maintain the health and unity of the whole Church (Ephesians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13). Jesus, too, prayed that we would be one, even as He and the Father were one (John 17:20-23). This is not always easily done, though it was a vision shared by Charles F. Parham, the self-proclaimed "Projector" of the Apostolic Faith Movement,¹⁸ and William J. Seymour, pastor of the Azusa Street Mission and leader of the famous revival that began in his congregation. Seymour consistently proclaimed that the Mission stood for "Christian Unity everywhere".¹⁹

As Spirit-filled followers of Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns together, one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we recognize Jesus as the One who has called us to follow Him and has baptized us with His Spirit, who was promised (Acts 1:4) and poured out by the Father (John 14:15; Acts 2:16-17), through the Son. The Day of Pentecost gave birth, not merely to the Church, but to a *Pentecostal Church*, a Church with a Pentecostal ethos, character, or spirit. Those who

¹⁸ Both men asserted that, "**The Apostolic Faith Movement** stands for the restoration of the faith once delivered unto the saints – the old time religion, camp meetings, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian Unity everywhere". This statement is quoted in "Declare Parham Is Gaining," *The Waukegan Daily Gazette* (September 28, 1906), 6, as coming from a "circular" distributed by Charles F. Parham, Projector

¹⁹ William J. Seymour used it, beginning with the first issue of his newspaper, "The Apostolic Faith Movement," *The Apostolic Faith* [Los Angeles, CA] 1.1 (September 1906), 2.1. Seymour continued to use it in each issue of his paper, over the next several years. He also published this statement in tract form, which he signed.

followed Jesus at that time, and who have received the promise of the Father in our own day (Acts 2:39), have been transformed and empowered to do the “greater works” that Jesus announced when He walked the earth.

What are some of the characteristics of a Pentecostal ethos? A church that exhibits a Pentecostal ethos is one that serves to the fullest, the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2). It recognizes Jesus Christ as the great, “I AM”, who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. It is a church that confesses that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead! It acknowledges and affirms the anointing that Jesus received from the Father, at His baptism, through the Spirit. It is a church that embraces such a baptism, anointing, fullness, or empowerment that only Jesus Christ gives through the Holy Spirit, to those who follow Him closely. This church with a Pentecostal ethos recognizes and follows in full obedience the command issued by Jesus. It willingly goes into the whole world, proclaiming the “Good News” of the in breaking of the Kingdom of God, bearing witness to salvation in Christ, making disciples, and proclaiming Him to all creation. That is the message of Foursquare, stated powerfully on the cornerstone of Angelus Temple, ““Dedicated unto the cause of inter-denominational and world-wide evangelism”.

A Pentecostal ethos recognizes that every person must have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that they may be reconciled to God and experience the love and joy of knowing Him. As a result, a Pentecostal church with a Pentecostal ethos will be evangelistic and missional in its vision, going into the entire world to make disciples (Acts 1:8; Romans 10:14-15; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15). Every Christian who truly follows Christ and embraces such an ethos will be willing to share the Gospel with those whom God places in their path (Luke 9:23-24; Romans 1:16-17).

A church that embraces a Pentecostal ethos provides space, encouragement, and opportunity for each of its members to encounter God through the Holy Spirit in such a way that the Spirit utterly transforms them and empowers them for a life of service. It facilitates their ability to seek and to discern what contribution the Holy Spirit desires to make through each of its members to the ongoing life of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) as well as to the world. It will be holistic in its outlook regarding its mission and ministry.

The result of such Divine encounters will bring about expressions of spiritual power, and a life lived in spiritual fullness, manifesting the fruit (Acts 1:8; 2:4; Galatians 5:22-23) and gifts or charisms (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) of the Spirit. Such Divine encounters help us to understand better that serving a Holy God requires that we also seek to live a life of holiness unto the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23; Romans 6:11-14; 8:9; Hebrews 12:14). Even Pentecostals sometimes find it difficult to live in these ways. Yet a church that exhibits a Pentecostal ethos will be a place where love and encouragement are its marks. It is a community where the immature are led into maturity. The church lifts them up, reassures them, and inspires them to begin again. Jesus’ treatment of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) provides a brilliant example of the way a genuine Pentecostal ethos might function.²⁰ It recognizes where sin

²⁰ This passage is a second passage that is not present in the earliest manuscripts that include the Gospel of John.

is present and holds the sinner responsible. At the same time, it does not sit in judgment, but lovingly forgives that sin and encourages the sinner to leave that sin behind and move forward in a way that is consistent with the life of holiness

Jesus came to preach “Good News” to the poor, to proclaim freedom to the prisoners, to proclaim recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim release to those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. So too, He calls His followers to do the same, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet this has often proved a difficult text to understand and embrace. There is a tendency for Pentecostals to see two ways of understanding this text. One of them is to look for and find a spiritual interpretation. The other is to focus only on a literal interpretation of this text.

While Norval Geldenhuys, was not a Pentecostal, he sums up the call for which Jesus was anointed, in the following manner.

He...announced that He was the One anointed by God with the Spirit *to proclaim the glad tidings to the poor. God had sent Him to heal those who were broken-hearted and found themselves in spiritual distress; to proclaim deliverance to those who were captives in the power of sin and in spiritual wretchedness; to give back to the spiritually blind the power of sight; to cause those who were downcast and inwardly bruised to go forward in triumph; and thus to “proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”*, i.e. to announce the Messianic age – the period ushered in by His appearance, in which God will grant His salvation to His people.”²¹

Essentially, the Geldenhuys, and most white Pentecostals read Luke 4:18-19 entirely from this spiritual perspective. It is not interpreted literally, describing acts of justice. There is no attempt to ask about our treatment of the poor, whether through compassionate ministries, or by providing food and clothing to individuals. Perhaps even more importantly, such an interpretation does not consider whether or how to address unjust institutional powers or structures that lead to poverty. It is true that Jesus does not go about setting up social welfare agencies. He is not working to release prisoners from their cells. He is not engaging the Romans to set free the people that they are oppressing. Yet this type of interpretation suggests that Jesus came only to address spiritual problems, not the kinds of problems that we face day by day in an unjust world. It has also led to the widespread criticism of Pentecostals as being otherworldly.²²

On the other hand, many African American and Latino Pentecostals read this same passage from a more literal perspective. Their understanding of a Pentecostal ethos in light of this perspective raises questions of justice.²³ They speak freely and, in many cases, powerfully of our

²¹ Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke: The English Text with Introduction Exposition and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament Series (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 168. Italics mine.

²² Christian Lalive d’Epinay, *Haven of the Masses: A Study of the Pentecostal Movement in Chile*, no city: Lutterworth Press and Friendship Press 1969

²³ Bernardo L. Campos M., “In the Power of the Spirit: Pentecostalism, Theology and Social Ethics,” in Benjamin F. Gutierrez and Dennis A. Smith, Eds. *In the Power of the Spirit: The Pentecostal Challenge to Historic Churches in Latin America* (Mexico City: AIPRAL/Guatemala City: CELEP / Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

treatment of the poor. While they appreciate the work of those involved in compassionate ministries and those who provide food and clothing in times of need, they frequently ask deeper questions about why and how other Pentecostals never question institutional powers or structures that lead to the level of poverty in which many of them suffer. They raise questions of conscience that need to be addressed by the whole Body of Christ, especially those who claim to embrace a Pentecostal ethos.

Byron Klaus, the former President of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary and a former missionary in Latin America goes beyond these narrower interpretations to include both a spiritual and a literal perspective on these verses. While he argues for what might be viewed as a *qualified* literal interpretation, it must be recognized as being qualified by the fact that he sees both a spiritual *and* a literal message lying within this text. He writes,

Luke 4:18-21 gives emphasis to servant ministry. The rule of the Lord Jesus sends us forward to be something more than a Christian version of the Red Cross. The evil that is perpetrated on victims the world over has been overcome by Christ. How will servant ministry display this victory through compassion in the midst of evil? Physical disabilities are no hindrances to the reign of God. In the midst of sickness and physical tragedy we have the privilege now to say, “Rise and be healed!” To those bound by the chains of the demonic, captives to the destructive power of the evil one, we can authoritatively demonstrate by our tangible acts of mercy and compassion that the kingdom of God brings dignity and human value to “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40).²⁴

Klaus goes further, however, by including a footnote at the end of this passage that reads: “Wealthy believers have a responsibility to give generously. Instead of indulging in luxury, lavish homes, expensive cars, etc., they should sacrifice for promoting the gospel and helping the poor. So should wealthy churches – and so should we all”.²⁵

From its beginning, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel has had all the elements it needs to develop and maintain a robust Pentecostal ethos. Aimee Semple McPherson understood that it rests in the risen Lord Jesus Christ, who is the same, yesterday, today and forever. She understood that the Pentecostal ethos includes taking the Great Commission seriously. This

Worldwide Ministries Division, 1996), 41-50; Jonathan Langston Chism, “‘The Saints Go Marching’: Black Pentecostal Critical Consciousness and the Political Protest Activism of Pastors and Leaders in the Church of God in Christ in the Civil Rights Era,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 35:3 (2013), 424-443; David D. Daniels III, “Future Issues in Social and Economic Justice,” in Vinson Synan, Ed., *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2011), 339-355; Dara Colby Delgado, “She Is Clothed with Strength and Dignity: Holy Drag and the Prophetic Social Consciousness of the Black Pentecostal Holiness Tradition,” in Antipas L. Harris, Ed. *The Mighty Transformer: The Holy Spirit Advocates for Social Justice* (Irving, TX: Gield Academic Press, 2019), 164-181.

²⁴ Byron D. Klaus, “The Mission of the Church,” in Stanley M. Horton, Ed. *Systematic Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1994), 592.

²⁵ Byron D. Klaus, “The Mission of the Church”, 592, note 63.

Commission brings “Good News” to all of humankind, but it also holds implications for the whole of creation. Living within a Pentecostal ethos requires living lives of holiness that are in keeping with these realities. It calls us to follow Jesus Christ closely, picking up the cross we have been given, and taking steps in keeping with His. And in the end, a Pentecostal ethos is not merely a spiritual reality. It is a reality that includes hands and feet, that our Savior can use to do His bidding throughout the world.

Our Pentecostal ethos is best maintained as we follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus. It can be strengthened when we preach these things. We need to be reminded and challenged and encouraged in following Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our churches need to be places where people come face to face with God, where sin is forgiven, people and relationships are healed, everyone is encouraged, and all are charged to live in keeping with the Pentecostal ethos that we share. Christ’s ministry is now our ministry. as we proclaim “Good News” to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, proclaim recovery of sight to the blind, proclaim freedom to the oppressed, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

An Outline of the Pentecostal Ethos: A Critical Engagement with James K. A. Smith

Andrew I. Shepardson, Ph.D.¹

ABSTRACT: This paper describes the unique emphases that Pentecostals bring to their belief and behavior as they participate in God's kingdom. Critically engaging with James K. A. Smith's five "Elements of a Pentecostal Worldview," this paper challenges adulterations and misappropriations of biblical Pentecostalism. This introduction to the Pentecostal outlook on reality will explain five aspects of the Pentecostal ethos by pointing to ways in which they are embodied in Pentecostal thinking and practice and then offer a word of caution about how each of these aspects can be misunderstood or misapplied.

Introduction

Pentecostals have a unique way of life, rooted in our theology and embodied in our practices, and one can sum up these ways of thinking and living as the Pentecostal ethos.² While space prohibits developing the concept of 'ethos' (as opposed to 'philosophy,' 'culture,' or 'worldview'), I am presuming to describe the unique emphases to behavior and belief that Pentecostals bring to their participation in God's creation and kingdom.³ My purpose here is to begin to describe this ethos, how it is rooted in our thinking, and how it is lived out in our communities of faith. Surely not all Pentecostals would agree with everything described here, nor do I claim to capture the ethos of all Pentecostals, especially those in the two-thirds world about whose ways of living the Pentecostal story I surely have much to learn.⁴ Even so, this outline broadly captures key elements of the Pentecostal ethos, namely: radical openness to God, an "enchanted" view of reality, the sacredness of the material and the spiritual worlds, the centrality of story, and an eschatological view toward mission and justice.

While the approach adopted here is unique in some ways, the chief categories are a critical adaptation of James K. A. Smith's "Elements of a Pentecostal Worldview."⁵ In his important, but

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² My gratitude to Ryan Lytton and Sam Rockwell who provided helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

³ There are alternative accounts to what I am proposing here, yet I use the word 'ethos' only heuristically. For the most relevant example of a broader account of this idea (which I do not endorse), see James K. A. Smith's version in *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 22-31.

⁴ For an introduction to a more global view of Pentecostalism, see Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007).

⁵ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 31-46. Smith refers to these elements as part of the "pentecostal worldview." He deliberately decapitalizes 'pentecostal' to indicate that he is referring to a larger group of people than those who are simply members of a Pentecostal denomination. I am not interested in retaining this linguistic convention for the purposes of this paper. For why I think Smith's views are highly troublesome, see Andrew I. Shepardson, "Thinking in Tongues" (review), in *The Denver Journal* 16 (2013), <https://denverseminary.edu/resources/news-and-articles/thinking-in-tongues-pentecostal-contributions-to-christian-philosophy>. See also my critique of

deeply problematic work, Smith articulates various contributions that Pentecostalism should make to philosophy. While his general outline of what I am calling the Pentecostal ethos is helpful in a number of ways, Smith's commitment to postmodern philosophy deserves a rebuttal, especially with respect to how postmodernism would negatively impact a Pentecostal ethos. This paper will acknowledge Smith's contribution to the discussion of a Pentecostal ethos by largely adopting his categories, but will also challenge the aspects of Smith's analysis that should be troubling to Pentecostals. In addition to a critical engagement with Smith, this paper will explore some other misappropriations and adulterations of biblical Pentecostalism that abound among those who are still properly included in the sphere of those Christians that are called Pentecostals. Therefore, this introduction to the Pentecostal outlook on reality will explain each of the five aspects of the Pentecostal ethos by pointing to ways in which they are embodied in Pentecostal thinking and practice and then offer a word of caution about how each of these aspects can be misunderstood or misapplied.

Radical Openness to God

Pentecostals are people of high expectations. We expect to see God move powerfully in our lives and in the world around us. We are constantly amazed by stories of God's work in bringing millions to faith in China, by dreams about Jesus in the Muslim world, and by healings and personal transformation in our own communities. Pentecostals are amazed by these things, but not usually surprised. This is because we have high expectations of God's power and revelation to accomplish God's work. God is doing new and exciting things all of the time, and Pentecostals are open to experiencing God's active presence in our lives and our world.

Two pertinent examples come to mind. First, Mary exemplifies radical openness to God. When she receives the promise that she will give birth to the King, "the Son of the Most High," she receives this news with obedient submission. "'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled'" (Luke 1:38, NIV). Second, consider the testimony of Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. In desperation over his and his wife Carol's inability to grow and sustain a small church, he writes, "We *had* to have a visitation from the Holy Spirit, or bust. 'Lord, I have no idea how to be a successful pastor.'" ⁶ After hearing a call to lead his congregation toward a lifestyle of prayer, he continues, "God was drawing me out, pulling me toward an actual experience of himself and his power. He was telling me that my hunger for him and his transforming power would be satisfied as I led my tiny congregation to call out to him in prayer."⁷ Radical openness to God changes our plans and alters our priorities.

Smith's (and Myron Bradley Penner's and Carl A. Raschke's) rejection of natural theology and apologetics, *Who's Afraid of the Unmoved Mover?: Postmodernism and Natural Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019).

⁶ Jim Cymbala with Dean Merrill, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 25. Emphasis in the original.

⁷ Ibid., 25-26.

This is precisely the case that Peter makes in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2. God promised to do powerful things in the last days. The prophets foretold the events of the Day of Pentecost. Jesus was the sign that the last days had arrived. So, Peter says, one's response should be to "repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38-39, NIV). Peter experiences the Pentecost events and makes the connection that Christians must accept this revelation from God. Pentecostals are ready for God to speak and act in powerful ways, and we are open to hearing from God and to participating in God's mission.

Smith's analysis of radical openness is beautiful and inspiring. He suggests that Pentecostals embody this openness in our willingness to be surprised by the work of God, work that may even upset our plans and assumptions. This includes openness to hearing God speak, openness to seeing miracles, and perhaps equally important for Smith, openness to the unexpected.⁸ Smith deserves credit for his helpful elucidation of how it is that Pentecostals seek to live in response to the God who is always revealing himself to the world. The only concern worth raising with Smith's analysis of radical openness is the brief contrast that he attempts to paint between the religious devotion of Pentecostals and non-Pentecostal Christians. He notes, "Such strange devotion is scandalous to the staid rhythms of a disenchanted Christianity."⁹ By "disenchanted," he seems to be pointing to Christians who do not live according to this ethos of openness. This seems fair enough. It would be scandalous to a Christian who is not open to God to experience the radical devotion of others in the ways in which Smith describes. However, if by "disenchanted," Smith means to say that non-Pentecostals are scandalized by radical openness to God, then many who do not identify as Pentecostals would rightly dispute this. Smith does not carefully distinguish what he means to say. Therefore, it simply remains for Smith to be a bit clearer on this point.¹⁰

A word of caution is in order for Pentecostals who claim to hear the voice of God, but who are not properly grounded in the Scriptures and in the historical confessions of the Christian Church. Out of an attitude of radical openness to God, some Pentecostals may be tempted to hear from God new revelations that are not in keeping with God's word definitively revealed in the Scriptures. This seems to be exactly what happens through prosperity gospel teaching and practice. In addition to misinterpreting texts on God's blessing in return for our obedience, churches that teach prosperity gospel often include elements in services where people will share their testimonies of God's provision in response to their tithes. Religion scholar Kate Bowler sums up the practice this way, "Congregations might open the worship service with positive confessions tailored to wealth, such as 'I am out of debt. I am healthy and wealthy. I'm having good success.'"¹¹ However,

⁸ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 33-39.

⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰ Smith is careful to say that his analysis of Pentecostal spirituality does not refer to Pentecostal doctrines and that Pentecostal spirituality can be embodied by people of different denominations. See *ibid.*, xix-xx.

¹¹ Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 128.

as many of us know, financial abundance does not always directly accompany tithing obedience. One person's testimony of radical openness accompanied by financial blessing is great, but the story is only veridical if it is supported by the Bible. As much as Pentecostals are radically open to fresh revelation, they ought to also be radically committed to God's word in the Old and New Testaments. Any new revelation that one receives must always be tested against the Bible. The key elements of biblical orthodoxy as represented in the historic creeds give Pentecostals a further plumb line against which they may measure their biblical interpretations. Yet given our radical openness to God, Pentecostals ought to heed Paul's commands, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil" (1 Thess. 5:19-22, NIV). We must always be open to hearing from and experiencing God in unexpected ways, knowing that God will not contradict God's words or character, but that God will also not always conform to our standards.

An "Enchanted" View of Reality

Radical openness to God entails an additional kind of openness for Pentecostals. We are open to seeing a much larger reality than most 21st century Westerners. Western culture is dominated by the secular humanist worldview, which contains, among other ideas, philosophical naturalism: the notion that the natural world is ultimate reality. Carl Sagan famously claimed, "The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be."¹² Naturalism denies the existence of God and the spiritual world and affirms that the universe is a closed system of cause and effect wherein the only relevant causal considerations are biology, chemistry, chance, and necessity. Pentecostals, however, are committed to the truth that the natural world is not all that there is. Of course, this is a feature of larger Christian belief, as well. For example, Francis A. Schaeffer famously wrote that Christians believe that we live in a "supernatural universe."¹³ The Pentecostal ethos, however, takes this belief further by having a readiness to perceive not only God's active presence in the world, but also the presence of other non-physical persons like angels and demons. This is why Pentecostals are often ready to do spiritual warfare in response to illness, spiritual oppression, and emotional brokenness. Pentecostals see the world as "enchanted" in the sense that their thoughts and actions show that they see a greater reality than what can be perceived by the five senses and what can be accounted for by biology, chemistry, chance and necessity.

In addition, Pentecostals rightly decry secular humanist uses (or more properly, misuses) of reason. For example, when secular humanists see someone exhibiting signs of mental illness in

¹² Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 4. For a thorough explanation of this worldview, its effects on culture, and for a Christian response to it, see J. P. Moreland, *Scientism and Secularism: Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2018). See also Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).

¹³ Francis A. Schaeffer, *True Spirituality: How to Live for Jesus Moment By Moment*, 30th Anniversary Edition (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 11. Another example would be James W. Sire, who claims that the Christian worldview includes the belief that the universe is an open system of cause and effect. "God is constantly involved in the unfolding pattern of the ongoing operation of the universe." See James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 5th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 32.

need of therapy and perhaps medication, Pentecostals see someone who may need therapy and medication, but who may also need divine deliverance from demonic oppression. This is because Pentecostals believe that demons are non-human and non-physical persons who may harass and otherwise injure human persons. The problem is that modern secular humanists reject the existence of demons *a priori*, reducing all of reality to physical states and to cause and effect. The Pentecostal ethos knows that the modern secular humanist vision of reality is a grossly incomplete picture, and the rejection of supernatural causation *a priori* is a misuse of reason.

Indeed, Pentecostals need to be careful to not confuse the secular humanist worldview with reason and rationality. Since secular humanists claim reason as their own, it would be easy, but mistaken, to reject this important tool alongside the rejection of secular humanism. However, Christianity has a rich tradition of employing reason (what Warfield called “right reason”¹⁴) as a tool for discovering truth. In the interest of seeing reality as enchanted, it is sometimes popular in Pentecostal thinking to believe that God is irrational or that reason and faith are opposed. This is precisely the perspective that one receives from Smith. He argues that Christian claims cannot “be legitimated by Reason, but rather trusted in faith.”¹⁵ He affirms the Kierkegaardian view of faith and reason, for in writing about God’s testing of Abraham by commanding that Abraham sacrifice Isaac, he argues that obeying God amounted to a transgression against universal ethics and objective knowledge. “According to the register of ethics and reasons, to respond to such a call would be sheer madness—but this madness is reckoned to Abraham as *faith*.”¹⁶

This could not be further from the truth. As the writer of Hebrews reports, “Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead” (Heb. 11:19a, NIV). Moreover, the person who denies the role of reason in having Christian faith is actually engaging in the reasoned use of evidence. As Jonah Haddad argues,

First, by sticking to my faith, I have suggested that my cognitive material is functioning well enough for me to unabashedly assert my belief. Second, by giving an object of faith, I have suggested that the existence of God is a believable proposition that can be taken to be true. If I were to claim, as many Christians do, that through my faith I have somehow experienced the object of faith in a real relationship, then I would be adding an experienced-based confirmation of God’s existence.¹⁷

¹⁴ B. B. Warfield, “Introduction to Francis R. Beattie’s *Apologetics*,” in *Christian Apologetics Past & Present: A Primary Source Reader*, Vol. 2: From 1500, ed. William Edgar and K. Scott Oliphint (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 399.

¹⁵ James K. A. Smith, “A Little Story About Metanarratives,” in *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*, ed. Myron B. Penner (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 125.

¹⁶ James K. A. Smith, *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 83. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁷ Jonah Haddad, *Insanity*, 92.

To deny the role of reason in Christian faith is futile, for the denial involves using reason. The truth of the matter is that Christians do not fully comprehend the supernatural universe, and we are not always able to see what God is doing. But this is different from claiming that God is irrational or that Pentecostalism is against reason. Rather, God invites us, “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18, NASB). Jesus himself is called the *Logos*, or Word (see John 1:1), the personal locus of reason behind all of reality.¹⁸ If our view of “reason” entails that we only see with the five senses, then this view of reason needs correction. Yet this is not what Christians believe, nor is it the ethos by which Pentecostals live. Our view of reason must account for the fact that we live in a supernatural, or as Smith likes to say “enchanted,” universe.

The Sacredness of the Material and the Spiritual Worlds

Pentecostals see beauty and possibility in all aspects of God’s creation. This means that we are able to appreciate the sacredness of both the physical and spiritual worlds. The human person, in particular, lives as a unity of spirit and body, and God sees the whole human person as valuable. Smith calls this aspect of the Pentecostal ethos, “A Nondualistic Affirmation of Embodiment and Materiality.”¹⁹ Yet, as Smith is careful to note, Pentecostals are substance dualists, “[P]entecostal spirituality...maintains an ontological distinction between spirit and matter, and affirms the existence of immaterial entities.”²⁰ What Smith rightly objects to is the particular kind of Gnostic dualism that denigrates the value and importance of the human body and the material world.²¹ One might say that Pentecostals are substance dualists with respect to metaphysics, but that they are nondualists with respect to ethics. That is, we affirm the existence of soul and body as distinct substances, and we affirm that spirit and matter are good. I have altered Smith’s “Nondualistic Affirmation” language because “nondualism” is too easily conflated with various Eastern spiritualities (i.e. Advaita Vedanta Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism). Conceptually, we should take care to understand how the sacredness of our embodied spirituality (or spiritual embodiment)

¹⁸ See Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 51-58. For a more scholarly overview of how the *Logos* concept is employed in John, see Christos Karakolis, “The Logos-Concept and Dramatic Irony in the Johannine Prologue and Narrative,” in *The Prologue of the Gospel of John: Its Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Contexts. Papers read at the Colloquium Ioanneum 2013*, eds. Jan G. van der Watt, R. Alan Culpepper, and Udo Schnelle (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 139-156. For an interesting introduction to how the idea of Christ as “Logos” was understood in Patristic theologies, see Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), ch. 1.

¹⁹ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 41.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 42, nt. 69.

²¹ For an overview of Gnosticism, see Ilaria Ramelli, “Gnosis – Gnosticism,” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 2:139-147. Referring to “Gnosticism” is problematic given some relevant debates about the history of Gnostic movements and teachings. For more information on these debates and on their relevance for Pentecostals, see Ryan Lytton, “Pentegnosticals: Gnostic Influences Among Modern Pentecostals,” in *Quadrum* 2.1 (July 2019): 49-62. For a defense of substance dualism, see J. P. Moreland, *The Soul: How We Know It’s Real and Why It Matters* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014).

is distinct from the nondualism expressed in some kinds of Hinduism and Buddhism. In these religious worldviews, ultimate reality is nondualistic in the sense that reality is beyond the distinctions (or the dualism) of spirit and body.

To the contrary, Pentecostals are substance dualists in the sense that we value both body and spirit. Smith and I both affirm that, despite the fall, some real goodness remains in both the spiritual and the physical aspects of creation. Moreover, given that the holistic ministry of Jesus addresses the effects of the fall, redemption and restoration include freedom from sin as well as healing from physical, mental, and spiritual illness. This feature of the Pentecostal ethos is most poignantly displayed in the Incarnation, but it is also clarified in the Spirit-indwelling of God's people on the Day of Pentecost. The Spirit of God is localized in Jesus' followers (themselves embodied souls) who participate in God's mission as agents of God's redemptive presence. Therefore, Pentecostals minister to the whole person, believing for healing for every aspect of the human being. Our spirituality is modeled after the Eternal Son who became fully human in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is God incarnate, and his example teaches Pentecostals to celebrate and care for the whole person, knowing the goodness of all creation and that physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing are deeply related in the Kingdom of God.

The Centrality of Story

Pentecostals love a good testimony. We like to tell our own testimonies, and we even like to retell the testimonies of others. Central to a Pentecostal ethos is the desire to tell others about what God has done for us. "Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story" (Psa. 107:2a, NIV). It is not that we reject propositional theology. Learning about God, primarily through the Bible is a key value for most Pentecostals. Theology has an important place, but Pentecostals acknowledge that one of the best ways to bring theology to life is to experience it firsthand. One of the most important reasons for this is that our own stories of God's activity are an anchor for us when life is tumultuous. Our memories of God's faithfulness in the past remind us that God will be faithful again in the future. We love others' testimonies because these testimonies increase our faith. We are encouraged to continue to trust God when we hear about how God is trustworthy in others' lives.

The story of the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 concludes in the Apostle Peter's dramatic retelling of the story of Jesus:

Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. (Acts 2:22-24, NIV)

After recounting various prophecies about Jesus and telling the story of Jesus, the people who were listening “were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37, NIV). The Pentecostal way of life includes a rehearsal of this kind of event. We tell people who Jesus is and what Jesus has done, and we see people respond in faith. Central to Pentecostal practice is this: telling the story of Jesus and our stories of how he has changed us.

A word of caution is in order. In recognizing the centrality of stories to the Pentecostal ethos, Pentecostals ought to guard against the acceptance of what some call “narrative epistemology,” which is popular among many theologians today. Advocates of this view claim that we actually know *in* stories, rather than knowing *through* stories. That is, they dramatically denigrate the reality of knowledge apart from its being told in stories. James K. A. Smith is an advocate of narrative epistemology, stating, “According to this model, knowledge is rooted in the heart and traffics in the stuff of story. It’s not that propositional truths can be ‘packaged’ in narrative format for ‘the simple’; rather, the conviction is that story comes before propositions—imagination precedes intellection. We know *in* stories.”²² This line of thinking requires some unpacking.

First, Smith’s primary target in advocating a narrative epistemology is the notion of a propositional epistemology. In this more classical epistemology, propositions are what declarative sentences assert. Propositions can be stated in any number of natural languages (through various acoustic blasts, gesticulations, or markings), but the proposition sits behind its contingent markers and is itself an entity in the minds of the language users. That is, propositions are mental entities that can be shared from one mind to another via the use of natural languages. Smith’s philosophy of language denies this metaphysics of signs. Second, Smith is denying the primacy of the proposition as the primary vehicle through which knowledge is shared. He is arguing that the narrativel is logically prior to the propositional. That is, stories (and not propositions) deliver the meanings of things. This is part of Smith’s larger appropriation of Jacques Derrida’s postmodern axiom, “*There is nothing outside the text.*”²³ By this, Derrida means that one cannot recover authorial intent via the reception of texts.²⁴ Instead, as stories are told, the texts (stories or writings or otherwise) are deconstructed in the communities of language users. The result is that the community’s reception or experience of the texts is primary to any thought that existed in the mind of the original speaker or writer.

There are a few problems here. First, while stories may be temporally prior to propositions in human experience, they are not logically prior. Pentecostals rightly celebrate that we come to know

²² Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 43-44. See also idem., *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); and Myron Bradley Penner, *The End of Apologetics: Christian Witness in a Postmodern Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013). For a thorough argument against this kind of thinking, see the work of Pentecostal philosophers W. Paul Franks and Richard Brian Davis, “Against a Postmodern Pentecostal Epistemology,” in *Philosophia Christi* 15 (2013): 383-399.

²³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 158. Emphasis in the original.

²⁴ For a helpful explanation of Derrida, see James K. A. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism?* 39-40.

many things (especially the things that matter most about God and God's relationship to the world) through stories. (That is, stories are the means by which we receive knowledge.) One may experience the presence of God or witness a miracle prior to the formation of the proposition. Yet many of the most important things that we know are propositions: God exists, Jesus is alive, the Holy Spirit lives in us, the Bible is true, etc., and these propositions are made poignant for us in our stories. However, it is the truth of these propositions that give meaning to our experiences. Moreover, these propositions are true regardless of them being told in stories, and we may be able to come to have knowledge about these things without experiencing them in our own stories. Facts are facts regardless of whether or not we learn them in a story.

Second, and as I have argued elsewhere,²⁵ a narrative epistemology removes any possible common ground from which to evaluate the veridicality of conflicting stories. It is possible to have two maximally developed, but mutually exclusive narratives. This confusion is a result of Smith's coherentist and pragmatic approaches to truth. In this case, Smith's understanding of narrative epistemology means that a story could be judged as true without the requirement that the story corresponds to reality. This confounds the significance of all of the truths which Christians hold dear. Consider the doctrine of the general resurrection, a part of the Christian understanding of human destiny. There is a conflicting story in Mahayana Buddhism that the human predicament of *samsara*, the unending repetition and cycle of death and rebirth where humans are suffering again and again, can be escaped through *nirvana*, which is a self-extinguishing awakening to the ultimate.²⁶ The ultimate is the "all-inclusive Buddha essence" *Dharmakaya*, "free from all multiplicity, duality, and variability which characterize our phenomenal world."²⁷ Many people find the Mahayana story to be beautiful and meaning-making. Many people find the Christian story of the general resurrection to be appealing. Who is to say who is correct on these mutually exclusive pictures of human destiny? Perhaps a reminder from Paul regarding the reality of the resurrection is relevant at this point,

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either (1 Cor. 15:13-16, NIV).

Paul is arguing not that it is the story of the resurrection that is significant; rather, it is the factuality of the resurrection that is most important. The significance of the resurrection hangs on its

²⁵ Shepardson, "Thinking in Tongues."

²⁶ For a helpful discussion of these beliefs with a contrast to historic Christianity, see Harold Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1991), 62-63.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

factuality. It is here where Smith's narrative epistemology shows its weakness. If the resurrection is not a fact of reality, then Christianity is false.

This is underscored by a third problem with narrative epistemology. Many things are simply not up for interpretation. Most of us are perfectly comfortable with people having differences of opinion as to which company produces the best ice cream. Two rival ice cream companies may tell very compelling stories about their origins, their ingredients, the way they treat their employees, etc., and it would be foolish to try to find criteria which could be used to argue that one company is actually better than another. Yet most of us would not be comfortable with a situation where one could not adjudicate between rival stories about the existence of God, the Trinity, or the death and resurrection of Jesus. Narrative epistemology does not provide these criteria, and this leaves essential Christian doctrines up to the interpretations of various language game communities with no way to adjudicate between rival interpretations.²⁸

Finally, while the emotional experiences in response to stories are profound and may not be completely reducible to propositions, the content of God's character and actions in any story are reducible to propositions. Consider the story of Jesus' baptism. In this story, we learn a number of propositions about God including, but not limited to the following: (1) The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons. (2) The Father loves the Son. (3) Jesus' relationship to the Father and the Spirit is unique and unlike any other human's relationship to these divine persons. (4) Jesus' teaching and ministry deserve our attention and allegiance. One could, of course, go on. While the experience of the story of Jesus' baptism (either in listening to or reading the gospel accounts or in the first-person experience of the events for those who were present) is not reducible to propositions, the story is only meaningful because the events of the narrative present propositional claims about the nature and character of God. In general, the truth of what happened in history is reducible to propositions, though its subjective impact may not be reducible. Propositions may miss the profundity of most narratives, yet they can accurately relay the truth or falsity of any narrative.

An Eschatological View Toward Mission and Justice

Pentecostalism begins with a central presupposition: the church empowered by the Holy Spirit is a sign of the last days. Jesus will shortly return in history, and our role, remembering that the gospels are simply the story of what "Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1, NIV), is to partner with what Jesus is continuing to do until the fullness of his Kingdom is revealed in the form of the New Heavens and the New Earth. In keeping with this eye toward the last days, Pentecostals live in such a way as to embody and participate in the eschatological Kingdom of God now. We do this in a number of ways. Western Pentecostals are passionate for evangelism and global missions, all

²⁸ In this way, Smith is indebted to Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968); and George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984). See Smith's own analysis in *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*, 71; and idem., *Who's Afraid of Relativism?: Community, Contingency, and Creaturehood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 37, 50-60, 152-178.

the while learning from the theologies and experiences of our Pentecostal brothers and sisters from the global south. Pentecostals are often leaders in racial reconciliation. Consider the Memphis Miracle. As the final step in dissolving the all-white Pentecostal Fellowship of North America to form the new and multiracial Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America, the Memphis Miracle exemplified a uniquely Pentecostal way toward racial reconciliation. In response to a dramatic tongue with an interpretation on God's desire to create Christian unity, Vinson Synon recalls that

A white pastor appeared in the wings of the backstage with a towel and basin of water...In a moment of tearful contrition, he washed the feet of [the African-American] Bishop Clemmons while begging forgiveness for the sins of the whites against their black brothers and sisters. A wave of weeping swept over the auditorium. Then, [the African-American] Bishop Blake approached [the white] Thomas Trask, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, and tearfully washed his feet as a sign of repentance for any animosity blacks had harbored against their white brothers and sisters.²⁹

Pentecostals surely are guilty of racial injustices, but the stronger impulse in our ethos is to participate in God's eschatological kingdom now, bringing his justice and reconciliation to all aspects of human life.

Further, we claim that the gospel is, indeed, good news to the poor, both by proclaiming the good news that God has favor on the lowliest in society and by caring for the physical needs of the poor (thereby transcending the reductionistic tendencies of the social gospel v. fundamentalism debates). We believe that God's redemptive justice is available today, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we seek to participate in God's remaking of the world now until its fullness is revealed at the last day.

There are numerous ways in which this aspect of the Pentecostal ethos could be contaminated. Pentecostals may mistakenly believe the Kingdom of God could be coextensive with a particular earthly kingdom, or we may embrace socioeconomic materialism through the prosperity gospel. We may lazily accept either a social gospel that cares not for spiritual transformation or an otherworldly fundamentalism that cares not for the poor and the marginalized instead of seeing that there is a better way. Yet at our best, we believe that God is, indeed, redeeming the world through God's redemptive rule, and it is our role to participate in God's Kingdom. The Kingdom is both political and this-worldly and spiritual and otherworldly. We live in the now-and-not-yet of our King's redemption and remaking of the world, and we partner with the King to see the Kingdom come in all of its incredible and awe-inspiring fullness.

²⁹ Vinson Synon, "Memphis 1994: Miracle and Mandate," History, Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America, https://pccna.org/about_history.aspx.

Though there are significant areas to criticize in Smith's account of the Pentecostal ethos, his contribution is greatly important for Pentecostals to consider as the key aspects of our way of life. After all, these elements of the Pentecostal ethos—radical openness to God, an “enchanted” view of reality, the sacredness of the material and the spiritual worlds, the centrality of story, and an eschatological view toward mission and justice—are really just values and attitudes related to God's Kingdom coming to earth. Our way of life is all about the Kingdom of God. Pentecostals are people of the Kingdom inaugurated with the coming of Christ, definitively established by his death and resurrection, empowered by his Holy Spirit, and anticipating his return.

A Biblical Rationale for Ethnic Inclusiveness

John Telman, D.Min.¹

ABSTRACT: Numerous references in Scripture regarding Israel as a people chosen by God may appear to some as a tacit endorsement of exclusiveness. A survey of both Old and New Testaments provide clear and compelling evidence of a Creator who is inclusive regardless of ethnicity. This article seeks to demonstrate that, while God has a unique relationship with Israel, this in no way omits the Gentile from his salvific plan.

Introduction

Although the Old Testament is primarily focused on Israel as the unique creation of God with the adjoining covenants between God and Israel, Gentile inclusion in the economy of God is not to be missed. Walter Kaiser wrote prolifically concerning the “Promise-Plan of God.” His teaching is drawn from but not limited to the Princeton Stone Lectures by Willis J. Beecher in 1904. Kaiser wrote,

my definition of the promise-plan would be as follows: The promise-plan is God's word of declaration, beginning with Eve and continuing on through history, especially in the patriarchs and the Davidic line, that God would continually be in his person and do in his deeds and works (in and through Israel, and later the church) his redemptive plan as his means of keeping that promised word alive for Israel, and thereby for all who subsequently believed. All in that promised seed were called to act as a light for all the nations so that all the families of the earth might come to faith and to new life in the Messiah.²

One cannot miss the addition of *all* in his definition.

The paper will show that *all* is an undeniable thread throughout the Old and New Testaments. Select passages demonstrate that although Israel is uniquely called God's people, no people groups were excluded from God's desire to redeem humanity.

Exodus

The Passover is for all those that accept the covenant; the sojourner is to be treated the same as the native-born so long as they accept the covenant (note especially v. 48), also, that a great mixture of people went out of Egypt with Israel (v. 38). In the Pentateuch, Israel is never defined by the descent of birth; it is always defined by acceptance of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3), which

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² Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Promised-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 19.

is for all nations, or by adherence to the covenant of Moses. Anyone could become an Israelite according to the Pentateuch.

“A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds” (Exodus 12:38 ESV). The Hebrew word translated “mixed multitude” is *ereb* (עֵרֵב). This indicates that there were people other than Israelites that were sent away by the Egyptians. There were five laws given for participation in the Passover including a prohibition against a foreigner eating it.³ This was not discrimination against anyone based on ethnicity since v.49 prohibited exclusion on any basis other than faith.

Leviticus

Israel was not only taught how to live with each other but was also taught how to treat those of other ethnicities (cf. Lev 19:33-34). God made it explicit to Israel regarding other ethnicities but does this lead to salvific consideration? We shall see that it does. In an atmosphere of the divisiveness of ethnicities, Israel was instructed how to treat others. They were to love others (Deut. 10:19), not oppress them (Exodus 22:20), support them (Lev 19:10) and include them in festival celebrations (Deut. 16:11; 26:11). Israel was not to patronize the existence of the *foreigner*; rather, it was to be inclusive including their times of worship which leads us to believe that God did not deny anyone based on ethnicity. This chapter opens with idolatry expressly forbidden. We will see that scripture makes prohibition based solely on the influence of foreign gods not simply ethnicity.

Deuteronomy

Canaanites were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. One might conclude from these passages that God did not include Canaanites in a redemption plan, especially with the zenith found in Joshua 10:40.

God told Abraham, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years . . . And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites [one of the Canaanite clans] is not yet complete” (Gen. 15. 13, 16). This is a statement of the patience of God since Canaanites were a terribly wicked people. Even so, there is evidence that individuals escaped the judgement. Rahab who is listed in the genealogies of Matthew 1 and is included in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11, was a Canaanite. The utter destruction of the Canaanites was due to their cultural practices. “By the time of their destruction, Canaanite culture was, in fact, debauched and

³ Enns makes this argument and also states, “We have here an attractive mixture of exclusivism and, ultimately, universalism. This is another hint that God’s purpose for bringing the Israelites out of Egypt is for a broader purpose.” Peter E Enns, *Exodus* (The NIV Application Commentary), (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000) 251.

cruel, embracing such practices as ritual prostitution and even child sacrifice.”⁴ Ethnicity was not the cause of the judgement meted out.

The laws (instructions) of Deuteronomy appear to be divisive and selective but the context arises out of the prohibition to worship other gods (ie., Deut 7:3-4). Wright explains,

This prohibition was not on ethnic grounds alone; mixed marriages were not in themselves out of bounds for Israelites. Moses himself had a Cushite wife (Num. 12:1), and a later law in Deuteronomy allowed an Israelite to take a wife from among captives of war (21:10-14). What was ruled out here was the kind of intermarrying that involved the social bonding of families and joint religious rituals (something that the circumstances of 21:12f. clearly did not include). Since the prohibition in verse 3 follows so closely after verse 2b it might also be forbidding intermarriage as an adjunct to the making of treaties, a practice for which Solomon was later condemned (1 Kings 11; cf. Neh. 13:26). Any type of marriage that would involve compromise with idolatry was banned in the critical days of the settlement in the land (v4; cf. the similar motivation in the postexilic resettlement period, when Israel's distinctiveness among the nations was again threatened, Ezra 9-10, Neh. 13:23-27).⁵

Even in the postexilic period, that is recorded in Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13:23-27, marriage that led to idolatry was banned. Nevertheless, Moses was married to a Cushite (Num. 12:1). Concerning Deuteronomy 10:17-19, Wright adds, “The text does not say merely that Yahweh is the only God for Israel (while allowing for the legitimate jurisdiction of other national deities) but affirms that Yahweh is the supreme God over all. Yahweh’s sovereignty is not just covenantal but cosmic.”⁶ Simple partiality would constitute exclusivism, but Yahweh is the only God over all so Israel was charged to love.

It is truly remarkable that Ruth, a Moabite, is held up as a model of faith and fidelity. Waltke and Yu remind us that, “The Mosaic law forbade a Moabite male and his sons even to the tenth generation (i.e., forever) to ‘enter the assembly of the LORD’ (Deut. 23:3-4). Ruth’s offspring are not descended from a Moabite male. The Law did not forbid all exogamous marriages. Scripture commends foreign wives who were loyal to their Israelite husbands (e.g., Tamar [Gen. 38:13-19]: Rahab [Josh. 2:1; cf. Matt. 1:5]: Ruth 3:1-9; 4:12: Bathsheba [2Sam. 11:2-5]).”⁷ This is reassuring

⁴ William Lane Craig. Reasonable Faith with William Lane Craig. *Slaughter of Canaanites*. <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/slaughter-of-the-canaanites/>, 2007, Accessed September 28, 2018.

⁵ Christopher J. H. Wright, *New International Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003) 110.

⁶ Ibid. 148.

⁷ Bruce K. Waltke, and Charles Yu, *The Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 853.

for women, but does this imply that God rejects men of other ethnicities? The answer will become clearer as we proceed.

Ruth

Could Ruth as well as Naomi be types of the church?⁸ Although it is intriguing and emotive, I'm not convinced that the scriptures present and use Ruth and Naomi necessarily as types. My challenge to Waltke and Yu's suggestion would be to ask, "is Mara (מָרָא - *bitterness*) also a type?"

As per above, it is encouraging to note that foreign women are not only invited, they are welcomed as examples of entrance into the kingdom of God through faith. In reference to Matthew's genealogy (Matt. 1:1-17), the four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ are all aliens. Tamar and Rahab are Canaanites, Ruth is a Moabitess, and Bathsheba is married to a Hittite. They are noted to emphasize the universal lineage of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world not just Israel.⁹ Additionally, whoever authored the book of Ruth, went to great lengths to emphasize that she was a Moabite. In the 4 short chapters, Ruth is called a Moabitess 6 times. If being a Moabite was to be avoided, the author failed.

Succinctly, Kaiser states that "The book (Ruth) teaches ... the blessing of God, the reward for all such deeds of kindness (חֶסֶד - *hesed*), the inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessings of the gospel, even in the promised Davidic line, and the works of God in providence." This is easier to support than Waltke and Yu's belief that Ruth and Naomi are types of the church.

Psalms

Nations were not only a creation of God, but they were purposed with worshipping the creator. Psalms 86:9 and Isaiah 45:23-24 seem to be reflected by the apostle Paul when he wrote that "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). Nations (designated as Gentiles in the New Testament) or non-Israelites, not from the stock of Israel, were not hated or despised and were to be treated with almost a sense of equality.

Isaiah

Whether one understands the servant to apply to Jesus as Messiah or to Israel, the servant (cf. Isa 42:1-6; 49:1-6) is faced with a mission that extends beyond the nation of Israel.

The mandate of the servant is first voiced in two large phrases, 'covenant to the people' and 'light to the nations.' The phrases are rich and suggestive, but their

⁸ This is a suggestion of Waltke and Yu. Bruce K. Waltke, and Charles Yu, *The Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 868.

⁹ Ibid. Waltke and Yu show that non-Jewish females were not prohibited from carrying on a pure line that only worships YHWH.

precise intent is not at all clear. The text juxtaposes ‘covenant’ and ‘people’ without any sign or clue about the relation of the words. The phrase is commonly taken to mean that Israel is to live so as to bring others to a defining relationship with Yahweh or, alternatively, to transform social relationship in order to make them neighborly. The poetry seems to entertain the thought that social relationship in the world can be radically reordered, and the servant is to effect that reordering. The second large phrase, ‘light to the nations,’ also offers a general notion of rehabilitation. Whatever may have been the original intent, subsequent Christian reading has found here a sweeping mandate for a worldwide mission for a renovation of the relation the world has to Yahweh and the relation people have to each other.¹⁰

Brueggemann rightly is not focusing on who the Servant is but rather the mission of the Servant. I also do appreciate that even though he postulates on the intent of the Servant his suggestion is not heavy-handed. All too often Old Testament prophecies are misapplied resulting in missing the actual point of the prophecy.

Joel

One may speculate that Joel 2:32 is not universal but simply a statement that all Jews who call on God will be saved, but when we take Acts 2 into account, this would not be logical. It becomes obvious that the passage is not exclusive and limited to Israel both in the context of Joel and the greater message of worldwide salvation.¹¹ It’s vital to also note that the prophecy includes the inclusive word, “all.”

Matthew

Only in Matthew’s gospel are the disciples instructed not to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans, “but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:6). Later, (Matt. 12:18-21), Matthew uses the Servant Song from Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 42:1-4) to proclaim that the Teacher would bring justice and hope to Gentiles. While there is undeniable tension here, Matthew is strategically speaking to his Jewish audience about the ministry of Jesus which was to his people who were lost although they were undoubtedly steeped in Judaism. Nevertheless, the calling to the “house of Israel” was not a rejection of Gentiles.¹²

¹⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 44.

¹¹ David Allan Hubbard, *Joel and Amos: Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009), 77.

¹² D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 150. Carson and Moo make a compelling argument for why the disciples were instructed not to go to the Gentiles. It would appear that the inspiration had a strategic reason.

What maybe a better approach is N. T. Wright's emphasis of Israel's mission to be a blessing to the world. "Matthew clearly understands the plot of his story as a Topical Sequence which presupposes an Initial Sequence and issues in a Final Sequence."¹³ The Initial Sequence, according to Wright is, "Israel is a means of blessing to the world. Of course, Matthew arranged and ordered his material in such a way as to address the church of his day. But the story which he tells only means anything if it has to do with things that actually happened."¹⁴

Wright's premise supports our theme of God's global purposes; salvation is the blessing that is not exclusively Jewish. Israel was to be a blessing, carrying the gospel to the world not simply to the Jewish nation.

Jesus gave numerous invitations including John 7:37. His invitations are highly inclusive. The language that he uses here is very broad. The context of Matthew 11:20-28 would lead us to conclude that the crowds to which Jesus is speaking are largely Jewish. Jesus rebukes three Jewish towns including his own hometown (Capernaum-Matt. 4:13; 9:1) and contrasts their unbelief with that of two pagan, enemy, Gentile cities; Tyre and Sidon. This contrast is not only for argument sake. It implies that belief/unbelief is more than possible for Jew as well as Gentile.

In Matthew 15:21-28, Jesus seemed to be exclusive when, without speaking a word, he ignored a Canaanite woman and, possibly worse, when he referred to her as a dog. One could surmise that he was simply not concerned and did not have compassion toward anyone other than a Jew. The truth is that most likely was testing her faith and all those who witness the encounter.¹⁵

Matthew, a Jew, writing his gospel with an immediate target group of Jews, intentionally used the word "Canaanite." It was a reminder that this woman was one of the Gentile enemies of the Jews and yet Jesus went to where this woman would be grappling with a horrible problem. With desperation, she cried out to Jesus. She recognized who he was by honouring him as "the Son of David."

Jesus knew who this woman was, and her ethnicity did not pose a problem. Even though her ethnicity may have been significant to her and others, it was faith that was more important to Jesus. Incidentally, this was not the only time Jesus spoke to a woman that was not a Jew. John 4 records an encounter Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. Women were marginalized and if they were a Canaanite or a Samaritan their hope of help was slight at best.

The Greek word that was translated "dogs" (v26) can be translated "puppies" *kynarion* (κυνάριον). It could be that this was a term of endearment although Turner states that,

The language describing Gentiles is offensive to modern sensibilities even if the word Jesus uses (κυνάριον, *kynarion*) is pressed as diminutive (BDF 111.3: Moulton and Howard 1920: 139; D. Swanson 1958), implying the affection one

¹³ N. T. Wright. *The New Testament and The People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God* (London, GB: SPCK, 1995), 389.

¹⁴ Ibid. 389-390.

¹⁵ This is the explanation Turner gives, which seems logical. David L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 387.

might have for a house pet, instead of κύων (*kyōn*), which often describes wild scavengers (cf. 7:6; Luke 16:21; Phil. 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:22; Rev. 22:15; Did. 9.5; BDAG 579). The point here is the redemptive-historical priority of Israel (Calvin 1972: 2.169-70; Carson 1984: 355-56). Jews come first in Jesus's ministry, yet he can also be compassionate to Gentiles once the 'children' have been fed. His blunt language reflects his culture, yet his commendation of the woman's faith and his upcoming gentile mission transcend that culture.¹⁶

I agree with Turner here. While some may not see Jesus speaking with such sensitivity, it is in keeping with not only his mission to "set free those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1). It also is in keeping with his admonish, "do not hinder them (children) from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14).

It is true that the first priority of Jesus' ministry was to the Jew but his attention to the plight of Gentiles is not missed as we observe the context. The importance of Israel's place cannot be minimized in our quest to understand this passage. Could it be that "he is requiring her to understand his true mission and lest she treat him as one of the many wandering magicians to whom Gentiles sometimes appealed for exorcisms."¹⁷ One could argue this point since the woman recognized Jesus as Lord (κύριος, *kyrios*) and Son of David. "Her surprising reference to him as "Lord" (e.g., 3:3; 4:7, 10; 7:21-22; 8:2, 6, 8 25; 9:28; 10:24-25; 12:8; 14:28, 30) and 'son of David' (1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42) shows that she has genuine insight into his identity and mission."¹⁸ We must remind ourselves that she is a gentile and not a Jew.

This apparent rejection of Gentiles (also see Matthew 10:5-6) does not weigh in favor of an exclusive calling for the graces of God. God's mercy and his supernatural power were accessed by Jew and Gentile as Matthew chronicles in his gospel.

Notice further the use of the word "all" by Matthew in the Great Commission. First, Jesus has been given *all* authority (28:18). Second, disciples are to be made of *all* nations (28:19). Third, these disciples are to be taught to obey *all* that Jesus commanded (28:20). Fourthly, Jesus will be with his disciples *all* the days until the end of the age (28:20).

The Great Commission is in unity with the message Jesus gave Nicodemus in John 3:14-21 that includes all humans. The Great Commission is important to the current day since it reinforces the need to evangelize beyond homogeneous ethnicities. Matthew, writing primarily to a Jewish community, brings a much-needed emphasis to the inclusion of more than Jews in the Kingdom of God.

¹⁶ Ibid. 388.

¹⁷ Craig S. Keener, *Matthew: The IVP New Testament Commentary Series* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 264.

¹⁸ David L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 387.

The beginning of the book (genealogies that include Gentiles) as well as its conclusion (Matthew 28:19) where Jesus directs mission to “all nations” emphasizes that although the book is Jew directed, it does not exclude the Gentile in any way.

Luke

One could argue that the primary theme of Luke’s gospel is the universality of Christianity. The gospel is dedicated to a Gentile (Luke 1:1-4), Samaritans are positively represented (Luke 9:51-55; 10:30-37; 17:11-19), and the emphasis of Jesus’ ministry to Gentiles (Luke 5:32; 7:22, 34; 14:21; 15:1-2) points to an inclusive God that welcomes all people regardless of ethnicity. Kenner clearly shows that,

Acts, as a whole, develops the announcement of the Gentile mission in Luke 24:47, which is interpreted in the language of Acts 1:8 as a fulfillment of Isaiah’s vision for the Gentiles. But Luke prepares for this theme long before the conclusion of his gospel. Likewise, Jesus’s programmatic mission statement in Luke 4:18-27 includes ministry to the Gentiles: though Isa 61 speaks primarily of the marginalized within Israel, Jesus’s examples are Elijah’s and Elisha’s ministry (fitting Luke’s emphasis on Jesus as prophet greater than Elijah; see discussion on Acts 1:9-11) to a Gentile leper and a possibly Gentile (or at least Diaspora) widow (Luke 4:26-27).¹⁹

Two passages are highlighted here to support the argument that the gospel of Luke is Gentile inclusive and quite possibly could be designated as the Gentile Gospel.

In Luke 7:2-10, the Centurion was said to love Israel, yet he remained a representative of the enemy. He was a Gentile but to Jesus, it was his faith that was noticeable. If Gentiles had no hope of redemption, faith of the same would be of no regard to Jesus. Faith amazed Jesus and the writer to the Hebrews reminds us that it is impossible to please God apart from the exercise of faith (Hebrews 11:6).

According to Edwards, “Faith is found in unexpected quarters – in Gentile centurions, in alien Samaritans (17:18), in desolate widows (18:8). But wherever it is found, it results in the joy of the incarnation. Faith is of course willed for Israel (2:32) but is not the sole possession of Israel. It is equally willed for outsiders, for Gentiles who are far away and do not belong to Israel.”²⁰ This is true, but my argument is that faith must be in YHWH as opposed to any arbitrary faith. Faith that is effectual is the key. Gentile faith, in these cases were exercised in the one true God; the God of Israel.

¹⁹ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1-2:47* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 507.

²⁰ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 212-213.

Jesus' heart for the Gentiles, which we find in the Gospel of Luke, and his high standards for discipleship are combined within Jesus' parable of Luke 14:16-27. God is certainly not prejudice as many humans are.²¹ Was the Jew first invited? Now is the invitation extended to those rejected? Certainly, Jews, Samaritans and other aliens are qualified which this parable indicates.

John

Inclusive language is a conspicuous feature of the gospel of John. It could be a book that is written from a Jewish perspective, nevertheless, it is highly inclusive. After decades of reading, studying and preaching through the gospel of John, I have noticed that the evangelist uses words such as “world,” *kosmos* (κόσμος), seventy-nine occurrences and “whoever,” *pas pisteuo* (πᾶς πιστεύω), 41 occurrences which conveys a message of extensiveness. In addition, the words “believe,” *pisteuo*, (πιστεύω), “loved,” *agapao* (ἀγαπάω) and “truth,” *alethos* (ἀλήθεια), that are popular in the gospel of John carries a breadth that is inclusive.

This statement, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” by John the Baptist expands upon the Old Testament sacrificial lamb (Jn. 1:29). Jesus Christ is not only the lamb sacrificed for the sin of Israel. He is announced as God’s lamb that takes away the world’s sin. Carson states that, “Whatever the antecedents of the expression, the sacrifice envisaged is not restricted in its purpose or effectiveness to the Jewish race. This Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world – that is, of all human beings without distinction, though not, as the Prologue has already made clear (1:11-12), of all without exception. This is God’s provision: Jesus is the Lamb of God.”²² I would challenge Carson not on the accuracy of his statement but whether or not the Gentile population would understand the concept of the scapegoat. The Jewish audience would most certainly understand but would they accept it to include Gentiles? John the Baptist may have ruffled more than the feathers of the religious elite. By his statement, he may have also challenged the common man’s thinking that salvation was only for the Jew.

John 4 highlights the racial segregation and animosity Jews had for Samaritans and how race was not a determining factor for Jesus Christ and his mission. There is little room for an adequate exposition of this chapter thus a short summary is offered here.

Jesus, the Savior of the World, did not avoid another ethnic group, especially one that to a Jew had particular enmity with, but interacted with them to bring life. Carson well states, “Those who read John in the light of antecedent Scripture cannot help but think of the prophecies that anticipate the saving reign of God to the farthest corner of the earth. It was appropriate that the title ‘Savior of the world’ should be applied to Jesus in the context of ministry to Samaritans, representing the first cross-cultural evangelism, undertaken by Jesus himself and issuing in a pattern to be followed by the church: ‘you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and

²¹ Edwards introduces the word “prejudice” to show that man can be given to exclusiveness in contrast to God who does not.

²² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 151.

Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8)."²³ I affirm Carson's statement. Samaritans, half-breeds, people to be avoided by Jews on a racial basis, were not forgotten practically nor prophetically. Jesus carried the theme of love for all people through chapter 3 on into this chapter and as we will see, on through this book and into the book of Acts.

Acts

Since we have observed Luke's obvious attention given to the salvation of Gentiles in his gospel, nothing less could be expected in his second volume that describes the church following in its founder's (Jesus Christ) footsteps. Much time could be spent in the book of Acts, because it provides numerous examples of inclusive ministry and salvation beyond Jews. For the purpose of this article, we will briefly examine nine passages following the prophetic statement of Jesus.

Let us consider Acts 1:8. Why would Jesus give such a prophecy if there was no intent of God to redeem Samaritans, not to mention the remotest part of the earth? Jesus' directive is evidence that God was not limiting his purposes to Israel alone. Next, we look to Acts 2:14-21. While it is widely understood that those witnessing the events of Acts 2 were largely Jews (v5) who were in Jerusalem from the diaspora, God's inclusiveness can be understood by what was said. Languages indicated that that God did not confine his gift to Jews. As Joel 2:28 states, "all flesh" responded to the moving of the Spirit. Genesis 6:12 also uses the same phrase *basar* (בָּשָׂר) that is often used to describe all humanity.²⁴ The intentionality of inclusion cannot be lost in the most unique event of Acts 2.

In Acts 3:25, Peter addressed literal descendants of the prophets and heirs also of the Abrahamic covenant with its promise. The Jews were the first to benefit from the promise to all the families of the earth. It's vital that we recognize that this was not overt favoritism. Horton suggests a *first* but not *only* idea for receiving God's mercy.²⁵ Keener support this view by stating that "All families' applies to Gentiles; thus Israel was only 'first.' Luke find the conversion of the Gentiles through Israel's remnant also in his allusion to the 'servant' passages (probably in Acts 3:13, 26), since the servant would touch all the nations (Isa 49:6-7)."²⁶

Previously, we conjectured that Peter was progressing in his understanding of Gentile inclusion. To Peter, this may have been new but according to God, all peoples, from before the creation of the Jewish nation, were targets for salvation. In Acts 10:28 (and 34-35) Peter most emphatically declares Gentiles to not be excluded from the treasure of salvation. His argument is most compelling nevertheless, Peter is not quite ready to declare inclusion of the Gentiles. Conversely, Paul states "There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil,

²³ Ibid. 232.

²⁴ Stanley M. Horton, *The Book of Acts* (Springfield MO: Gospel Publishing House 1981), 38-39. This idea was proposed by Stanley M. Horton.

²⁵ Ibid., 58.

²⁶ Keener, 1120.

of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek for there is no partiality with God” (Romans 2:9-11).

In Acts 13:46-47 we note how Paul and Barnabas were not merely frustrated at the abstinence of the Jews suggests Horton.²⁷ It was in obedience to Isaiah 49:6 regarding God’s Servant, the Messiah. Resistance to the idea of *Jewish* rejection should carefully be considered. Gaventa agrees, “Rather than categorizing this passage as ‘Jewish rejection’ versus ‘Gentile receptivity,’ readers need to look at the question of divine versus human initiative and how that initiative is received.”²⁸ Both Horton and Gaventa seek to make scripture reading here contextual. God ultimately is the one directing movement to the Gentiles. People may choose to be exclusive, but God’s invitation is not limited by ethnicity according to this passage.

Arguably, there can be no greater portion of Scripture to support the premise that the Gentiles were included in the Kingdom of God than Acts 14, especially verses 1-4 and 26-28. Paul and Barnabas speak in the synagogue of Iconium which included more than Jews (see on 10:1-8; 13:16b-25). It should be noted that even though previously, Paul and Barnabas stated that they would turn to the Gentiles, we find Paul and Barnabas continuing to appeal to Jews in a synagogue.²⁹ This should support the view that turning to the Gentiles was not out of frustration but that they were given a direct calling to invite the Gentiles.

Judaizers forced a council of the new church by their instance that Mosaic Law had to be observed by Gentile Christians (cf. Acts 15:1-21). James, in response is using an argument by comparison that in the future (as well as in his time), both Jew and Gentile would not only experience salvation but would also come to the temple to worship. This results in the judgement that the Gentiles not be troubled unduly with circumcision which resulted in encouragement and rejoicing (15:31).

The fact that Paul made his speech to the Athenians (Acts 17:24-27) is a statement of the purposeful inclusion of Gentiles in the economy of God. Paul assumes the existence of the “unknown God” who made all humanity in his image. Here, a Jew is speaking to Gentiles about the Creator who is inclusive. “With the Jews, who claimed to believe the Scriptures, Paul always based his reasoning on the Old Testament. But with Gentiles like these, he was guided by the Holy Spirit to use a different approach. His reasoning was still based on Scripture, but he started where the people were and led them to the point where he could introduce the gospel.”³⁰ This is of particular interest to our topic in that Horton presents Paul giving the invitation of salvation to Greeks. As Paul is speaking to a Gentile audience, “All people everywhere” (Acts 17:30) is certainly not directed exclusively to Jews. Additionally, some Athenians responded favorably including Dionysius and Damaris which were Gentiles, to which Paul would have rejoiced (Acts 17:34).

²⁷ Horton, 167.

²⁸ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Acts* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 203.

²⁹ This observation was made by Gaventa. *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁰ Horton, 208.

Lastly, in Acts 28:28, Paul explicitly states the inclusion of Gentiles in the redemption of humanity which also points to Paul's calling.³¹ This seems to be the most complete way to conclude Acts. There can be no doubt as to the inclusion of Gentiles in the plan of God for the salvation of humanity.

Romans

Two gospels can be observed in Paul's writings. First, is the gospel of Jesus Christ and second is Paul's gospel of inclusion.³² Hence, we turn to Romans 10:12-13. Previously, we examined Luke's account of Paul speaking to Greeks on Mars Hill (Acts 17). There, Paul invited polytheists to receive the inclusive gospel of Jesus Christ. These were not Jews that he spoke with which is in keeping with Paul's teaching in Romans 10. Both belief and unbelief are universal.

The question that should be addressed here is what does *all* mean? Does *all* include every human that has ever lived, or does it have a qualifier ethnically? Paul gives no apparent limit to his use of the word *pas* (πᾶς). Paul uses the Greek word, *pas*, which is translated, *all* or *every*, more than 400 times in the New Testament. The use of *pas* is highly inclusive. If all have sinned then the same can be concluded regarding Paul's statement of *all* in Romans 10:12. According to Paul, every human is eligible for salvation and ethnicity is not a basis for exclusion.

Paul quotes Joel 2:32 which seems to bring emphasis to the word *all*, *pas* (πᾶς) and the wideness of God's mercy. The message of Paul can be summarized in the universality of humanity's sinfulness and that of God's salvific plan.³³

The word that is translated distinction/difference is *diastole* (διαστολή), which Paul uses in three places (Romans 10:12-13, Romans 3:22 and 1 Corinthians 14:7). In the first two, Paul is making the argument for inclusive salvation but in the latter, Paul uses the word to describe sounds on an instrument. "If I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped" (1 Cor. 14:7)? His teaching is that there would be no benefit if tongues were not followed by interpretation. By using *diastole*, could Paul be emphasizing the universality of sin and salvation: one note or tone? This is not advocating the doctrine of universalism. Rather, we can conclude that Paul asserts that God does not differentiate between Jew or Gentile when it comes to his plan of salvation.

³¹ Horton also states that Paul referenced Isaiah 6:9-10 Ibid. 293.

³² Mark Deymaz, *Disruption: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson), 2017. DeYmaz presents this thought in his book in which he seeks to encourage diverse multi-ethnic churches.

³³ Ben Witherington and Darlene Hyatt. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2004), 263. Witherington and Hyatt present this thought which cannot easily be denied.

Galatians

Several questions arise in response to the ethnic tension with which Paul was dealing. For instance, “How do Gentile and Jew relate to each other within the purposes of God? How should Gentiles relate to the God of Israel? How can Gentiles participate in the blessings God promised through Abraham?”³⁴ At the heart of Paul’s letter to the Galatians (Gal 2:11-21) one of the principal theological issues concerns the trouble brought about by “Jewish trouble-makers” who demanded circumcision. Galatians “reminds us that the formative theology of Christianity was forged not simply and not primarily under attack from without, but as a wrestling of Christian with Christian (including Paul with Peter).”³⁵ Indeed, Dunn’s previous questions raise the seriousness of Peter’s actions. Paul reminds the Galatians that Peter was already condemned for drawing back. Something as simple as not eating with people who were not circumcised was not in character with the early church. Peter’s actions were nothing but discrimination which had no place in the church.

One of the most clearly inclusive passages is found in Galatians chapter three (Gal 3:26-29). Here, Paul argues that salvation through Christ first came to the Jews and that it is directly addressing the Galatians, who were apparently overwhelmingly Gentile in terms of ethnic extraction. Paul is indeed arguing that salvation brought by Christ came to the Jews first, and was for expressed reason of being a light to the Gentiles. Coupling Paul’s ministry and the end of the book of Acts with his teaching in Galatians presents overwhelming support for inclusivity in the Kingdom of God.

Ephesians

To the Ephesian church the apostle Paul described the divide between Jews and Gentiles as a personal barrier or wall that saving faith in Jesus Christ eliminates. Four possible meanings of “the wall” include the following: (1) “Eph. 2:14 may be an allusion to the wall between the outer and inner courts of the Temple in Jerusalem which kept the Gentile visitors away from Jewish worshippers. (2) The ‘wall’ which divided men from God, and which was removed by Jesus Christ, may refer to the curtain in the Temple of Jerusalem which separated the Holy from the Holy of Holies. (3) The wall and the enmity between men, and between man and God (Eph. 2:15 f.), might be identified with a function which the Law had assumed after it was ‘fenced in,’ as the rabbis used to say, by man-made statutes and ordinances (cf. Mark 7:7f.; Gal. 3:23 f.). (4) Finally, by the wall may be meant a barrier between God and man, and between man and man, which consists of angels and other principalities and powers, such as are enumerated in Eph. 1:21.”³⁶ Regardless of which position one takes, we must recognize that Jesus Christ is the one that eliminates a major barrier.

³⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University, 1993), 9.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Vancouver, B.C.: Regent College, 1959), 40-42.

Paul's concern for his people (Israel) is well documented in Romans but also in Ephesians. In Eph 3:8-9 he expresses his unique calling as the apostle to the Gentiles. He shows that salvation is not exclusively for the Jew. "The whole phrase here before us is one of the greatest in holy Scripture. It presents the truths, harmonized into one truth, of the simplicity and the infinity of the Gospel."³⁷ Additionally, "Some ancient MSS, (including the great MS, of the British Museum, and the Sinaitic), and other authorities, omit 'all men.' But the external and internal evidence for retention greatly preponderates, the idea is of the Apostle as 'casting bright light' on the universal scope of the Gospel, in the eyes of 'all men' no longer only of Jews"³⁸ writes Moule. As troubling as it may be to know that "all men" is not included in copies, it cannot lessen the focus which is seen in the first verse of this chapter. Paul definitively gives his mission; to be "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1).

Revelation

Possibly the most compelling statement of salvation reaching beyond the Jew alone is the one found in Rev. 5:9 and 7:9. The purchase of all people—regardless of ethnicity—is explicit in the song sung to Jesus Christ. Other portions of Scripture may be looked upon as implicit, but this passage is explicit about the inclusion of all people regardless of ethnicity.

Apocalyptic literature is controversial as interpretations are many and varied. Regardless whether one takes Revelation literally or figuratively, this passage is meant to show the undeniable inclusivity of those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. "Every kindred (tribe - phyle - φυλή), and tongue (language - glossa - γλῶσσα), and people (larger people group – laos - λαός) and nation (multitude of people – ethnos - ἔθνος).

The Revelator was making a definitive statement as to who will be saved. No less than people from every ethnicity are undoubtedly included. To the initial recipients of his letter, which were in Asia (1:4) it had to be clear that God was inclusive with his purposes and plans to redeem Gentiles.

John Calvin made the following observation regarding the far-reaching plan of salvation. He also notes that sadly, the inclusiveness of God has been largely rebuffed.

God had promised Christ, not to one person or to another, but to the whole seed of Abraham. If the Jews were deprived, for the most part, of the joy that was offered to them, it arose from their unbelief; just as, at the present day, God invites all indiscriminately to salvation through the Gospel, but the ingratitude of the world is the reason why this grace, which is equally offered to all, is enjoyed by few.³⁹

³⁷ H. C. G. Moule, *Commentary on Ephesians* (Waikato, NZ: Titus, 2013), 91.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, vol. 1, trans.* William Pringle (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 115–16.

In this paper, select passages were considered to demonstrate that no people groups were excluded from God's desire to redeem humanity. The word *all* has been a thread that is used beyond identifying a unique people. Yes, Israel was chosen but scripture is clear why it was chosen. Israel was to bid the *world* to turn in repentance to God.

There are passages of scripture that at first glance may give the impression that only some are blessed with the salvific plan of God but after a clear consideration of context said passages actually support the inclusive plan of God to redeem all of humanity.

Let My People Go: Spirit-led Leadership and the Dominant Culture

Guillermo Puppo, M.A.¹

ABSTRACT: The story of the Israelites, an emerging nation in a world dominated by the Egyptian culture, shows how the dominant culture reacts to the emergence of leaders from a different culture. In three cases, the response of Pharaohs was negative. Only one Pharaoh aligned with God's plan and saved both peoples. The present study used socio-rhetorical analysis and sociological studies to extract biblical principles that apply to today's tension between the dominant culture and the emergence of leaders from outside.

Introduction

The twenty-first century world is more globalized than ever before. The convergence of cultures finds digital, geographical, and philosophical channels to create new cultural expressions that impact all areas of life. This unprecedented phenomenon does not exclude spirituality. The fastest-growing sector of Christianity, Pentecostalism is at the center of the multigenerational, multiethnic, and multi-cultural development. As Pentecostalism arguably found its highest expression within the cultural context of twentieth-century American modernism,² how can Spirit-filled leaders become Spirit-led leaders for a globalized world? Moreover, how can Spirit-led leaders pass the baton to an emerging generation of leaders whose culture is radically different from theirs? A socio-rhetorical and sociological analysis of the stories of the four Pharaohs who dealt with the emergence of a culturally different leadership group—the Israelites—provides helpful information about both successful and unsuccessful strategies to navigate the tension between the force of a leader's culture and the move of God's Spirit towards the next generation. Provided that it was God who called each of the emergent leaders, the Pharaohs' responses represent the dominant culture leader's response to God's plans. The conclusion of each case offers a brief principle that summarizes the content of the section.

A Sociological View of Culture

According to Northouse,³ culture is the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions common to a group of people. Therefore, culture can group people around elements such as geographical territory, generational identity, political affiliation, philosophical perspectives,

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² Joseph, Thomas. "Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders." *Fides Et Historia* 36, no. 1 (Winter, 2004): 168-170.

³ Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2013), 384.

race, language, religion, and many others.⁴ Therefore, culture is informed by the worldviews held by those within that culture and the cultural artifacts that convey meaning.⁵ These views are accepted by in-group members even when they benefit only relatively, due to the different levels of privilege within the group. Those in positions of leadership or authority within a group may enjoy the group system's advantages more than others in less significant roles. In this article, it will be necessary to define some of the terms related to culture. 'Dominant culture' refers to the majority group whose strength enables the imposition of its values, norms, and beliefs onto the minority groups. 'Non-dominant' culture refers to the minority cultural groups who live under the influence of the dominant culture. The term 'extra-cultural' refers to a group that is external to the dominant culture and inherently different. The term 'multi-cultural' refers to the acceptance of coexisting cultures within a region or organization without meaningful cultural exchange or transformation. The term 'cross-cultural' refers to the interaction among cultures that has a transformative effect on both of them, bringing honor and creating a synergy that benefits everyone involved while highlighting cultural identity.

A Biblical View of Culture

In the second letter to the Corinthians, chapter five,⁶ Paul explains that from the decisive moment of the cross, when humanity's situation was forever changed, there are two ways of knowing. On the one hand, there is the old way of knowing, knowing according to the flesh, without reference to God and his purposes, a way of knowing in which "one's estimates of others are based on purely human and especially self-regarding consideration."⁷ In terms of cultural studies, this is the "culture-led" monocultural way of knowing and thinking of other cultures based on one's own culture. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to regard other cultures as inferior (in any way) to one's own. When the approach to multi-cultural dynamics is based upon the ethnocentric assumption that one's culture is better (in any way) than others, the epistemological process is the "knowing according to the flesh."

Through Christ's death and resurrection, nonetheless, there is a new way of knowing, the "Spirit-led" cross-cultural way, a "transvaluation of values, and in particular, the turning upside down of the secular canons of wisdom and power."⁸ In other words. The epistemology of the Spirit replaces the epistemology of the flesh. In terms of cross-cultural dynamics, the culture-led, worldly notions of ethnic or racial intelligence and superiority become worthless, and the Spirit-led cross-

⁴ Guillermo Puppo, "Cross-Cultural Competence in Higher Education Faculty and Staff." *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, Vol. 12 no. 1 (2019): 105-137.

⁵ Luis Urrieta, "The Social Studies of Domination: Cultural Hegemony and Ignorant Activism." *The Social Studies* 96, no 5 (2005): 189–92.

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced in this article are in the New International Version.

⁷ Hulitt Gloer, "Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Paul's Genius in Applying the Gospel in a Multi-Cultural World: 2 Corinthians 5:14–21." *Review & Expositor* 104 no 3 (2007): 589–601.

⁸ Ibid.

cultural intelligence that comes from Christ's mind (2 Co. 2:16) provides the framework through which to regard people from other cultures. For Paul, the past was as dead to him as Christ on His cross; all its ideas, all its hopes, all its ambitions were dead in Christ; he was another man in another universe.⁹ For today's Christians, their past conceptions of race, culture, and ethnicity must die on the cross to enter Paul's "universe." The new way of living and knowing is the result of God's reconciling humanity to Himself through Christ. In verses eighteen and nineteen, Paul established that reconciliation includes three elements: (a) all this is from God, (b) who through Christ reconciled us to himself, (c) and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. First, God, rather than imposing conditions on humanity, sent His Son to initiate reconciliation and fulfill the requirements for it to become a reality. Spirit-led cross-cultural leadership, therefore, must eliminate any requirements imposed by the dominant culture over the other. Second, in Christ (rather than setting unrealistic standards for humans), God brought Himself to the point where humanity could engage through faith. Spirit-led cross-cultural leadership, therefore, must remove unrealistic ethnocentric, cultural, or linguistic expectations by the dominant culture over the other. Third, until sin is removed, it stands as a barrier to genuine reconciliation. In other words, Spirit-led cross-cultural leadership is not possible where pride (sin) is present. Thus, Spirit-led cross-cultural leadership must begin with the premise that all cultures are alienated, alienating, and equal in Christ. Anything less than that is culture-led, prideful, and, therefore, sinful.¹⁰

Socio-Rhetorical Analysis

Robbins proposed the socio-rhetorical analysis method as an approach to exegete biblical texts.¹¹ The method includes five textures: inner-texture, intertexture, ideological, social-historical, and sacred. The current study utilized sacred-text analysis to identify God's position regarding extra-cultural emergent leadership. The sacred-text analysis includes eight areas and are as follows:

- **Deity:** God may be directly or indirectly mentioned in a story; either way, these texts allude to God's nature and character.¹²
- **Holy Person:** The text may feature one or more persons who have an intimate connection to God.¹³
- **Spirit Being:** Texts also mention the existence of beings who, either good or evil, have no corporeal body but possess spiritual nature.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Vernon Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation*. Valley Forge, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1996.

¹² Ibid., 120.

¹³ Ibid., 121.

¹⁴ Ibid., 123.

- **Divine History:** Sacred texts imply divine powers have a direct influence on the course of history and events.¹⁵
- **Holy Person:** The text may feature one or more persons who have an intimate connection to God.¹⁶
- **Human Redemption:** Sacred texts also relate to the transmission of benefits from the divine to the human.¹⁷
- **Human Commitment:** The response to God and other holy persons determines the level of human commitment.¹⁸
- **Religious Community:** Sacred texts address the creation and formation of religious communities.¹⁹
- **Ethics:** Ethics encompass the way humans behave in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances according to their commitment to God.²⁰

God's Call on Emergent Leaders

God calls emerging leaders when He wants to bring about change in a nation, an organization, or a church. Furthermore, God may call the most unlikely person to succeed a given leader.

Abraham's Calling

In Genesis 12:1-3, God called Abram to leave his land. If he obeyed, there were promises of greatness, legacy, and blessings, along with a mission to bless others. Although Abram did not understand the magnitude of what was ahead of him, he decided to believe God and risk everything to follow Him. There was a high price to pay, namely, to leave everything behind, but Scripture shows Abram did not hesitate to embrace God's call for him and his family. The Sacred-text analysis is as follows:

- **Deity:** God is calling the emergent leader to rise and follow His instructions.
- **Spirit Being:** There are no Spirit beings in the pericope.
- **Holy Person:** The emergent leader came to know God intimately.
- **Divine Story:** God's call to Abram is the foundation for the Israelite nation.
- **Human Redemption:** Through Abraham, peoples, and nations would come to be blessed by God

¹⁵ Ibid., 123.

¹⁶ Ibid., 121.

¹⁷ Ibid., 125.

¹⁸ Ibid., 126.

¹⁹ Ibid., 127.

²⁰ Ibid., 129.

- **Human Commitment:** The emergent leader decided to follow God's directions.
- **Religious Community:** The emergent leader's family became the nest for the birth of a new religious community.
- **Ethics:** The obedience of the emergent leader is a positive example of ethics.

Joseph's Calling

The book of Genesis, chapters 37-45, tells the story of how God called, tested, and prospered Joseph. In Genesis 37:5-11, Joseph had two dreams where he saw himself as the head of his father's clan. The alleged meaning of these dreams was extraordinary for two reasons. First, sons were not to rule over their parents. In ancient cultures, the elders remained at the highest honor and authority until they were unfit to lead the family clan. Second, he was the youngest brother and, as such, his chances to rule over his siblings were unlikely. Nonetheless, Joseph's father, Jacob, who had previous experience with God-sent dreams, took his son's dreams into serious consideration. Joseph did not have to do anything at this point, only to believe. Here is the present Sacred-text Analysis:

- **Deity:** The story affirms that God was with the emergent leader every step of the way.
- **Spirit Being:** There are no spirit-beings in the pericope.
- **Holy Person:** Although there is a direct connection between Joseph's dreams and his faith, the emergent leader's behavior was pious and godly.
- **Divine Story:** In the context of the overall story, the dreams of the emergent leader represented the beginning of God's story in his life.
- **Human Redemption:** The emergent leader received God's favor even in the hardest times of his life. In turn, God's favor benefited his family and an entire nation.
- **Human Commitment:** The emergent leader believed his dreams and embraced them dearly as he experienced severe hardship.
- **Religious Community:** Although the emergent leader did not create a new community, he produced a new environment and operating platform for his community
- **Ethics:** The emerging leader displayed endurance and steadfastness through the most challenging times of his life

Moses' Calling

Exodus 2 tells Moses' birth and upbringing, a Hebrew child who survived the ethnocide (ethnic genocide) of the Egyptian king. By the end of the chapter, Moses escaped the desert after murdering a man and fleeing from Egypt. He broke the law and escaped from the authorities, leaving his Egyptian life behind to avoid prison. For all it matters, Moses was a criminal on the run when God called him into ministry leadership. He could run from the earthly authorities, but he could not run from the call of God. In Exodus 3, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and

called him to go back to Egypt, stand up against its government's oppressive regime, and liberate the Israelites. The Sacred-text analysis for this passage looks like this:

- **Deity:** God appeared directly to the emergent leader and gave clear directions about the mission ahead.
- **Spirit Being:** Although there are no Spiritual beings in the pericope, the burning bush acquired a supernatural dimension as the fire did not consume it.
- **Holy Person:** Verses 5-6 describe how an encounter with God transformed the emergent leader.
- **Divine Story:** As with the other emergent leaders, God initiates a new chapter in the lives of the emergent leader and the people they lead.
- **Human Redemption:** Arguably, the first benefit the emergent leader received from God was the forgiveness of his crime. Second, the entire nation of Israel would benefit from the interaction between God and the emergent leader.
- **Human Commitment:** After struggling with his sense of unworthiness, the emergent leader fully committed to God's plan.
- **Religious Community:** Ethnically speaking, the emergent leader did not form a new religious community. He formed, however, a new spiritual community that was blessed with freedom from slavery and freedom of religion.
- **Ethics:** The posture of the emergent leader before God, the Egyptian authorities, and the Hebrew people is exemplary in humility and godliness.

Pharaohs and the People of God

The following analysis does not show a chronological pattern. Instead, it presents the attitudes of dominant-culture leaders towards extra-cultural emerging leaders in a spectrum that covers from the most hostile to the most favorable behaviors. In the four examples, Pharaohs were the dominant culture in power, and the Israelites were the extra-cultural emerging leadership group. Each Pharaoh adopted a different posture towards the emergence of the extra-cultural leader. Each example includes a brief Sacred-text analysis and a sociological analysis of how cultures react to outside influences that emerge in their midst.

First Case: Pharaoh Killed the Hebrew Children

The most hostile attitude of a Pharaoh towards the people of Israel is that of the one who tried to kill all Hebrew children. In Exodus 1:8-12, Pharaoh observed Israel's rapid growth, an external ethnic and cultural group, as a threat to Egypt's economy, government, and way of life. He responded to the apparent conflict by oppressing the Israelites, confining them to a geographical region, and confining them as slave-workers. Surprisingly, rather than having a decreasing affect on the emerging group, Pharaoh's strategy seemed to work against his plans. The Israelites grew even more numerous, and so did the Egyptians' apprehension towards them. Exodus 1:16-22 shows

Pharaoh's new strategy: kill the Hebrew baby boys to stop the spread of the race. He ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill every newborn boy but let the girls live. The midwives understood that, in this case, the law of the land was against the law of God, and they decided to obey God and disobey the King.

When summoned by Pharaoh, the midwives gave a reasonable explanation, but unlikely to be true. The cultural differences played in their favor but, more importantly, God helped them and prospered them because they feared Him and risked their lives to obey Him rather than Pharaoh. In a desperate reaction to his failing plan, Pharaoh authorized and ordered every Egyptian citizen to kill all Hebrew male babies that were found. In Exodus 2, Moses' mother gave him birth, hid him, and eventually sent him down the river to save his life. Paradoxically, the daughter of Pharaoh, the very man who ordered to kill the Hebrew babies, saw the baby and rescued him. His older sister, who witnessed the scene, pointed out to Pharaoh's daughter that the baby was of Hebrew descent and asked her if she would like to find a Hebrew woman to nurse him, to which Pharaoh's daughter agreed. The young girl went and brought the baby's mother, who became his nurse. Perhaps, Pharaoh's daughter thought that saving one child would not make much of a difference in her father's plans. Little did she know the child was God's emergent leader to defy Pharaoh's oppressive regime. We turn our attention now to the following Sacred-text analysis:

- **Deity:** There are two mentions of God in the pericope. One refers to the fear of God the midwives felt as they understood that human law was violating God's moral law. The second refers to God protecting and prospering the midwives for risking their lives to obey Him, even as they likely distorted the truth against earthly authorities to protect the Hebrew babies.
- **Spirit Being:** There are no spirit-beings in the pericope.
- **Holy Person:** No character in this pericope shows a significant transformation from a spiritual or supernatural experience.
- **Divine Story:** Although God does not appear in the events of Moses' rescue, God's providence is evident in the chain of events, radically altering the direction of the story.
- **Human Redemption:** The first beneficiaries of God's redemption were the midwives. The second was Moses, who survived Pharaoh's ethnocide. It is possible to say that his loving mother and family benefited directly from God's redemptive intervention.
- **Human Commitment:** The midwives' fear of God displays a high level of commitment to God and His will, even when it meant to disobey man's law.
- **Religious Community:** A new community did not form, but the existing Hebrew community was strengthened by God's providence.
- **Ethics:** The main ethical element in the pericope is the potential tension between human legality and godly morality.

Theme 1: The Elimination of Emergent Cultures

Ethnocide, or cultural genocide, is the strategic destruction of the values, practices, or even the lives, of an extra-cultural group considered to be a threat to the dominant culture's existence or welfare.²¹ If there is a threat, there is an enemy to destroy. If the dominant culture perceives the new emergent culture as trying to destroy their traditions, members of the dominant culture may think of itself as having the civic duty to undermine or destroy the foundations of the emergent culture. Pharaoh perceived the Israelites as a threat to Egypt's social and economic system and, as a king, considered his responsibility to eradicate the problem. Today's leaders from the dominant culture may perceive the rise of extra-cultural emergent leaders as a threat to the existing leadership model and, therefore, feel the need to stop the movement at any cost. Ethnocide is not about making peace or negotiating a place for the new culture; it is about withering the members of the incoming group.

Albeit short of physical genocide, the destruction of the basis for identity and culture seems to be a viable tactic for countering the perceived invasion.²² Thus, cultural genocide does not stop at cultural domination. It purposefully targets extra-cultural movements until they have no power to influence the course of the lives of the members of the dominant culture.²³ Pharaoh aimed to accomplish this by eliminating the male babies and debilitating the ethnic strength of the Israelites. Today's culture-led leaders may fall into this pattern by either directly opposing the emergence of extra-cultural leaders or by shortening the resources available to them to the point of cultural extinction.

The process of cultural ethnocide, however, may not always be conscious in the moral sense. Culture draws imaginary boundaries in people's minds, and they become collectively acceptable, even inherently reasonable. External elements with the appearance of contradicting the collective thoughts seem disruptive to the group coherence and different from what is known as good, moral, and cohesive. Humans want to feel good about themselves. At a basic level, if one's group lifestyle is perceived to be right, then, lifestyles which contradict or challenge the group's lifestyle is viewed be inherently wrong. Therefore, group members tend to discard dubious extra cultural trends, which, in turn, creates cultural ignorance. Ignorance becomes the soil for imaginary prejudices against other cultures, making dominant culture members treat extra-cultural groups with contempt and event to reach the extreme of murderous aggression.²⁴

Such was the case for Pharaoh in his dealings with Israel. He saw the Israelites as an inferior class and, therefore, the emergence of the group threatened the "higher" way of life of the Egyptians. Egyptians already despised the Israelites but, with the rapid demographic growth, they

²¹ Lawrence Davidson, *Cultural Genocide* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press), 2012.

²² Ibid., 19.

²³ Ibid., 1.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

view them all the more negatively. Culture-led leaders may feel that extra-cultural emergent leaders from a social sector perceived to be lowly will destroy the sophisticated structures and systems built by the dominant culture through many generations. Such an imminent threat can fuel the "us versus them" perception, increasing the animosity towards the extra cultural emergent group.

The genetically rooted dispositions towards group cohesion are three in number: (a) a pursuit of status and power which creates a positive bias towards those with shared interests and views; (b) in-group solidarity in the face of external sources of danger; (c) the need for friendships, love, and collaboration with other in-group members.²⁵ Environmental elements such as climate, geographical region, religious experiences, and successes and failures direct cultures to materialize these three dispositions in different ways, and creating symbols, traditions, and representations of their desirable lifestyle. Lawrence Davidson calls these representations "emotives," as they create emotional attachments and reinforce the love of one's group, be it ethnic, religious, national, or generational.²⁶ These emotives also promote the contempt and hatred to develop towards those who threaten one's values, potentially resulting in the severe pathologies embedded in the sacred ideologies of nationhood.²⁷

The sense of love for one's group feeds the animosity against those groups that represent the opposite position, making in-group members subject to manipulation by those controlling the information to favor their interests. Pharaoh was able to weaponize a whole nation as he charged each Egyptian citizen with murdering every Israelite male baby they found. Culture-led leaders can mobilize members of the dominant culture to unite against an extra-cultural emergent leader/group perceived as the enemy of everything they value, even when that perception is based on false, erroneous, or under-informed pretenses. It is important to state that in-group cohesiveness is healthy and necessary for the survival of every species. Community identity is helpful for human development. It is the greedy ambition for domination and the lack of empathy for extra-cultural groups that causes community-identity to devolve into negative feelings towards others, and this directly drives ethnocidal behavior.²⁸

Principle One: Culture-led leaders may perceive extra-cultural emergent leaders as a threat to their way of life and pursue the eradication of the movement on the basis of cultural survival and domination.

Second Case: Pharaoh Deceived Moses

The second most hostile case of a Pharaoh towards the people of Israel is that of he who constantly lied to Moses as he tried to liberate Israel from the oppressive Egyptian regime. As Moses

²⁵ Ibid., 11.

²⁶ Ibid., 12.

²⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁸ Ibid., 17.

confronted him in Exodus 5, Pharaoh decided to increase the oppression of Hebrew workers. As God demonstrated his support to Moses, Pharaoh would listen to him and "play nice" to get out of trouble. However, Pharaoh would never keep his promises. When his power was at risk, he compromised to recuperate the stronger position in negotiations and then ignore Moses again (Ex. 8). Exodus 9-10 shows multiple occasions in which Pharaoh repeats the deceiving behavior, making more false promises. In the best cases, he would only partially fulfill his promise, like when he allowed Israelites to go without their families, or their livestock, or to stay within Egyptian territory. Pharaoh did not understand that he was not fighting against Moses but God. The power of God became so strong against Pharaoh that it cost him the lives of all Egyptian firstborns (Ex. 12). Broken by defeat, Pharaoh allowed Israel to go, but only to be pridefully hardened one last time and chase them down. This last time, however, he lost everything (Ex. 14). This Sacred-text analysis looks something like the following:

- **Deity:** The pericope shows God as the author of all plagues caused by Moses and the director of the Egyptian massacre. In the end, God's miracle rid Israel of their enemy.
- **Spirit Being:** The angel of God came to execute God's command to kill all Egyptian firstborn. This figure is a powerful one, expressing God's anger against injustice and pride.
- **Holy Person:** Moses, the emergent leader, became the representative of God on earth. He dedicated his life to obey God's instructions.
- **Divine Story:** God entirely orchestrated the story of Israel's liberation. Without his miracles, the story could not have been possible.
- **Human Redemption:** The exodus led by Moses immensely blessed the nation of Israel.
- **Human Commitment:** Moses and Aaron, and then all the Israelites, dedicated their lives to the Lord due to his powerful intervention.
- **Religious Community:** A new religious community of emergent leaders and believers began, alas, free to live and worship their God.
- **Ethics:** Pharaoh's scheme, the dominant-culture leader, may have seemed to pay off for a short while. Nevertheless, deceiving the emergent leader did not buy him much time.

Theme 2: The Ethics of Cultural Imperialism

Urrieta pointed out how cultural imperialism goes beyond the traditional concept of ethnic dynamics.²⁹ It is a worldview that promotes a system of privileges that generates more privileges for specific socio-cultural groups who embrace it as a universal truth and have the power to perpetuate it and impose it on the emerging culture. Therefore, cultural imperialism imposes the values of the politically or economically dominant culture onto a non-dominant or emergent culture. Even though the two cultures may share certain elements, their traditions, values, moral norms, and shared experiences are different.

²⁹ Urrieta, 189–92.

The dominant culture may feel that the emerging culture threatens its lifestyle, and the best thing for both is to maintain a certain distance. The emergent group must be close enough to serve the dominant culture, but far enough away to preserve the status quo. Therefore, the dominant culture keeps this distance by forcefully imposing the social and legal rules that allow the emergent culture to exist but only as an inferior class.³⁰ This is accomplished through regulations which place the emergent culture in a disadvantage. Such regulations may include unjust working conditions, unequal distribution of resources, and the elimination of language and cultural elements perceived as sources of strength.³¹

In the case of Pharaoh, he perceived the growth and emergence of the Israelites as a threat to his leadership. Rather than identifying opportunities to partner and strengthen the organization, culture-led leaders view the emergent leader/group as the enemy of the current governmental system. Pharaoh developed a paradigm in which the emergent group culture and behavior endangered life as known by the Egyptians. He proposed the oppression of the group as the solution to their problem. Culture-led leaders influence the organizational climate with their views and then implement culture-led oppressive strategies accordingly. Like the Pharaoh, they create unjust, unequal cultural and operating conditions through which the emerging leader/group stays under their thumb.

The concept of *Pax Romana* is an excellent example of cultural imperialism.³² In Rome, there was peace after the Roman army conquered the territory, and Roman norms were established and followed by the dominated culture. In cultural imperialism, peace and unity exist as the result of subjugating minorities into the dominant cultural system and allocating resources on the hands of the dominant culture, leaving minorities and emergent groups with no choice but to adapt to them. In this system, those who adapt successfully become the "poster-child" of cultural imperialism, while those who do not are considered to lack either the capacity or the willingness to seize the opportunities generously presented by the dominant culture. Neither case is a faithful expression of the emergence of the new cultural group. Pharaoh viewed Moses' request as rebellious and the hope of the Israelites to have time to worship as an alienating attitude towards the Egyptian gods. Culture-led leaders consider the ideas from the emergent leader/group as questioning, defying, or divisive. Therefore, they may not enjoy the economic and logistical resources that empower such an attitude.

The basis for cultural domination is twofold. On the one hand, there is an honest belief that the way of life of the dominant culture is superior to that of the minorities. On the other hand, there is a convenient fact that domination benefits the dominant culture's economic and social systems. Therefore, the fewer symbols and traditions of the minority culture, the better.³³ The synergy created by these two elements fuels a sense of "groupism" (patriotism, communism, liberalism)

³⁰ Theresa Weynand Tobin, "Cultural Imperialism," *Encyclopædia Britannica Inc.*, 2019.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

that may influence their epistemologies and distort reality in dangerous ways. For the dominant culture members, the distorted reality becomes a regulator of beliefs and morality, leading to questionable behaviors and attitudes that become acceptable as noble efforts to preserve their higher way of life.³⁴ Therefore, by the time imperialist cultural groups encourage all members of the organization or society to participate equally, the process of debilitating, cheating and subjugating the cultural strength of the emerging group positioned them for the proverbial "Whoever is not with me is against me" (Lk 11:23), preparing the soil for either cultural surrender or rebellion, not for negotiation or integration.³⁵

In the case of Pharaoh, preserving the lifestyle of the Egyptians from the "Israelite invasion" justified the use of lying, deceiving, and cheating. After all, it was the Israelites who were rebelling against their rulers and attacking them through plagues and curses. Culture-led leaders are willing to concede power or privileges when they cannot contain the force of the emergent leader/group. The concession did not come from a change of beliefs but a lack of options. As soon as options become available again, the culture-led leader will break the promises and agreements accorded during their disadvantaged position. Like Pharaoh, they do not see this behavior as immoral because it aims to protect their status quo and the continuity of their leadership and lifestyle of their constituency.

Principle Two: Culture-led leaders may perceive extra cultural emergent leaders as the enemy of their notion of goodness, developing a distorted sense of morality that justifies the use of unethical, deceiving, and dishonest practices to preserve their place of privilege.

Third Case: Pharaoh Expelled Abraham from Egypt

The third attitude of a Pharaoh towards Israel shows a combination of favor and hostility. In Genesis 12, God called Abraham, inviting him to obey His will and receive His promises. Abraham responded positively to God's call and left his homeland to venture out. In verses six and seven, Abraham arrived at what God called the "Promised Land." For the first time, God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants. After that, Abraham continued his journey. As the economy worsened, Abraham and his family decided to migrate to Egypt.

In contrast with previous passages, the pericope does not include God's input in this decision. Neither did the pericope include God in Abraham's plan to tell Pharaoh only half of the truth about his connection to Sarah. They were siblings indeed but, more importantly, they were husband and wife. Abraham's plan to save both of their lives seemed to work; he received the favor of Pharaoh through generous gifts in livestock while Sarah joined Pharaoh's palace. God is back in the scene when He begins to curse Pharaoh's family due to his relationship with Abraham's wife.

³⁴ James Leming, Lucien Ellington, and Kathleen Porter, "Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong?" *The Thomas B. Fordham Institute*. (August 2003). <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/where-did-social-studies-go-wrong>

³⁵ Urrieta, 191.

Interestingly, the pericope does not mention any reprimand from God to Abraham about his lying. Eventually, Pharaoh figured out the truth, summoned Abraham, reprimanded him for his lies, and deported him from Egyptian territory. God was merciful with Abraham; Pharaoh was not. When Pharaoh realized that he could not have Sarah, he lost all interest in Abraham's welfare. It appears as though the only reason Pharaoh favored Abraham was self-interest. He thought that by blessings Sarah's "brother" he would gain favor with him and keep her in his harem. We shall now consider the Sacred-text analysis:

- **Deity:** The presence of God in the pericope is as significant as His absence and silence. For example, God called Abraham into a new journey. He blessed him and promised him land and a lineage. However, God's silence on Abraham's plan to move to Egypt and lie about his wife may represent Abraham's negligence to trust and consult with God. The next appearance is when God punishes Pharaoh for having Abraham's wife, even though he did not know she was married. God's position in the matter is surprising as He seemed to favor Abraham, the cheater, over Pharaoh, the righteous.
- **Spirit Being:** There are no spirit-beings mentioned in the pericope.
- **Holy Person:** The pericope presents the reverse process of a holy person. Abraham, who trusted God in previous occasions, became untrusting.
- **Divine Story:** By punishing Pharaoh for having Sarah, God prevented the dissolution of the marriage He intended to use to unfold His divine plan for Israel.
- **Human Redemption:** Abraham seems to be the recipient of God's mercy as God did not confront or punish him for his lying.
- **Human Commitment:** The pericope does not show any human commitment.
- **Religious Community:** God's actions preserved the religious community.
- **Ethics:** The pericope presents a dilemma from an ethical standpoint. It is not clear why God did not confront Abraham with his sin but confronted Pharaoh with his. Arguably, the lesson in the story is the contrast between God's mercy and Pharaoh's lack thereof. There may be another ethical lesson on Pharaoh's self-serving attitude towards Abraham.

Theme 3: The Self-Serving Nature of Acculturation

“Cultural acculturation” is the process through which the dominant culture influences a foreigner into changing his or her cultural identity.³⁶ Acculturation occurs in the context of daily life, as the two cultures interact in ways that are mutually influencing. Thus, each culture benefits from the contribution of the other. While the level of contribution and benefit may not be equal, each participant adds something to the relationship the other cannot. In general, the result of the

³⁶ Theodore D. Graves, "Psychological Acculturation in a Tri-Ethnic Community." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 23, no. 4 (1967): 337-350.

exchange lacks balance.³⁷ The dominant culture has more traction to pull the non-dominant culture towards its center than the opposite. Therefore, the weaker culture must move away from its cultural locus, abandoning its traditions and values to embrace those of the dominant culture.³⁸ In other words, in acculturation, both groups are influenced (the “melting pot” model), but only one is acculturated (the “pressure cooker” model).³⁹ In the case of Pharaoh and Abraham, Abraham knew he needed to enter Egypt with something to offer and decided his wife Sarah was the best option. Right or wrong, the plan seemed to work.

Emergent leaders/groups are inherently transformational;⁴⁰ they understand their contribution to the organization. On the other hand, culture-led leaders are transactional and perceive the potential contribution as an asset to add to the organization at the lowest possible cost.⁴¹ However, this low cost may include certain transformational elements, like those observed in the dealing between Pharaoh and Abraham. Pharaoh accepted the potential interaction with a different culture as long as the benefit seemed greater than the adjustment. Therefore, the intention of interacting with his Hebrew visitors was merely self-serving. Culture-led, transactional leaders pursue a self-centered agenda that only includes others as part of their selfish plans. Abraham also received a significant economic benefit from the exchange, for which he was willing to sacrifice his values and beliefs. The benefits of abandoning their culture and principles and embracing the dominant culture may tempt emerging leaders, but they must carefully evaluate the cost.

In the process of acculturation, non-dominant groups often seek the joint goals of diversity and equity, which includes: (a) the recognition of the group's cultural uniqueness and specific needs such as language and (b) having their group receive the same level of understanding, acceptance, and support as those of the dominant groups.⁴² Emergent leaders/groups are willing to dilute some of their cultural values, but they hope to conserve enough of their cultural identity as part of their contribution to the organization.⁴³ In contrast, the dominant culture, mistaking uniformity for unity, leans towards structures representing their cultural views of development, leadership, and government. While the extra-cultural emergent leader seeks diversity and equity as a means of integration, the culture-led leader seeks to control and dominance as a means to assimilation.⁴⁴ When the prospect of such balance (or lack thereof) is lost, the dominant culture

³⁷ Kevin M. Chun, Pamela Balls Organista, and Gerardo Marín. *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C: American Psychological Association, 2003.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ John W. Berry, "Cultural Relations in Plural Societies: Alternatives to Segregation and Their Sociopsychological Implications." In *Groups in contact*, pp. 11-27. Academic Press, 1984.

⁴⁰ Bernard M. Bass, and Ruth Bass. *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 619.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Chun, 29.

⁴³ Torin Perez, "Reflections from an Emerging Leader: Leaving a Legacy by Finding the Heart of Leadership and Representation." *Leader to Leader* 2018, no. 90 (2018): 55-60.

⁴⁴ Chun, 30.

leader loses interest in the exchange because the cost of the interaction becomes too high or assimilation is not possible. When Pharaoh understood he could not pursue his self-serving agenda, he abandoned the cross-cultural exchange with Abraham and expelled him. Culture-led leaders are not interested in integrating cultures but in assimilating the few cultural elements that benefit their own culture.

Principle Three: Culture-led leaders use acculturation to fulfill their self-serving agendas, engaging in cultural transactions with extra-cultural emergent leaders as long as they do not cause mutual transformation but cultural domination at the lowest price.

Fourth Case: Pharaoh Empowers Joseph

The fourth interaction between a Pharaoh and a leader is that of Joseph, an Israelite emergent leader, and falls on the spectrum's favorable side. Genesis 41 tells the story of Pharaoh having a disturbing set of dreams. He was so troubled that he called all the magicians and wise men of Egypt to discern the meaning of his dreams, but no one could do it (v. 8). The fact that Pharaoh called these men implies two things. First, he understood the dreams to be spiritual. Second, he was willing to seek spiritual guidance to understand their meaning. When the cupbearer mentioned an imprisoned man, whom he knew, to have the gift of interpreting dreams, Pharaoh was open-minded to hear from him, even though he was from a lower-class social group (a Hebrew). When summoned, Joseph took no credit for his gift. He acknowledged God as the giver and interpreter of dreams, affirming that God was talking to Pharaoh and preparing him for what was to come (cf. vv. 28-32). Joseph's interpreting ability was higher than that of any Egyptian magician, but his wisdom to give counsel to Pharaoh on how to develop a strategy for the next fourteen years of his government was unparalleled. The fact that he felt confident to advise the most powerful man on earth at that time also speaks of the Pharaoh's attitude to listen and learn from anyone, including foreign criminals. Pharaoh's attitude seemed contagious, as his officials were also open to external counsel (v. 37).

Pharaoh further recognized "the Spirit of God" in Joseph. Evidently, he was not judging Joseph by his human predicament but by the leading of the Spirit of God. He acknowledged that the Spirit of God anointed Joseph with the discernment and wisdom to lead the Egyptian nation in its upcoming phase. Next, Pharaoh placed the foreign criminal in charge of the whole Egyptian empire, ranking him in authority only second to himself, and began the process of empowerment. First, he relinquished his signet ring to empower Joseph with the necessary resources to lead the nation (v. 42). Second, by dressing him with fine cloth and gold jewelry, Pharaoh welcomed the Hebrew man into his circle as equal to all (v. 42). Third, he gave him a chariot and presented him publicly as his second-in-command (v. 43), vindicating Joseph's legal status. Fourth, Pharaoh willingly submitted himself to Joseph's leadership (v. 44). Fifth, by giving his daughter in marriage, Pharaoh included Joseph in his family circle (v. 45). The behavior of this Pharaoh presents a sharp contrast with the previous examples in which Egyptian rulers tended to resist extra-cultural emergent leaders in defense of preserving the status quo of cultural domination.

Rather than betraying his people and culture, by partnering with Joseph, Pharaoh brought salvation and God's blessings upon his very people. Sacred-text analysis

- **Deity:** God appears as the orchestrator of the entire scene. On the one hand, He stirred Pharaoh with the dreams; on the other, He equipped Joseph to interpret them and gave him the appropriate counsel for Pharaoh, positioning him as the perfect candidate to lead the nation.
- **Spirit Being:** The pericope presents the Spirit of God as present in Joseph, equipping him with the gift of knowledge, discernment, and wisdom.
- **Holy Person:** The humble posture of Joseph when he did not take credit or advantage of his gifts shows a holy transformation in comparison to previous phases of his life.
- **Divine Story:** God's intervention significantly impacted Egypt's fate and Israel's clan.
- **Human Redemption:** The number of people who benefited from Pharaoh's posture is countless. The entire Egyptian nation survived the famine under Joseph's godly leadership.
- **Human Commitment:** Although Pharaoh's commitment was not directly towards God, he committed to Joseph, in whom he recognized the Spirit of God.
- **Religious Community:** There is no religious community created in the pericope. Nonetheless, the events facilitated the rescue and relocation of Jacob's clan.
- **Ethics:** Arguably, the most significant ethical issue in the pericope is that the king of Egypt was willing to dialogue, learn from, and associate with someone from a lower ethnical group, a despised culture, and an alleged criminal.

Theme 4: Spirit-led Cross-Cultural Leadership

Leadership cross-cultural competence is the capacity of a leader to meet others where they are, welcoming them with an open mind, accepting their culture, and making decisions that reflect these traits.⁴⁵ As it is the case with other cultural definitions in this study, cross-cultural leadership refers not only to ethnicity-based culture but also to those based on generational trends, leadership styles, and geographical regions, among others. Effective cross-cultural leaders understand that no leadership style is better than others from different cultures, but only the best in specific contexts. Instead, the adoption and adaptation of different cultural values is a vital skill for cross-cultural leaders. They embrace and understand the values, beliefs, needs, and expectations of the different existing cultures within the organization to ensure that organizational objectives are inclusive and representative of such cultures.⁴⁶ In the case of Joseph, Pharaoh was willing to listen to him, even though he belonged to a different social and cultural group. Pharaoh put the differences aside and opened his heart and mind to a Spirit-led path that took him to listen to the foreign emergent leader. Contemporary research indicates how cross-cultural brainstorming is a highly valued asset in organizations because it provides a myriad of vantage points, perspectives, and skillsets to solve

⁴⁵ Puppo, 105-137.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 107.

problems and create resources.⁴⁷ Many of the magicians and wise men in Pharaoh's court tried to solve the mystery of his dreams, but only an extra-cultural emergent leader had the answer. Prompted by the Spirit of God, the dominant culture leader led himself outside of his culture and opened the doors to new solutions.⁴⁸ Therefore, cross-cultural leadership is a hybrid leadership encompassing ideological diversity and allowing an organization to become a cultural mosaic in which extra-cultural emergent leaders/groups are encouraged to bring their best as the organization aims for the highest level of performance and productivity.

Rather than serving any one single culture, cross-cultural leadership creates a harmonious environment that makes engagement with other cultures seamless and even convenient for thriving in ways that are relevant for all the cultures involved.⁴⁹ Pharaoh's officials' openness to Joseph's advice speaks of the organizational climate created by the dominant leader. By embracing the extra cultural emergent leader, the dominant leader served his people into salvation. There are eight elements that Spirit-led, cross-cultural leaders must consider in fostering cross-culturally and spiritually healthy and thriving organizations:

1. Leaders must prevent and discourage any form of discrimination.
2. The leader is responsible to foster diversity.
3. The leader must be intentional to ensure that the creation and implementation of policies and procedures are consistent with the values of diversity and inclusion.
4. The cross-cultural leader must be open to receive feedback from different cultures and reflect the impact of such input in his or her decisions.
5. Leaders must implement changes that show the acceptance of all the cultures involved.
6. The cross-cultural Golden Rule maintains that leaders should treat others as they like to be treated in their cultural context, not in that of the dominant culture.
7. Leaders should recognize that, although ideas from a different culture may not seem as sound or plausible as those from the dominant culture, they create a sense of honor and unity that strengthens the organization.
8. Cross-cultural leaders must engage with other cultures enough to understand their values, beliefs, and needs.⁵⁰

Pharaoh fulfilled each of these requirements: (a) He prevented discrimination by endorsing Joseph publicly; (b) he fostered diversity in his inner circle; (c) he created policies to endorse Joseph, (d) he was open to Joseph's ideas; (e) he implemented Joseph's ideas swiftly; (f) he treated Joseph with respect and dignity; (g) he fully supported Joseph's plan. While multiculturalism welcomes the plurality of cultures without necessarily engaging in a meaningful exchange, cross-culturalism

⁴⁷ Oana Simona Hudea, "Cross-cultural leadership." *Manager* 19 (2014): 45-52.

⁴⁸ Perez, 58.

⁴⁹ Hudea, 46.

⁵⁰ Puppo, 108.

requires the interaction of cultures in ways from which all cultures involved benefit and experience transformation while honoring their cultural identity. Pharaoh benefited greatly from the extra-cultural emergent leader, but so did Joseph from the Spirit-led dominant leader. This attitude, Urrieta argues, is the true spirit of democracy. Democracy exists to empower the voice of every group represented in it, not to utilize the power of the majority to quiet other cultural voices.⁵¹ Urrieta explains:

Through transformative dialogue, people learn to live together and to value different perspectives rather than merely to tolerate each other or pretend that we really are not that different, which is the uncritical and naïve cultural pluralist approach to diversity.⁵²

Hudea composed a list of leadership styles connected to cross-cultural environments. The list categorized the styles as a) not appropriate, b) moderately appropriate, c) appropriate, d) most appropriate.⁵³ The following recollection summarizes the most appropriate leadership styles in cross-cultural environments according to Hudea.⁵⁴

- **Democratic leadership:** Members participate in the decision-making process, and the leader makes the final decision. Joseph and the officials participated in the decision-making process, along with Pharaoh.
- **Team leadership:** Leaders focus on both people and production, creating an environment of respect and trust. By listening to Joseph and implementing his ideas, Pharaoh built a relationship of respect and trust.
- **Participating leadership:** Communication is bidirectional; the leader involves the team in setting the agenda, which strengthens relationships. Pharaoh allowed Joseph to set the national agenda by willingly submitting to his decisions.
- **Affiliate leadership:** Leaders place relationships in high priority, creating a harmonious and cohesive team. By giving his daughter to Joseph, Pharaoh included him in his most inner circle of relationships.

The list above shows that effective cross-cultural leadership builds upon relationship building, active listening, honoring perspectives, sharing knowledge and efforts, and multi-cultural harmony.⁵⁵ The list also applies to Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders. In his selection of the twelve disciples (Lk. 6:12-13), Jesus serves as an example of how to select the people He wanted to follow

⁵¹ Urrieta, 189.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Hudea, 51.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 52.

Him closely so He could train them. Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders understand the advantage of building teams that include emergent leaders/groups to increase their capacity to perform at a higher level. Developing such healthy leadership skills within a Spirit-empowered ministry will make effective leaders through the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction.⁵⁶ Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders are transformational leaders,⁵⁷ they empower extra cultural emergent leaders to perform at their highest level by including them in circles where they can influence others, like Pharaoh did with Joseph. Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders are servant-leaders who place the needs of extra cultural emergent leaders above their own.⁵⁸ They understand that only then will they accomplish the cross-cultural organization's mission.⁵⁹ Pharaoh modeled this virtue as he provided Joseph with everything he needed to accomplish his goal.

Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders are learners who are never too busy to grow spiritually, emotionally, or intellectually and value the wealth of knowledge that extra cultural emergent leaders contribute to the organization, just like Pharaoh valued Joseph's wisdom. They follow truth and principles, not culture and tradition, and they are willing to implement new skills and strategies outside of their cultural comfort zone. Spirit-led leaders ask questions because they understand they do not have all the answers.⁶⁰ They exhibit the humility to acknowledge other culture's wealth of experiences and wisdom. Pharaoh was an example of this as he welcomed the instruction of Joseph. Spirit-led leaders are team players who recognize the spiritual gifts God places in extra-cultural others and count them as a gift to the organization's mission. They encourage and challenge extra-cultural emergent leaders to put their gifts to work for others' sake,⁶¹ just like Pharaoh recognized that the "Spirit of God" was in Joseph. Spirit-led leaders empower others, intentionally transferring authority to the extra cultural emerging leader within specified boundaries while maintaining a healthy level of responsibility.⁶² Pharaoh bestowed Joseph with this level of authority. Spirit-led leaders allow for the Holy Spirit to direct the arranging of leaders and workers in the team, understanding that God knows best and culture is spiritually limited. They understand that God can equip and empower anyone He wants, and the leader's role is to join God in the Kingdom-strategy that exceeds any single cultural expression of leadership.⁶³ Pharaoh

⁵⁶ Wendell Lee Clark, "Spirit-Empowered Ministry: A Leadership Development Program for Faith Assembly of God, Dewey, Arizona." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2010.

⁵⁷ Bass, 681.

⁵⁸ Robert K. Greenleaf and Larry C. Spears. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Paulist Press), 2002.

⁵⁹ Clark, 64.

⁶⁰ Clark, 65.

⁶¹ Ibid., 76.

⁶² Ibid., 83.

⁶³ Ibid., 85.

looked beyond Joseph's natural condition and found his Spirit-led power. Last, Spirit-led leaders recognize other Spirit-led emergent leaders.⁶⁴

Principle Four: Spirit-led leaders are humble, generous, learners, team players, and wise enough to recognize Spirit-led extra cultural emergent leaders and to welcome and empower them, making the organization more productive and more effective than any single dominant culture could.

Conclusion

Table 1 summarizes the themes and principles observed in each interaction between Pharaoh and the emergent Israelite leader/group.

Table 1: Summary of Themes and Principles

Order	Theme	Principle
First	The elimination of emergent cultures	Culture-led leaders may perceive extra cultural emergent leaders as a threat to their way of life and pursue the eradication of the movement on the basis of cultural homogeneity, survival, and domination.
Second	The ethics of cultural imperialism	Culture-led leaders may perceive extra cultural emergent leaders as the enemy of their notion of goodness, developing a distorted sense of morality that justifies the use of unethical, deceiving, and dishonest practices to preserve their place of privilege.
Third	The self-serving nature of acculturation	Culture-led leaders use acculturation to fulfill their self-serving agendas, engaging in cultural transactions with extra cultural emergent leaders as long as they do not cause mutual transformation but cultural domination at the lowest price.
Fourth	Spirit-filled cross-cultural leadership	Spirit-led leaders are humble, generous, learners, team players, and wise enough to recognize Spirit-led extra cultural emergent leaders and to welcome and empower them, making the organization more productive and more effective than any single dominant culture could.

The socio-rhetorical and sociological study of the four occasions in which Pharaoh, the dominant culture leader, dealt with the Israelites, the extra cultural emergent leader, yielded four different ways to navigate the tension between the forces of the leader's culture (culture-led monocultural leadership) and the move of God's Spirit (Spirit-led cross-cultural leadership). Culture-led

⁶⁴ Ibid., 88.

monocultural leadership dealt with the emergence of extra-cultural leadership by either (a) elimination of the emergent culture, (b) unethical cultural imperialism, or (c) self-serving acculturation. In contrast, Spirit-led cross-cultural leadership embraced the emergent extra cultural leadership with respect, openness, and humility. Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders are servants, learners, team players. They create cross cultural-friendly environments in which all cultures feel encouraged and even challenged to contribute their best to the organization. Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders empower others not according to their cultural allegiance but on their spiritual gifts and potential to lead the organization to optimal performance, benefiting all cultures involved while emphasizing cultural identity. Above all things, Spirit-led cross-cultural leaders identify Spirit-led extra cultural emergent leaders and cultivate the Pentecostal ethos into the twenty-first-century by paving the way for them.