

**THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT:  
THE CONTRIBUTION BY AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY  
SCHOLARS OF PENTECOSTALISM TO AN  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLDWIDE PENTECOSTAL  
MOVEMENT – THE REASONS FOR ITS GROWTH, ITS  
INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGES AND ITS POTENTIAL IN  
DIALOGUE ABOUT FAITH  
IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD**

Dissertation

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im Fach Englische Philologie

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vorlegt von  
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# **Das Wirken des Geistes**

**Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der  
zeitgenössischen amerikanischen Forschung  
zur Pfingstbewegung - Die Gründe für ihre  
Ausbreitung, die intellektuellen  
Herausforderungen, vor denen die Bewegung  
steht, und ihr Potential für den Dialog über  
den Glauben in einer globalisierten Welt**

**vorgelegt von**

**NIGEL WILLIS**

## **Zusammenfassung**

# **Das Wirken des Geistes**

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Untersuchungsgegenstand dieser religions- und kulturgeschichtlichen Dissertation ist das enorme Wachstum der Pfingstbewegung, die sich aus einer kleinen Versammlung in der Azusa Street in Los Angeles (1906) zu einer weltweiten Religionsgruppe mit ca. 525 Millionen Anhängern entwickelt hat. Der Verfasser geht den Gründen für dieses Wachstum in den USA und weltweit nach, indem er mittels eines transdisziplinären Ansatzes die Werke der folgenden amerikanischen Wissenschaftler untersucht:

- (i) Grant Wacker, Historiker
- (ii) Margaret Poloma, Soziologin
- (iii) Frank Macchia, Theologe und
- (iv) Amos Yong, ebenfalls Theologe.

Ebenfalls analysiert werden die Auswirkungen der Ausbreitung und die Herausforderungen, denen sich die Pfingstbewegung in den nächsten Jahren stellen müssen.

Innerhalb der amerikanischen Pfingstbewegung existieren unterschiedlichste Ansichten und unterschiedlichste Formen des Gottesdienstes. Die untersuchten Wissenschaftler sind sich darin einig, dass gerade die Bereitschaft zum Pluralismus ein wichtiges Merkmal der Pfingstbewegung ist. Die vorliegende Dissertation zeigt in der vergleichenden Analyse der Werke der vier Wissenschaftler aber auch, dass bestimmte Elemente des Gottesdienstes in allen Pfingstgemeinden vorzufinden und somit als spezifisch für diese Form des Christentums einzustufen sind.

Im Ergebnis zeigt sich, dass sich die rapide globale Ausbreitung der Pfingstbewegung nicht monokausal erklären lässt. Das Verhältnis der Bewegung zur Moderne ist ausgesprochen komplex und soziologische oder sozio-ökonomische Faktoren allein bieten keine hinreichende Erklärung für ihr Wachstum. So mag insbesondere auch die Art der spirituellen Erfahrung, die den Anhängern zuteilwird, ein Grund für ihre Attraktivität sein.

Ein weiteres Ergebnis der vorliegenden Dissertation ist es, aufzuzeigen, dass sich die Pfingstbewegung an einem Scheideweg befindet: Die Frage ist, ob sie sich von der Betonung des biblischen Literalismus entfernt und in die Richtung einer eher auf empirischen Erfahrungen beruhenden Theologie bewegt. Es lässt sich allerdings nach der heutigen Forschungslage keine richtungsweisende Tendenz in die eine oder andere Richtung vorhersehen.

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich meine Dissertation **The Work of the Spirit, the Contribution by American Contemporary Scholars of Pentecostalism to an Understanding of the Worldwide Pentecostal Movement – the Reasons for its Growth, its Intellectual Challenges, and its Potential in Dialogue about Faith in a Globalizing World** selbständig angefertigt, die benutzten Quellen und Hilfsmittel vollständig angegeben sowie im Einzelnen nachgewiesen und die Arbeit weder einer anderen Fakultät vorgelegt noch in der vorliegenden Form für eine andere Prüfung benutzt habe.

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**NIGEL PAUL WILLIS**

**4 Juni 2012**

**Abstract**  
**for**  
**The Work of the Spirit,**

**The Contribution by American Contemporary  
Scholars of Pentecostalism to an Understanding  
of the Worldwide Pentecostal Movement – the  
Reasons for its Growth, its Intellectual  
Challenges and its Potential in Dialogue about  
Faith in a Globalizing World**

The growth of the Pentecostal movement from a small assembly gathered together in 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles in 1906 to a worldwide movement having some 525 million adherents invites examination. In order to explore the reasons for this growth this dissertation has adopted a transdisciplinary approach examining the writings of the following four American scholars:

- (i) Grant Wacker;
- (ii) Margaret Poloma;
- (iii) Frank Macchia; and
- (iv) Amos Yong.

The implications of this growth and the challenges which the Pentecostal movement faces in the years that lie ahead have also been examined.

Wacker is an historian, Poloma a sociologist, and both Macchia and Yong are theologians, having a Pentecostal ministry.

Within the Pentecostal movement there is a diversity of opinion and forms of worship. These scholars agree that a feature of the Pentecostal movement has been its embrace of pluralism. In addition, an overview of the work of these scholars shows that certain features of worship are commonly and incorrectly considered to be distinctive to Pentecostalism.

There is no single explanation for the rapid, worldwide growth in the Pentecostal movement. Pentecostalism has had a complex relationship with modernity. 'Sociological' or socio-economic factors do not suffice to explain the gathering momentum of the Pentecostal movement. The quality of the spiritual experience of adherents may provide an explanation for the growing following within the Pentecostal movement.

The research indicates that Pentecostalism may now be at the cross-roads: a key question is whether Pentecostalism will move away from an emphasis on Biblical literalism towards a more 'experiential' theology. It is not possible to predict the route which Pentecostalism will follow.

The obstacles that have so often appeared to stand in the way of closer union among all the peoples of the world may be formidable but there is cogent evidence that these barriers may not be insurmountable.

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**IN DIALOGUE ABOUT FAITH IN A**  
**GLOBALIZING WORLD**



# DEDICATION

This dissertation has been dedicated to

my wife,

**Glenda**

(Ph.D. (*Witwatersrand*))

and

**the Reverend Richard Willis,**

(M.A. (*Cantab.*))

(1719-1783)

my 4<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather,

an Anglican priest and scholar

of

Holybourne, England,

those who have gone before him and those who have come after.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The support and encouragement of the following are gratefully acknowledged:

- (i) Michael Welker, Professor für Systematische Theologie an der Universität Heidelberg und Direktor des Forschungszentrums Internationale und Interdisziplinäre Theologie, with whom I first mooted this project in Potchefstroom, South Africa in 2007 and without the critical appraisals of whom this work would not have arrived at its final destination;
- (ii) Detlef Junker, professor and founding director of the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA) who, soon after I had first discussed the possibilities of pursuing this project with Michael Welker, endorsed the proposal for this research;
- (iii) Thomas Renkert, a graduate in theology at the University of Heidelberg who, during a critical period in this research, was one of Michael Welker's research assistants with whom I engaged in several illuminating discussions relevant to this dissertation;
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- (v) Dieter Schulz of the Anglistisches Seminar in the University of Heidelberg, with whom I exchanged some delightful ideas on a range of subjects from music to economics during my sojourn there.

Without the love of my family this research would never even have begun.

I thank you all with deep affection and abiding respect.

**SUMMARY & OUTLINE**  
**OF**  
**THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT,**  
**THE CONTRIBUTION BY AMERICAN**  
**CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS OF**  
**PENTECOSTALISM TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF**  
**THE WORLDWIDE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT –**  
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**IN DIALOGUE ABOUT FAITH IN A GLOBALIZING**  
**WORLD**

Although the roots of Pentecostalism can be traced back to other evangelical Protestant denominations such as Methodism, the so-called ‘Azusa Street revival’ in Los Angeles in the United States of America in 1906-1909 has generally been considered to be the ‘defining’ period in time for the origins of the worldwide Pentecostal movement. From a small assembly gathered together in an old building at 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles, Pentecostalism has grown into a worldwide movement having some 525 million adherents.

Having originated in the United States of America, the Pentecostal movement’s growth in recent decades has been located especially in sub-Saharan Africa, south-east Asia and Latin America. This growth has attracted interest from a range of different scholars.

It is the account of Pentecost in Acts 2:4, where Luke describes how, on the day of Pentecost, those gathered in the upper room “were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues”, from which the movement derives its name.

The growth of the Pentecostal movement provides the rationale for this research. Against this background of growth, questions arise as to: (i) what may account for this gathering, global momentum of Pentecostalism as a broad religious movement; (ii) what might the implications of this momentum be; (iii) what might be the challenges to be faced by the movement in the years that lie ahead and (iv) does the Pentecostal movement possess the potential to contribute fruitfully to academic and theological conversations about faith in a rapidly globalizing world? The main aim of this research is to answer these questions.

In the pursuit of this aim, the writings of four American scholars have been examined. These scholars are:

- (i) Grant Wacker;
- (ii) Margaret Poloma;
- (iii) Frank Macchia; and
- (iv) Amos Yong.

All four of these scholars have a Pentecostal background and have undertaken research into and made observations about the Pentecostal movement. In at least some instances their academic interests have not been exclusively focused on specifically Pentecostal developments. The four scholars come from different intellectual disciplines and social *milieu*. Wacker is an historian, Poloma a sociologist, and both Macchia and Yong are theologians, having a Pentecostal ministry. Yong’s background and interests are more internationalist than those of Macchia.

Research across different intellectual disciplines has the potential to yield conclusions that are strongly validated precisely by reason of the fact that one can be more confident that the biases inherent in any particular intellectual discipline will not cloud the accuracy of the deductions drawn.

The American focus of this research derives from the conviction that one cannot properly understand the Pentecostal movement without having a sense of its American roots and the continuing influence of American traditions of pluralism and pragmatism upon the movement worldwide.

This dissertation researches and analyses the published material of the abovementioned four American Pentecostal scholars. The research has also been undertaken by reference to academic publications worldwide which touch upon the action of the Spirit. Original sources from Wacker, Poloma, Macchia, Yong, Moltmann, Polkinghorne and certain other contemporary theological writers' works, as well as commentaries on their works, have been considered in this research. Other literature, mainly pneumatological in its focus, has been considered. Journal articles have aided in the interpretation and understanding of the ideas and insights considered in this research.

This research is particularly concerned with the intellectual progress or *movement* over time that is to be discerned within Pentecostalism.

All four scholars recognize that within the Pentecostal movement there is a diversity of opinion and forms of worship. These scholars agree that a feature of the Pentecostal movement has been its embrace of pluralism. In addition, an overview of the work of these scholars shows that certain features of worship are commonly and incorrectly considered to be distinctive to Pentecostalism.

The review of the work of the four scholars indicates that there is no single explanation for the rapid, worldwide growth in the Pentecostal movement. All four of the American Pentecostal scholars agree that Pentecostalism has had a complex relationship with modernity. There is a consensus among them that 'sociological' or socio-economic factors do not suffice to explain the gathering momentum of the Pentecostal movement. The quality of the spiritual experience of adherents may provide a convincing explanation for the growing following within the Pentecostal movement. The evidence suggests that it is the quality of spiritual experience among adherents that rises above all other factors in giving an account of the Pentecostal movement. The Pentecostal experience of the Spirit, so often transformative of people's lives for the better, is one from which those having different religious convictions may learn.

The research of Wacker, Poloma, Macchia and Yong indicates that Pentecostalism may now be at the cross-roads: a key question is whether Pentecostalism will move away from an emphasis on Biblical literalism towards a more 'experiential' theology. All four scholars are wary of making predictions as to the route which Pentecostalism will follow. There are developments among Pentecostal theological scholars which suggest that they may be moving 'in phase' with academic and theological discussions that are taking place across religious boundaries all over the world.

Among the conclusions that are drawn as a result of this research is that emerging developments within Pentecostal theology may be discerned. These developments are moving towards an integration of religion with other fields of human endeavour, most notably science.

That the discernment of spirits may be required in evaluating these processes is also recognized. The potential of emergent processes within

Pentecostal theology is examined. The possibility that a regeneration of Pentecostal theology may be under way is explored.

The spiritual experience of Pentecostals could enrich conversations not only among Christians but also between Christians and those of different faith, even those with no faith at all. There are signs that there are those among Pentecostals and others who are willing to explore the potential that lies in an expanding dialogue about spiritual experience by human beings. The obstacles that have so often appeared to stand in the way of closer union (*communio*) among all the peoples of the world may be formidable but there is cogent evidence that these barriers may not be insurmountable.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION**

**1.1 Pentecostalism as a Rapidly Growing Feature  
of the Global Religious Stage – The Rationale for  
this Research**

Pentecostalism features prominently on the global religious stage.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the twentieth century more than 200 distinct or separate

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<sup>1</sup> Barratt, D. and Johnson, T. 2001. "Annual Statistical table on Global Mission in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, (January 2001) p25; Brierly, P. and Wraight, H. 1998. *Atlas of World Christianity: 2000 Years*. Nashville, Tennessee:

Pentecostal churches had established themselves in the United States of America.<sup>2</sup> Many of these churches are small but the two largest, the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ have claimed millions of adherents.<sup>3</sup> Others, like the United Pentecostal Church, claim hundreds of thousands of followers.<sup>4</sup> According to a 1978 Gallup survey, 19 percent or 29 million adult Americans considered themselves to be Pentecostal Christians.<sup>5</sup> Pentecostalism has grown around the globe, with there being nearly 525 million adherents worldwide.<sup>6</sup> The growth has been marked in sub-Saharan Africa, south-east Asia and especially in Latin America, where there are 15 to 20 million in Brazil alone – some 10 to 20 percent of that country’s population.<sup>7</sup>

The Assemblies of God church was founded in 1914 by about three hundred persons and has grown into the twelfth largest Protestant denomination in the United States.<sup>8</sup> Its growth has extended beyond the United States of America to over one hundred different countries,

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Thomas Nelson, p4 and 13; Shaull, R. and Cesar, W. 2000. *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p9; Wacker, G. 2001. *Heaven Below, Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, p8; Dempster, M. Klaus, B. and Petersen, D. Eds. 1999. *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*. Irvine, California: Regnum; Macchia, F. 2006. *Baptized in the Spirit, A Global Pentecostal Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, p33.

<sup>2</sup> Melton, J. 1993. “The Pentecostal Family” in *Encyclopedia of American Religions*. Detroit: Gale Research, pp77-84 and 401-78; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p7.

<sup>3</sup> Melton, “The Pentecostal Family”, pp77-84 and 401-78; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Kantzer, K. 1980. “The Charismatics Among Us”, *Christianity Today*, February, 22, 1980, pp24-9; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p7.

<sup>6</sup> Gallup, G. 1985. *Religion in America, 50 Years: 1935-1985*. Gallup Report No. 236. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Research Center Inc; Cox, H. 1995. *Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley; Brierley and Wraight, *Atlas of World Christianity*, p4 and 13; Shaull and Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches*, p9; Barratt and Johnson, “Annual Statistical Table”; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p8; Poloma, M. 2003. *Main Street Mystics*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, p19.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Jacquet, C. 1971. *Yearbook of American Churches*. New York: National Council of Churches, p18; Jacquet, C. 1981. *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, p18; Poloma, M. 1989. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, p.xv.

embracing some fifteen million followers worldwide.<sup>9</sup> It is now one of the most rapidly growing Christian organizations in the world.<sup>10</sup>

The term 'Pentecostal' derives from the account of Pentecost in Acts 2:4 where Luke describes how, on the day of Pentecost, those gathered in the upper room "were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues".<sup>11</sup> Broadly stated, there are three types of 'Pentecostalism' in the twentieth century: the classical Pentecostal movement, connected to the so-called 'Azusa Street revival' in Los Angeles in 1906-1909 (which began in an old building at 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles); the charismatic-renewal movement in the more traditional Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches beginning in the 1960s; and a "catch-all category that comprises 18 810 independent, indigenous, post-denominational groups that cannot be classified as either Pentecostal or charismatic but share a common emphasis on the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, Pentecostal-like experiences, signs and wonders and power encounters".<sup>12</sup>

Inclusively defined, there is a consensus that there were about 525 million adherents of Pentecostalism world-wide in 2000, constituting about 28 percent of the world Christian population and 8.65 percent

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<sup>9</sup> Jacquet, *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, the cover and p.xvi.

<sup>10</sup> Jacquet, *Yearbook of American Churches*, p18; Jacquet, *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, p18; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p.xvi, 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Revised Standard Version*. 1965. New York: William Collins.

<sup>12</sup> Burgess, M. and Van der Maas, E. Eds. 2002. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, pp.xviii-xxi, xx and 286-9; Yong, A. 2002. *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, pp248-51; Yong, A. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, pp151-61; Yong, A. 2005. *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh, Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, p18. Welker, M. 2006. "The Introduction" in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p.x.

of the total world population.<sup>13</sup> Of the some 525 million world-wide, more than 400 million or 76 percent live in Latin America, Africa and Asia.<sup>14</sup> The pace and extent of the growth of Pentecostalism has attracted increasing interest from outside scholars.<sup>15</sup>

An example of this gathering interest is the fact that Douglas Petersen, together with Murray Dempster and Byron Klaus, organized an international conference in Costa Rica in 1997 with this globalization of Pentecostalism as its theme.<sup>16</sup> According to Frank Macchia, one of the outcomes of this conference was an across-the-board awareness of the potential located within the Pentecostal movement as a contributor to ecumenical conversations.<sup>17</sup> This potential reposes in Pentecostal claims of the experience of the Spirit.<sup>18</sup> The 'experience of the Spirit' eludes easy definition. The concept will be explored and developed in the chapters that follow.

The rate of growth of the Pentecostal movement over a relatively short period of time provides the rationale for this research. Against this background of growth, questions arise as to: (i) what may account for this gathering, global momentum of Pentecostalism as a broad religious movement; (ii) what might the implications of this momentum be; (iii) what might be the challenges which the movement faces in the years that lie ahead and (iv) does the Pentecostal movement possess the potential to contribute fruitfully to academic

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<sup>13</sup> Gallup, *Religion in America*; Burgess and Van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pp286-9; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p19; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp248-51; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p19.

<sup>14</sup> Burgess and Van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pp286-9; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp248-51; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p19.

<sup>15</sup> He refers, for example, to Crawley, W. 2001 *World Christianity, 1970-2000: Toward a New Millennium*. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library; Jenkins, P. 2002. *The New Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p19.

<sup>16</sup> Dempster et al, *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p33.

<sup>17</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

and theological conversations about faith in a rapidly globalizing world? The primary aim of this research is to endeavor to answer these questions.

## 1.2 The Pursuit of the Aim

In the pursuit of this aim, the writings of four American scholars will be examined. These scholars are:

- (i) Grant Wacker;
- (ii) Margaret Poloma;
- (iii) Frank Macchia; and
- (iv) Amos Yong.

All four of these scholars have a Pentecostal background and have undertaken research into and made observations about the Pentecostal movement. In at least some instances their academic interests have not been exclusively focused on specifically Pentecostal developments. The focus of this research has been deliberately multidisciplinary or, at least, transdisciplinary.<sup>19</sup> The four scholars

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<sup>19</sup> There is considerable confusion as to the correct terminology to adopt where research crosses the boundaries of a specific discipline. The terms *interdisciplinary*, *multidisciplinary*, *cross-disciplinary*, and *transdisciplinary* are often used interchangeably and often erroneously. *Interdisciplinary* research involves “a cooperative effort by a team of investigators, each expert in the use of different methods and concepts, who have joined in an organized program to attack a challenging problem”. *Multidisciplinary* research occurs where “independent or sequential research” takes place “focused on a common problem” but less sharing of ideas occurs in this instance than in the case of *interdisciplinary* research. *Transdisciplinary* research involves “the development of a common conceptual framework that bridges the relevant disciplines” and “can serve as the basis for generating new research questions related to the defined problems”. A hallmark of *transdisciplinary* research is that it aims at achieving “novel and integrative conceptual models”. See Rosenfield, P.L. 1992. *The Potential of Transdisciplinary Research for Sustaining and Extending Linkages between the Health and Social Sciences*. Soc Sci. Med. 35: pp1343-57; Fitzpatrick, J. 2002. “Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Research: What it is and What it is not”, *Applied Nursing Research* 16 (2): 59; Marts, S.A. 2002. “Interdisciplinary Research is the Key to Understanding Sex Differences: Report from the Society for Women’s Health Research Meeting on Understanding the Biology of Sex Differences”, *Journal of Women’s Health and Gender-Based Medicine*. 11 (6), pp501-509; Stokols, D., Harvey, R., Gress, J., Fuqua, J. and Phillips, K. 2005. “In Vivo Studies of Transdisciplinary Scientific Research Collaboration: Lessons Learned and Implications for Active Living Research”, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 28 (2S2), pp202-13 and 204;

come from different intellectual disciplines and social *milieu*. Wacker is an historian, Poloma a sociologist, and both Macchia and Yong are theologians, having a Pentecostal ministry. Yong's background and interests are more internationalist than those of Macchia.

A multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach, by working across disciplinary boundaries, may have the following advantages:

- (i) The research will draw upon the strengths within the different academic disciplines concerned;
- (ii) The potential weaknesses in the approaches of different academic disciplines may be mitigated;
- (iii) Catalytic, synergistic consequences arising from the interaction of different academic disciplines may emerge, having a 'multiplier effect'.

The work of these four scholars will also be compared and contrasted with certain critical trends in philosophy and theology both in the twentieth century and at the cusp of the twenty-first.

The overall assumption of this research is that there are likely to be benefits to be derived from current developments in scholarship focused upon and within the contemporary Pentecostal movement. In summary, the research aims to determine the reasons for Pentecostalism's world-wide, rapidly growing following and, in doing so, to uncover academic and theological trends and tendencies within the movement. In the process, the likely challenges which the movement faces in the coming decades become apparent.

The American focus of this research derives from the conviction that one cannot properly understand the Pentecostal movement without

having a sense of its American roots and the continuing influence of American traditions of pluralism and pragmatism upon the movement worldwide.<sup>20</sup> The Pentecostal movement traces its origins to the leadership of an itinerant Methodist preacher in America, Charles Fox Parham, who started a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas in January 1901.<sup>21</sup> The Azusa Street revival is generally regarded as the event which gave critical momentum to the movement and launched it on the trajectory from which it has continuously grown from strength to strength.<sup>22</sup>

Both the process and the outcome of any research will be affected by the theoretical framework within which it has been undertaken. This research has been premised upon five main suppositions.

### **1.3 The Suppositions of this Research**

The suppositions of this research are:

- (i) A transdisciplinary approach to research of this nature is likely to yield more widely validated conclusions than an approach which is more narrowly focused;
- (ii) Pentecostals in general and the intellectuals among them, in particular, may have the potential to contribute to worldwide academic and theological discourse in the coming decades;
- (iii) Theologically, the Spirit is likely to be best understood as being poly-contextual and polyphonic;
- (iv) The Spirit is theologically best understood as the *Deus absconditus*, the hidden God, the divine presence always active and engaged in the unfolding of the world, at least to

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp265-6; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p66 and 87.

<sup>21</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp100-104.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp5-7, 37, 39, 49, 71, 77, 79, 100, 104, 132, 160, 178, 194, 201, 215, 227, 230, 232.



some extent, and always working from within the processes of the world;<sup>23</sup>

- (v) In the long run, theology (or any other intellectual discipline) which is inconsistent with scientific knowledge and discovery will be moribund.

‘The Spirit’, ‘the Holy Spirit’, or ‘the Spirit of God’ may be used coextensively and interchangeably with one another.<sup>24</sup> In this research, unless the context otherwise requires, the term ‘the Spirit’ is normally used for the concept in question.

## 1.4 Sources and Data Collection

This dissertation researches and analyses the published material of the abovementioned four American Pentecostals. The research has also been undertaken by reference to academic publications worldwide which touch upon the action of the Spirit. Original sources from Wacker, Poloma, Macchia, Yong, Moltmann, Polkinghorne and certain other contemporary theological writers’ works, as well as commentaries on their works, have been considered in this research. Journal articles have aided in the interpretation and understanding of the ideas and insights considered in this research.

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<sup>23</sup> Moltmann, J. 1993. *God in Creation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p9; Moltmann, J. 2003. *Science and Wisdom*. Translated by Kohl, M. London: SCM Press, pp66-7; Polkinghorne J. 1994. *Science and Christian Belief, Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker*. London: SPCK, p147; Polkinghorne J. 1996. *The Faith of A Physicist*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p151; Welker, M. 2006. “The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives” in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, the Preface; Kim, K. 2007. *The Holy Spirit in the World, a Global Conversation*. New York: SPCK, pp1-8.

<sup>24</sup> See Yong, A. “*Ruach*, the Primordial Waters and the Breath of Life: Emergence Theory and Creation Narratives in Pneumatological Perspective”, in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, pp183-204; Cruden, A., Irwin, C., Adams, A. and Waters, S.A. Eds. 1990 (Reprinted and Revised). *Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*. Cambridge: the Lutterworth Press, p626; Kelly, J. 1968 (reprinted 1975). *Early Christian Doctrines*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition London: Adam and Charles Black, p261; and see, also, more generally, the *New Jerusalem Bible*. 1985. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

## 1.5 Methodology

In addition to the review of the published work of the four American scholars mentioned above, other pneumatological literature has been considered. Some of this literature is foundational but most is contemporary.

It has been expected that a comparative analysis of the research of Wacker, Poloma, Macchia and Yong will provide useful insights: all of these scholars have deep knowledge of the Pentecostal movement, derived not merely from a theoretical perspective but also from experience. Commonalities in their understandings may permit reasonably firm conclusions, especially where these commonalities are endorsed by other scholars. Differences invite further examination and exploration. Where there are differences of opinion and interpretation among these four scholars, the work of other contemporaries is explored to draw tentative conclusions and to test which position can more safely be regarded as correct.

Essentially, this research is concerned with the intellectual progress or *movement* over time that is to be discerned within Pentecostalism, especially insofar as its relations with the wider world are concerned. For this reason the researcher has tried to follow a broadly chronological sequence. This 'chronological orientation' in the research has influenced the sequence of the chapters as beginning with an historian, then turning to deal with a sociologist, and finally with theological scholars. In dealing with theological scholars, the research ends with the more 'radical' of the two. The movement from the past into the present, in order to facilitate a gaze into the future, features in the progress of the research.

Among the challenges in this research has been to find answers to questions which some of the scholars themselves have not asked.

Another challenge has been to try to find commonalities in the deductions which they have made. Not all of the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter have been raised either singly or collectively by every one of the scholars whose work has been the focus of this research. The questions posed by this research have, in some instances, not even interested certain scholars.

Consistent with the transdisciplinary nature of this research, none of the chapters fit within a 'watertight' or 'hermetically sealed' compartment: there are overlaps and overflows in the different chapters. For example, chapter two does not deal, exclusively, with the history of Pentecostalism. There should be advantages in the chapters not reposing in discrete isolation: to the extent that there appears to be a consensus across a spectrum of opinion and intellectual discipline, this facilitates the drawing of more firm conclusions. Conversely, a divergence of opinion provides an alert for more rigorous scrutiny and analysis.

Insofar as the four American scholars are concerned, the focus of this research is that of their published work, especially that in the books of which they have been the authors. The year 2008, the year in which this research began, has been taken as the benchmark. This focus avoids the research being caught up in a vortex, chasing the latest publications of the different scholars. In the case of both Poloma and Yong their rate of publication has been prolific, if not exponential. The major trajectories in the work of all four scholars, insofar as Pentecostalism *per se* is concerned, have been identified. A perusal of the work of these scholars since 2008 does not suggest that any major shift in their thinking has occurred since then, insofar as it touches upon the subject matter of this research.

A brief outline of the chapters that follow may assist the reader as a 'navigational chart'.

## 1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter two considers the work of Wacker, a professor of church history whose upbringing has been shaped by the Pentecostal commitment of his family. Wacker's specific interest has been the history of religion in America. Wacker recognizes that the rapidly growing following which Pentecostalism has attracted has confounded many critics. His work is examined to determine what the explanation for this following may be.

From an analysis of Wacker's work there appears to be no sociologically determinable criterion such as educational levels or socio-economic status which explains the growth of the Pentecostal movement even though it appears that, historically, the movement held a special appeal to the socially disadvantaged.

This leads to an investigation as to whether there may be some other 'defining' feature of Pentecostalism which provides the key that unlocks the answers to the questions raised in this research. As is the case with each of the chapters dealing with the work of the specific scholars whose work has been scrutinized in this research, 'glossolalia' or 'speaking in tongues' – often associated in the minds of observers with Pentecostalism – is considered in response to this question.

According to Wacker, 'speaking in tongues' was seen as a sign of special giftedness among those in whom it manifested itself but has never been distinctive to Pentecostalism. It has not, in Wacker's analysis, been regarded as conclusive evidence of 'Spirit baptism'. Wacker makes it clear that, within the Pentecostal movement, there has always been respect for a life well lived, regardless of whether an adherent manifested the 'gift of tongues' or not. This leads to an

enquiry of whether it is reasonable to consider whether there may be something else that is distinctive to or 'essential' in Pentecostal theology. Related to this question is a further question of whether the theology of Pentecostalism itself explains its following. This aspect is explored not only in the chapter which deals with Wacker's work but also the three chapters that follow thereafter.

Wacker reasons that to find answers to the question of what may explain the pulling power of the Pentecostal movement, it is useful to understand how it has dealt with the dilemma of historical consciousness. Wacker argues that Pentecostalism has straddled this dilemma either by ignoring it or by holding that no such dilemma exists.

Wacker discerns that a factor that may assist in understanding both the history and the challenges which face the Pentecostal movement is that it has maintained that the truths to be found in the Bible have remained unaffected by the forces of history. This stance has generally been described as 'Biblical literalism'. Various scholars whose research is considered in this dissertation associate 'Biblical literalism' with religious 'fundamentalism'. It becomes apparent that, among the consequences of a literalist stance on the interpretation of scripture, is that the message of the Pentecostal movement has hitherto been largely unaffected by the prevailing winds of intellectual thought, blowing across the world since the Enlightenment.

The dilemma of historical consciousness much influenced the thinking of Wacker. In order better to understand why this should be so, the genealogy of his ideas is considered. Wacker concludes that the Pentecostal movement will not, forever, be able to avoid addressing this dilemma of historical consciousness. Chief among the reasons which he puts forward for this conclusion is that the advances and discoveries of science cannot be ignored.

This leads to an analysis in this chapter of the likelihood and prospects of the Pentecostal movement remaining isolated from the academic developments taking place in the world. Originally, the movement was marked by isolation from the prevailing trends in academic discourse. Conversely, if this intellectual isolation is not to be perpetuated, questions arise as to the likelihood of there being a Pentecostal discourse with a spectrum of others.

As the focus of Wacker's research has been historical, he does not, as a general rule, hold the future in view. It will be seen that while Wacker perceives that, in the past, the Pentecostal movement may have suffered from academic weaknesses, one should be careful not to be distracted by them. Wacker has proposed that the genius of the Pentecostal movement has been to hold the impulse of the experience of other-worldly power in productive tension with this-worldly practicality.

Wacker believes that there may be closer interaction, academically and theologically, between the Pentecostal movement and 'others' in future. This conviction derives from Wacker's perception of there always having been an underlying pragmatism within the Pentecostal movement. The chapter closes with a summary of Wacker's understanding of the position of the Pentecostal movement as it awaits the future. The chapter concludes that a 'sociological' perspective may provide further illumination.

Chapter three deals with the work of Margaret Poloma, a sociologist. She has been, for many years, professor of sociology at the University of Akron. Poloma analyzes the effectiveness of conventional socio-economic tools in providing an adequate explanation for the growth of Pentecostalism. She contends that these tools fail to do so. While she does not dismiss factors such as race, gender, social status and

educational levels as having played a role, historically, in the character of the movement's development, Poloma is of the view that a conventionally sociological approach to understanding the Pentecostal movement is inadequate to the task.

The apparent anomaly of a position in which a sociologist finds that the conventional socio-economic tools of her 'trade' fall short when called upon to explain a feature of human society leads to a survey of the genesis and development of Poloma's ideas. Poloma's books and journal articles have been published prolifically over several decades. Her positions have shifted on a number of issues over time.

Originally much influenced by the positivist school in sociology, Poloma now considers herself to be a postmodernist. She no longer considers Pentecostalism to be a reaction to modernity as she once did. The persons who impacted upon the progress of her ideas are considered and other influences upon her intellectual development are referred to in this chapter. The Pentecostal movement was a focus of Poloma's research for a number of years, but her interest has taken a change in direction towards a more general understanding of prayer and Godly love.

In Poloma's perspective, the key issue for Pentecostalism in the years that lie ahead will be the extent to which an 'experiential' theology – in contrast to a 'fundamentalist' theology – unfolds within the movement. The 'experience' to which an 'experiential theology' relates, is a concept that is considered in the chapters that follow.

Poloma's understanding of the potential of an experiential theology emerging within the Pentecostal movement is scrutinized for its plausibility. This provides a foundation from which to look at similar issues in the perspectives of other scholars whose work is reviewed in this research. Poloma points to a paradox that confronts the

Assemblies of God church. The Assemblies of God is one of the large, influential, mainly white and institutionalized Pentecostal churches.<sup>25</sup> It risks alienating swathes of its support if it remains attached to Biblical literalism. By way of contrast, its ‘fundamentalist’ character has given it a sense of identity which it may lose if it shifts focus away from Biblical literalism. Poloma holds to the view that the white Pentecostal churches risk being overtaken on several fronts by the newer ‘ethnic’ churches. These fronts include rates of growth, actual numbers of adherents and general influence within society.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the potential in Poloma’s idea that the world, as a whole, would benefit from the development of an ‘experiential’ theology. The work of Pentecostal theologians is then looked at to try to discern emerging theological trends within the Pentecostal movement.

Chapter four explores the work of Frank Macchia. A professor of theology at Vanguard University in California, he is a Pentecostal by upbringing and has remained so in his worship, ministry and convictions. He has been the editor of *Pneuma: the Journal for Pentecostal Studies* for many years. The contribution of other scholars to Macchia’s thought as well as his own development over the years is examined.

While defending the distinctiveness of Pentecostalism, Macchia opens up Pentecostal theology to enhanced opportunities for ecumenical conversations. Macchia’s theological journey has moved increasingly towards a position in favor of ecumenical conversations, in a manner that not only explains but also qualifies Pentecostal theology. In his early academic life, Macchia’s focus was not ecumenical. His doctoral dissertation focused upon research on pietism. Thereafter, he

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<sup>25</sup> Melton, “The Pentecostal Family”, pp77-84 and 401-78; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p7.



concentrated on those elements of religion that were generally considered to be distinctive to Pentecostals. He published a number of essays in the 1990's on glossolalia, prophecy and the like.

Acknowledging his debt to ecumenical critics, most notably James Dunn and Kilian McDonnell, who challenged him to think more broadly about Spirit baptism than he had in the 1990's and early 2000's, Macchia's ecumenical journey developed with his research for and publication of *Baptized in the Spirit* in 2006. Prior thereto he had neither challenged nor sought to qualify the Pentecostal doctrine of 'subsequence' (Spirit baptism as a post-conversion experience of power). He had understood Spirit baptism as a "second conversion". Influenced by Christoph Blumhardt, he had seen the first conversion as being from the world to Christ and the second, Spirit baptism, as from Christ to the charismatic and missionary impulses in the world.

Macchia's reflections on Spirit baptism in preparation for his *Baptized in the Spirit* have helped him to see that what he describes as the Biblical metaphor of Spirit baptism is fluid and expansive. Spirit baptism is understood by Macchia to be implicitly eschatological in nature and open to dogmatic development from the context of God's triune self-impartation in history. This metaphor of Spirit baptism is examined in the review of Macchia's work. Without abandoning the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence, Macchia develops it to make space for ecumenical conversations.

Macchia's ecumenical convictions gather momentum in his more recent monograph, *Justified in the Spirit*, published in 2010. The interrelationship of Spirit baptism, *koinonia* and the Christian doctrine of justification is explored.

In addition to the meaning of 'Spirit baptism', Macchia's views on issues such as the significance of glossolalia within the Pentecostal

movement, and the pneumatological implications for ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity from the Pentecostal viewpoint are explored, in parallel with the research in the previous two chapters.

Chapter four closes with a focus on Macchia's concept of a 'creation pneumatology' as a necessary requirement for a full Pentecostal theology of creation and eschatology. The implications of such a theology are made manifest in the concluding chapter of this research. At the end of the summary of the chapter, it is postulated that these theological perspectives, derived from Macchia's work, will be enhanced if it appears that they are part of an emerging trend within Pentecostalism rather than held in isolation by a single scholar.

This leads to the review of the work of Amos Yong in chapter five. Yong is a theologian who has postgraduate academic qualifications from reputable secular universities in the United States of America. He is professor of theology at Regent University. Of Chinese ethnic origin, he has been exposed to a variety of cultural influences. He was brought up in the North American Pentecostal religious tradition.

A similar analysis of the trends, tendencies, topics and issues in the previous three chapters is undertaken. The focus of Yong's theology is both pneumatological and eschatological. Yong believes that the pluralism inherent in the Pentecost account contains the potential for the Pentecostal movement to contribute academically and theologically to conversations across religious boundaries.

Yong reasons that a pneumatological understanding of the unfolding creation has eschatological implications which include environmental awareness. The issue of the environment is developed in the final chapter of this research. Chapter five concludes with the assessment that it is appropriate to compare and contrast the findings that have

been made in respect of the four scholars whose work has been the focus of this research.

In chapter six the work of the four contemporary American Pentecostal scholars referred to above is subjected to comparative scrutiny. There is a mutually reinforcing resonance in the work of the four scholars, each with the rest. For example, all four scholars recognize that within the Pentecostal movement there is a diversity of opinion and forms of worship. The scholars agree that a feature of the Pentecostal movement has been its embrace of pluralism. In addition, an overview of the work of these scholars shows that certain features of worship are commonly and incorrectly considered to be distinctive of Pentecostalism.

The review of the work of the four scholars indicates that there is no single explanation for the rapid, worldwide growth in the Pentecostal movement. All four of the scholars agree that Pentecostalism has had a complex relationship with modernity. There is an across-the-board consensus among the four American scholars that 'sociological' or socio-economic factors do not suffice to explain the gathering momentum of the Pentecostal movement. The quality of the spiritual experience of adherents may provide a convincing explanation for the growing following within the Pentecostal movement.

The research of Wacker, Poloma, Macchia and Yong indicates that Pentecostalism may now be at the cross-roads: a critical question is whether Pentecostalism will move away from an emphasis on Biblical literalism towards a more 'experiential' theology. All four scholars are wary of making predictions as to the route which Pentecostalism will follow. There are developments among Pentecostal theological scholars which suggest that they may be moving 'in phase' with academic and theological discussions that are taking place across religious boundaries all over the world. The chapter also deals with speculation

as to how Pentecostal theology will address the challenges of science in the years that lie ahead.

In chapter seven certain conclusions are drawn. There are emerging developments within Pentecostal theology, moving in the direction of an integration of religion with other fields of human endeavor, most notably science. A glimpse is caught of a developing 'pneumatological eschatology' in Pentecostal theology. Pneumatological eschatology is concerned with where the Spirit may be thought to be leading and how the Spirit may be at work in the world.

The evidence suggests that it is the quality of spiritual experience among adherents that rises above all other factors in giving an account of the Pentecostal movement. Among the conclusions are that the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit, which is so often transformative of people's lives for the better, is one from which those having different religious convictions may learn. The potential of emergent processes within Pentecostal theology is considered. That the discernment of spirits may be required in evaluating these processes is recognized. The possibility that a regeneration of Pentecostal theology may be under way is explored.

The work of Wacker will now be considered.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **RISING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE TIMES: GRANT WACKER'S HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CERTAIN DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In order to explore the reasons for the growth of the Pentecostal movement a broadly chronological sequence will be followed. This will begin with a consideration of the work of an historian. Thereafter, the work of a sociologist will follow and, finally, that of theologians. Grant Wacker's work as an historian will be examined with particular emphasis on an understanding of the origins of the Pentecostal movement and how these origins may impact upon today. Insofar as any broad trends within it may emerge, these will also be explored. The prospects and potentialities of the movement will also be examined. Not only is Wacker a scholarly historian but he also has a Pentecostal background which may illuminate his perspectives.

### **2.2 The Background of Grant Wacker**

Wacker grew up in a Pentecostal home, attending a Pentecostal church regularly.<sup>26</sup> Many of his relatives were Pentecostal ministers or missionaries.<sup>27</sup> The college and graduate school which he attended, both of which were secular, influenced his thinking.<sup>28</sup> He has, for many years, been a lay member of the United Methodist Church.<sup>29</sup> He is currently Professor of Church History and Director of Graduate Studies in Religion at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.<sup>30</sup>

Wacker acknowledges the influence of Pentecostalism upon his world-view but he no longer participates in Pentecostal worship.<sup>31</sup>

Wacker's primary focus has been on religious movements in America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>32</sup> Recognizing that Pentecostalism is a global religious experience, Wacker's interest concentrates upon its cultural contours, especially in the United States of America.<sup>33</sup> Careful to avoid any analysis of the movement as a theological force, he has taken an interest in the reasons for the growth of Pentecostalism.<sup>34</sup>

### **2.3 Wacker's Assessment of the Reasons for the Growth of Pentecostalism – and the Development of his Ideas on the Matter**

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<sup>26</sup> Wacker, G. 2001. *Heaven Below, Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, p.ix.

<sup>27</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p.ix-x.

<sup>28</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p.x.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, frontispiece.

<sup>31</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p.x.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, *Heaven Below*, and his publication with James Goff, Jr. 2002. *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders*. Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press; and his work entitled *Religion in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America*. 2000. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press in the Series *Religion in American Life* by Jon Butler and Harry Stout.

<sup>33</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p8.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

In his chapter *Early Pentecostals and the Study of Popular Religious Movements* in a book edited by Michael Welker, *The Work of the Spirit, Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*, Wacker proposes that the Pentecostal movement has been able to “hold two seemingly incompatible impulses in productive tension”.<sup>35</sup> These two impulses are the ecstatic experience of otherworldly power and this-worldly practicality.<sup>36</sup>

In his earlier work, *Heaven Below, Early Pentecostals and American Culture*, published in 2001, Wacker expressed himself in identical terms.<sup>37</sup> In that book, *Heaven Below*, Wacker attributes much of the strength and growth of Pentecostalism to this facility to hold in dynamic tension the apparent dissonance between spiritual experience and pragmatic practicality in contemporary society.<sup>38</sup>

In the chapter *Early Pentecostals and the Study of Popular Religious Movements* Wacker explains the reasons for his conviction that the Pentecostal movement has been able to maintain this productive tension.<sup>39</sup> He does so by reminding readers that real life is untidy and suggesting that the practice of lived religion among Pentecostals succeeds precisely by not trying to iron out or explain away the contradictions of everyday experience but rather to manage them.<sup>40</sup>

In his earlier work he was less overt.

In the epilogue of a book which he co-edited, *Religion in American Life, A Short History*, Wacker attributes the appeal of the movement to a well-adapted contemporary style, which manifests even in the

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<sup>35</sup> Wacker, G. 2006 “Early Pentecostals and the Study of Popular Religious Movements” in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit, Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan Eerdmans, pp133-143. See, also: Welker’s observations in Welker, *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xiv.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Wacker, “Early Pentecostals”, p133 and pp143-144.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

architecture of its buildings.<sup>41</sup> In Wacker's assessment, the power of the movement throughout the world has been partly attributable to a radically evangelical tradition.<sup>42</sup> He sees Pentecostalism's embrace of different cultures as one of its great strengths.<sup>43</sup>

Wacker perceives an apparent paradox within Pentecostalism, which often confounds contemporary observers of the movement: it offers its followers a sense of spirituality at a time when spiritual experience is increasingly viewed with skepticism in the broader society.<sup>44</sup> Large swathes of contemporary society may battle to cope with 'spiritual' understandings of the working of the world while Pentecostals have, through their spirituality, offered an experience of life which he describes as "heaven below". This is the expression from which the title of his book, focusing on Pentecostalism, derives.<sup>45</sup> By "heaven below" Wacker means something akin to 'heaven on earth'. He remarks that this experience of the Spirit has been attributable to a thoroughly American effectiveness – pragmatic, innovative and responsive to people's needs.<sup>46</sup>

Wacker has consistently, in his published works, recognized the pragmatic adaptation to the world that is to be found within Pentecostalism while recognizing that it offers its followers an experience of otherworldly sensibility.<sup>47</sup> It is only later that he comes to an overt acknowledgement that, rather than these two tendencies being incongruous, they actually have a synergy, a creative tension.<sup>48</sup> The reason for this shift may be attributable to a gathering awareness

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<sup>41</sup> Butler, J., Wacker, G. and Balmer, R. Eds. 2008. *Religion in American Life, A Short History*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, p431.

<sup>42</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p264.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p265.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p266.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp266-9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p267.

<sup>47</sup> Compare Wacker, G. 1984. "The Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism", *Harvard Theological Review* 77:3-4, pp353-75 with Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10 and Wacker, "Early Pentecostals", p133 and pp143-144.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



of the importance of ‘discerning the spirits’, of evaluating the claims of Spirit experience.<sup>49</sup> For example, both James Dunn and Michael Welker, Biblical scholars who have published widely on the Spirit, have concurred in the opinion that a key to Christianity’s growth in the wider world as well as its general revitalization may lie in this: the ability to acknowledge that there may be ecstatic experiences of the power of the Spirit while, at the same time, discerning and evaluating these experiences as to their source as well as their significance for the benefit of the community.<sup>50</sup>

Since Wacker first wrote about Pentecostalism in 1984, he has developed a stronger sense that it is not merely the other-worldly sensibility which set the movement apart from other Christian denominations which accounts for its following.<sup>51</sup> He considers that the answer to the question as to why the Pentecostal movement has an expanding appeal may be found in an ability (i) to harness this other-worldliness to an accommodative approach to prevailing culture and (ii) to combine these two factors (spirituality and pragmatism) with impressive relief work in its mission around the world.<sup>52</sup>

Related to the tension between the ecstatic experience of otherworldly power and this-worldly practicality which Wacker has described, he has also postulated that there is a degree of tension between a rationalist tradition of intellectual discourse, on the one hand, and the yearning of human beings for spirituality, on the other.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Dunn, J. 1999. “Discernment of Spirits – A Neglected Gift” in Harrinton, W. Ed. *Witness to the Spirit: Essays On Revelation, Spirit, Redemption*. Dublin: Irish Biblical Association, pp79-96, reprinted in *Pneumatology*, pp311-28; Dunn J. 2006. “Towards the Spirit in Christ” in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, p24; and Welker, M. 2006. “Introduction” Welker, *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xi.

<sup>50</sup> Dunn, “Towards the Spirit in Christ”, p24; and Welker, “Introduction”, p.xi.

<sup>51</sup> Wacker, *Early Pentecostals*, p133 and 143-144.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp150-3.

Wacker is here referring to the tension between maintaining ancient religious truths, considered to be immutable, and making accommodation with prevailing drifts of intellectual thought.<sup>54</sup> This is ‘the dilemma of historical consciousness’.<sup>55</sup> This dilemma has been so large in Wacker’s thinking that it requires some attention.

## **2.4 Grant Wacker and the ‘Dilemma of Historical Consciousness’**

In his preface to his book *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, Wacker acknowledges that the dilemma of historical consciousness predominated in his understanding of the significance of the life and work of Augustus Strong.<sup>56</sup> The reason for this is that, as Strong grew older, he became increasingly uneasy about the relation between the essential doctrines of Christianity and the now prevailing historical assumptions of social thought.<sup>57</sup> Since the nineteenth century it has been increasingly accepted in the Western world that all ideas, values, institutions – all creations of human intellect – have been affected by the processes of history themselves.<sup>58</sup>

Wacker contends that this dilemma of consciousness confronts all who believe that the Christian faith has “a message to proclaim as well as a story to tell” but who wish to reconcile this belief with the

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<sup>54</sup> Wacker, G. 1985. *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, p.xiii.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* Strong, who lived from 1836 to 1921, was a Baptist theologian. He was, for many years, President of Rochester Theological Seminary. Wacker considers Strong to have been one of the most influential conservative Protestant thinkers in the United States in the late nineteenth century. In Wacker’s assessment, Strong’s struggle to hold together ancient faith and contemporary epistemology is representative of a difficulty that has confronted intelligent discourse in religious matters for at least the past one hundred years (*Ibid.*, pp.xi-xiii and 1-19).

<sup>57</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p.xiii.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p10 and pp33-5.

prevailing assumptions of contemporary pluralistic culture.<sup>59</sup> Wacker puts forward the proposition that Pentecostalism has often, in the past, sought to deal with the dilemma by holding out that no such dilemma existed.<sup>60</sup> In the meantime, the movement made adjustments to the times while maintaining that it proclaimed the same beliefs as those of the first apostles.<sup>61</sup>

Conservative theological thinkers have generally held the view that religious truth was impervious to historical context.<sup>62</sup> In this view, those who wrote the Bible were, in a sense, 'ahistorical' figures, who articulated timeless and universal truths, regardless of the social and cultural settings in which these truths were formulated.<sup>63</sup> This perception, according to Wacker, remains prominent among Pentecostals, even now.<sup>64</sup>

Wacker opines that characteristic of this historically transcendent view of religious truth is the conviction that the sole authority in matters of religion is the Bible.<sup>65</sup> This belief, in Wacker's view, was the core theology of the early Pentecostal movement.<sup>66</sup> He emphasizes that this conviction underpinned the belief among Pentecostals that the

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xiv. Wacker shows that until the late nineteenth century, Protestant culture, including that of North America, assumed that the truths about God and God's relationship with human beings had been revealed by God. This, in Wacker's analysis, was a vital element of the 'orthodox rationalism' of those times. This 'orthodox rationalism' entailed the belief that the processes of history did not differ materially from time to time or from place to place. It was assumed that the same event would produce more-or-less similar consequences regardless of the society or time in history when it occurred. In the late nineteenth century, this idea was severely challenged, according to Wacker, as intellectuals concerned with the humanities became conscious of the historical origin of culture (*Ibid.*, p10 and pp33-5).

<sup>60</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p70.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p11.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p12; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p70.

<sup>65</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p10.

<sup>66</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p73.

sole means of salvation is a life-transforming experience wrought by the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>67</sup>

Wacker accepts that there are a number of reasons for the drift to historical consciousness over the past century: these range from changing social realities to the loss of a sense of community arising from industrialization and urbanization, to the influence of the Enlightenment and the philosophical ideas of theoreticians such as Johann Herder and Georg Hegel, in particular.<sup>68</sup>

Christians have always believed that God's saving and revelatory activity takes place within an unfolding history.<sup>69</sup> The tensions, especially between those Protestant theologians who may broadly be defined as liberal and conservative respectively, arise from whether revelation is to be understood as emerging from within the historical process or whether it intrudes from outside the historical process.<sup>70</sup>

A comparison between Wacker's treatment of historical consciousness in his early work such as *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness and Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism*<sup>71</sup> and his later work such as *Heaven Below* shows that he used to regard the dilemma as irresolvable.<sup>72</sup> Now he sees that the matter which divided liberal and conservative theologians may not have to resolve itself by persons making a choice: the tension may be

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<sup>67</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p10.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp32-45. For the purposes of this research the reasons do not matter much as historical consciousness is not part of the subject matter. As Wacker recognizes, historical consciousness has been a powerful force that created its own tensions: most liberal Protestants embraced it, most conservatives ignored it, but even among some liberals and some conservatives it was difficult to escape the conviction that at least some of the precepts of Christianity transcended the gravitational pull of historical processes. (*Ibid.*, pp36-42).

<sup>69</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p50.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Wacker, G. 1984. "The Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism", pp353-75.

<sup>72</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p50.

productive.<sup>73</sup> He points out that Pentecostals were able to achieve balance “without admitting that they were doing it”.<sup>74</sup>

What of the future? If we accept that Wacker is correct in deducing that Pentecostals have been able to maintain a creative tension between spirituality and pragmatism, questions arise as to whether this facility is likely to continue in the future? In this regard, it may be helpful to understand the genealogy of Wacker’s ideas on historical consciousness. The implications of these ideas may affect one’s gaze at the future horizons for Pentecostalism.

## **2.5 The Genealogy of Wacker’s Ideas on the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness and the Implications thereof for Pentecostalism**

Wacker submits that Vico in the seventeenth century and Hume, Montesquieu and Voltaire in the eighteenth century, elaborated three ideas which contributed to the development of historical consciousness as we understand it today: (i) cultural forms are determined by the settings in which they emerge: (ii) history involves developmental change – history develops in a manner that is qualitatively different from discoveries made in natural science and (iii) history has a certain directionality, usually perceived as ‘progressive’.<sup>75</sup>

Wacker considers that Johann Herder was the leading intellectual figure behind the idea of unpredictable growth in history while Georg Hegel contributed to the idea of that history as changeful and developmental, defining human nature in the process.<sup>76</sup> To Leopold

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<sup>73</sup> Wacker, “Early Pentecostals”, p133 and pp143-144.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p143.

<sup>75</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, pp34-5.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p36.

von Ranke, Wacker attributes the amplification of the 'directionality' of history.<sup>77</sup>

Wacker acknowledges that literature of Robin Collingwood, Ernst Cassirer, Peter Gay, Georg Iggers, Arthur Lovemore, Maurice Mandelbaum, Frank Manuel and Hans Meyerhoff influenced his understanding of these three ideas which contributed to the development of historical consciousness.<sup>78</sup>

Wacker records that, by the nineteenth century, Ernst Troeltsch felt empowered to contend that historical consciousness had become the fundamental feature of modern culture, involving an interplay between Anglo-French positivism and German romantic idealism.<sup>79</sup> Wacker acknowledges that his insight of the interplay between positivism and romantic idealism derives from Stuart Hughes and Iggers.<sup>80</sup>

According to Wacker, German romantic idealism or progressive idealism was a notion attractive in both popular and intellectual culture in the United States of America throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup> In this regard, Wacker acknowledges the insights gained from Louis Agassiz, George Bancroft, Henry Bowden, Mumford Jones, Francis Parkman, Louis Parrington and Richard Prescott all of whom wrote on the currents of intellectual thought in America in the

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp34-5; Collingwood, R. 1956. *The Idea of History*. London: Oxford University Press; Cassirer, E. 1951. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Princeton: Princeton; Gay, P. 1968. *The Enlightenment*. New York: Random House; Iggers, G. 1968. *The German Conception of History*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press; Lovejoy, A. 1960. *Essays in the History of Ideas*. New York: Putnam; Mandelbaum, M. 1971. *History, Man and Reason*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press; Manuel, F. 1965. *Shapes of Philosophical History*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press; Meyerhoff, H. ed. 1959. *The Philosophy of History of Our Time*. Garden City: Doubleday.

<sup>79</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p35.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p36.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p37

nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup> The tradition of Anglo-French positivism Wacker attributes principally to Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Herbert Spencer.<sup>83</sup>

Wacker contends that Max Weber and John Dewey contributed to a more radical view of the historicity of culture: history shapes our thoughts and our knowledge – even our understanding of knowledge itself.<sup>84</sup> Wacker concludes that by the 1930's historical consciousness had become dominant among intellectuals in America and Europe and has remained so until today.<sup>85</sup> In reaching this conclusion, he acknowledges the contributions of Isaiah Berlin and Benedetto Croce to his own thinking.<sup>86</sup>

In the late twentieth century the belief that history had been directional had yielded to a belief that the unfolding processes of history were entirely random – not even progress could be certain.<sup>87</sup> It hardly needs be said that this directionless view of history is not one in which there is any room for a metaphysical concept such as the Spirit. Inevitably, the understanding of an entirely random underpinning of history posed challenges for all religion. It is to be expected that these challenges would be particularly intense for so Spirit-focused a religious tendency as Pentecostalism. Questions then arise as to how Pentecostalism will respond to these challenges<sup>88</sup>

According to Wacker, the early Pentecostals were uniformly Biblical literalists.<sup>89</sup> Against the background of historical consciousness, Wacker contends that Biblical literalism is driven by the perspective

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p38.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p40.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p41

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p11.

<sup>89</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp70-73.

that ‘the truth’ stands outside of history.<sup>90</sup> It is trite that a literal rather than a metaphorical understanding of the account of creation in Genesis, for example, is incompatible with prevailing scientific knowledge derived from physics, geology and the theory of evolution. Biblical literalism, with its claims of an exclusive revelation of truth will, inevitably and unavoidably, have an impact on Pentecostalism’s ability to relate to other Christian denominations, other world religions and those committed to scientific rationality.<sup>91</sup> In a rapidly globalizing world, how is Pentecostalism likely to respond to the challenges posed to all religion by changing perceptions of the forces that shape our thoughts and our realities? In this regard, it may be helpful to gain some insight into Wacker’s understanding of the sociology of Pentecostal theology.

## **2.6 Wacker’s Understanding of the Sociology of Pentecostal Theology**

In Wacker’s view, it is critical to understand that as far as the early Pentecostals were concerned, the authors of the Bible were mere amanuenses recording the dictation which they had received from the Spirit.<sup>92</sup> Wacker notes that Russell Spittler, a second-generation Pentecostal who earned a Ph.D in biblical studies at Harvard University, remembered that he had grown up in the tradition of believing that the Bible’s existence had been unaffected by human agency.<sup>93</sup> This explains why, in Wacker’s opinion, the early Pentecostals were led to the belief that the Bible was free from errors of any sort - historical, scientific or theological.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p17.

<sup>91</sup> This aspect, as considered by Wacker, will be examined in more detail in subsection 2.9 below.

<sup>92</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp72-3.

<sup>93</sup> Spittler, R. 1985. “Scripture and the Theological Enterprise” in Johnston, R. Ed. *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, p63; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p73.

<sup>94</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p73.



Wacker contends that almost all the early Pentecostals would have maintained that legitimate authority rested finally on the Bible and in the doctrines contained therein.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, they would have believed in the Spirit's direct communication with believers of Biblical and doctrinal truths.<sup>96</sup> In Wacker's evaluation, the reason for this adherence to strict Biblical literalism has been aptly summarized in the words of one Joseph Hutchinson who pointed out that the early Pentecostals believed not only that their beliefs and those of the early church were the same but that it could not properly be otherwise.<sup>97</sup>

In Wacker's view, the early Pentecostals considered the Bible to be a hand-book or guide containing all that a person needed to know in order to navigate through the complex decisions and intricacies of life.<sup>98</sup> To accomplish this navigation, it was believed to be imperative that the Bible should be read, believed and obeyed.<sup>99</sup> In Wacker's assessment, this belief not only in the comprehensiveness of the Bible but also in its exhaustive quality as a moral compass probably explains why, in the early stages of the movement, almost all Pentecostal educational programs used the Bible as the only textbook.<sup>100</sup> It also explains why Pentecostal centers of learning were called 'Bible Institutes'.<sup>101</sup>

Wacker deduces that the belief that what has been recorded in the Bible had been impervious to human agency not only explains the adherence to Biblical literalism but also gave rise to the assumption that the Bible could be read and understood without any special

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p70.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp70-1.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p71.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

preparation or interpretive principle.<sup>102</sup> Wacker contends that the belief that the Bible's teachings should be articulated carefully and defended vigorously accounts for the familiar expression, 'Full Gospel', which permeated many of the Pentecostal publications and sections of the movement itself.<sup>103</sup> As Wacker points out, the proposition was simple enough: to understand the 'truth' one needed merely to hear and understand the gospel as it had fully been set out in the Bible.<sup>104</sup>

In Wacker's assessment, the movement could, as a result of its conviction that it possessed the truth, be highly coercive.<sup>105</sup> Fraternity with those who adhered to other Christian denominations met with disapproval and often ostracism as it was believed that consorting with others could lead to lapses and errors in understanding the truth.<sup>106</sup> Consequently, the early Pentecostal movement, in Wacker's evaluation, showed little, if any, interest in theological pluralism.<sup>107</sup>

Wacker argues that encounters with practical realities taught Pentecostals to make small compromises along the way, especially when it came to evangelism.<sup>108</sup> He contends that, in practice they often recognized that not every lesson that mattered in life was to be found in the Bible or was always communicated through the Spirit.<sup>109</sup> This, he suggests, reflects the underlying pragmatism in the early Pentecostal movement.<sup>110</sup> For example, Wacker notes that 'speaking in tongues' may have been seen a sign of Spirit baptism but Spirit baptism was not seen as being, in itself, a panacea: the movement recognized the importance of a life well lived and the manifestation of

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp72-6.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp74-77.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p77.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p78.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp84-6.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p86

the fruits of Christian grace in ordinary, everyday matters.<sup>111</sup> Therein may lie much of the explanation for Pentecostalism's transformative power.<sup>112</sup>

Wacker's main interest has been religious movements in America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His assessment may not necessarily give an accurate picture of contemporary Pentecostalism.

The emphasis on Biblical literalism within the Pentecostal theological tradition may have had sociological explanations that are broad in scope and complex in evaluation.<sup>113</sup> The emphasis on Biblical literalism may have been attributable, for example, to the lack of education among adherents. The poorly educated may have been attracted to the movement because they found a home there. That following, in turn, may have given little impetus for an 'educated' approach to religion. Concerning these possibilities, Wacker does not deal pertinently with the classical question: 'which came first, the chicken or the egg?'

The growth of Pentecostalism, while maintaining a commitment to Biblical literalism, could be understood by reference to factors other than the educational levels of Pentecostal adherents. While the early Pentecostals adhered to an ideal of leaderlessness, a factor such as 'leadership' could provide a partial explanation for the following within the movement having spread as it did.<sup>114</sup> This ideal of leaderlessness was closely related to the reason for an attachment to Biblical literalism: the truth was in the Bible, free of human agency. That

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Explanations that arise from socio-economic status, demographics and theories relating to social organization in general.

<sup>114</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp142-4.

truth had simply to be read, understood and obeyed – it could not be expounded.<sup>115</sup>

Wacker relates that this vision of leaderlessness was expressed with varying degrees of intensity: doctrinal pronouncements and effective addresses were attributed to the work of the Spirit alone.<sup>116</sup> Wacker argues that Pentecostals have had able leaders.<sup>117</sup>

Wacker interprets the sociological evidence as suggesting that the leaders of and the converts to the Pentecostal movement were representative of the upwardly mobile segment of the middle class and working class respectively.<sup>118</sup>

According to Wacker, scholars have, in recent decades, offered various explanations for Pentecostalism's ability to attract and sustain the strong following it has.<sup>119</sup> The most common explanations have been the following:

- (i) The Pentecostal movement provided a substitute for material comforts and social esteem that converts could not otherwise obtain (the 'compensation' model);
- (ii) It provided a creative resource for dealing with adversity (the 'functional' model);
- (iii) It was the product of creative leadership (the 'mobilization' model).<sup>120</sup>

There is truth, Wacker reasons, in all three models but they miss at least one essential point.<sup>121</sup> It is to be found in this genius, mentioned

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p71 and 142

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, pp142-4

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p216. Wacker points out that characteristic of both leaders and followers was, in Wacker's interpretation of events, a strong stress on personal autonomy – often described as 'self-reliance' or freedom from support by state agencies (*Ibid.*).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p10

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

earlier in this chapter, of the Pentecostal movement “to hold two seemingly incompatible impulses in productive tension”.<sup>122</sup>

Inasmuch as Wacker has postulated that there is a degree of tension between a rationalist tradition of intellectual discourse and a human yearning for spirituality, the question arises whether it may be correct to regard spirituality as inherently un-intellectual or even anti-intellectual.<sup>123</sup> Wacker applies his mind to the possibility of there being an ‘anti-intellectual’ tradition within Pentecostalism.<sup>124</sup> Whether or not it is accurate to attribute such a tradition to the Pentecostal movement may be relevant to a proper understanding of trends and unfolding developments to be discerned within it.

## **2.7 The Historical Perception of Anti-intellectualism in the Pentecostal Tradition**

Wacker concedes that, historically, there was a factual foundation to Pentecostalism’s pervasive image of being anti-intellectual.<sup>125</sup> He notes that Pentecostals refused to set up accredited seminaries until the 1960s.<sup>126</sup> Among the reasons for the reluctance to foster seminary education was that Pentecostals were averse to degreed clergy and preachers, wary of the social distinctions that may arise from the status of having had a formal religious education.<sup>127</sup> Wacker attributes the failure of Pentecostalism, in the first generation, to require any particular standard of education for ordination as being rooted in a distrust of worldliness.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* See, also, Wacker, “Early Pentecostals”, pp133-143; See, also Welker’s observations in Welker, *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xiv.

<sup>123</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp150-3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p151.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

Wacker acknowledges that there were, even in the first decades of the twentieth century, Pentecostal Bible training schools.<sup>129</sup> These schools claimed that the Bible was their sole textbook but he observes that the students received the guidance of outstanding teachers.<sup>130</sup> Wacker concludes that, while there may have been reservations about formal education, a rigorous training in Christianity has always been valued among Pentecostals.<sup>131</sup> The education at these Bible colleges was, in his view, unaffected by scientific methodology.<sup>132</sup> He points out that a number of first-generation leaders of the movement possessed a sound formal education which extended beyond high school and sometimes beyond college.<sup>133</sup>

Wacker contends that the truth is more variegated than that the Pentecostals were anti-intellectual: submerged beneath much of the rhetoric and public stances was considerable respect for learning and leadership within the movement.<sup>134</sup> Pentecostals were not so much anti-intellectual as they were believers in the importance of the actual experience of the Spirit.<sup>135</sup> This experience was more highly valued than theoretical analysis of religious matters.<sup>136</sup>

In considering the question of anti-intellectualism, Wacker has, in general terms, raised the issue of education.<sup>137</sup> The leadership of the Pentecostal movement may have had a reasonably good education.<sup>138</sup> This was not the case for most of the followers.<sup>139</sup> The poorly educated are socially disadvantaged, as are the poor and others having a low social status. Wacker has raised the question of whether the

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p150.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp152-3.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p204

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p32

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, pp150-3

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p204

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

Pentecostal movement had a special appeal to the disadvantaged, especially the socially disadvantaged.<sup>140</sup>

## **2.8 Pentecostalism's Special Appeal to the Socially Disadvantaged**

Wacker relies upon a number of sources, including John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, first published in 1932, to illustrate the fact that from the time of the Azusa Street revival Pentecostals were widely seen as constituting the marginalized of society.<sup>141</sup> The so-called 'Azusa Street revival' began in an old building at 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles in 1906 and continued to 1909.<sup>142</sup> It is regarded as the event which gave critical momentum the Pentecostal movement, launching it on the trajectory from which it has grown from strength to strength.<sup>143</sup>

Wacker places much reliance on the work by Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: the Making of American Pentecostalism*, wherein Anderson describes early Pentecostals in derogatory terms.<sup>144</sup>

Wacker does not endorse Anderson's portrait but concludes that it contains a kernel of truth, supported by solid research.<sup>145</sup> In Wacker's view, there can be no question that poverty, hunger, homelessness, minimal education, and ill health defined the lives of thousands of Pentecostal followers in earlier days.<sup>146</sup> Whether or not this picture of

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p199

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp5-7, 37, 39, 49, 71, 77, 79, 100, 104, 132, 160, 178, 194, 201, 215, 227, 230, 232.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Anderson, R. 1979. *Vision of the Disinherited: the Making of American Pentecostalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, chapter six, especially pp100-114, 135-6 and 291-5; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp200-1.

<sup>145</sup> Anderson R. 1982. "Taking Another Look at the *Vision of the Disinherited*", *Religious Studies' Review*, 8 (January 1982): pp15-22; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p201.

<sup>146</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p201.

the early Pentecostals was accurate, there was widespread prejudice against them throughout much of America.<sup>147</sup>

No organization or movement attracts a following without reason. The Pentecostal movement traces its origins to the leadership of an itinerant Methodist preacher, Charles Fox Parham, whose awareness of glossolalia or 'speaking in tongues' was awakened towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>148</sup>

The first known newspaper account of a Pentecostal meeting referred to men and women attending Parham's Bible school in Topeka, Kansas in January 1901.<sup>149</sup> The attendance of women at this school was a harbinger of things to come: referring to newspaper reports, Wacker records that outsiders considered the role of women, approaching equality with men, even to the extent of preaching, to have been prominent in Pentecostal meetings.<sup>150</sup>

Women have experienced considerable social disadvantage for much of history. In the light of the conservatism often associated in the public mind with the Pentecostal movement, Wacker considers it ironic that there is widespread public recognition for the fact that the movement, from its beginnings, not only provided an hospitable home for women but also a prominent one for them as preachers and leaders.<sup>151</sup> Women, he concludes, maintained a conspicuous place in the early Pentecostal movement in a variety of ways.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, chapter six, especially pp100-114, 135-6 and 291-5; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp200-1.

<sup>148</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp5-7, 37, 39, 49, 71, 77, 79, 100, 104, 132, 160, 178, 194, 201, 215, 227, 230, 232.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p100.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p104.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p158. This, he contends, is supported by scholarly research. See, Scanzoni, L. and Setta, S. 1986. "Women in Evangelical, Holiness and Pentecostal Traditions" in Reuther, R. and Keller, R. Eds. *Women and Religion in America, 1900-1968*. Volume 3. San Francisco: Harper & Harper, pp223-265; Bendroth, M. 1993. *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p4; Wacker describes how, in the Assemblies of God church, around 1914, women constituted almost one third of its ministers. This figure had declined to about one



Part of the explanation is to be found in the belief that anyone who had received the gift of tongues had the obligation to spread the good news of the work of the Spirit.<sup>153</sup> The Pentecostal movement has always recognized that the Spirit spoke through both women and men.<sup>154</sup> Inasmuch as the gift of tongues did not discriminate against women, this gave women respect within the movement.<sup>155</sup>

While arguing that the role of women within the Pentecostal movement has not been free from contradictions, Wacker acknowledges that the historical record shows that women had roles in leadership, power and responsibility that was unusual for the times.<sup>156</sup>

Blacks, too, have been socially disadvantaged. Wacker records the remarks of one of the leaders within the interracial Pentecostal Assemblies of the World who declaimed, "Truth is truth, it matters not who proclaims it" as being indicative of an attitude of acceptance towards women and blacks.<sup>157</sup> Wacker contends that while white

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fifth by 1925. Wacker summarizes the role of women in the Pentecostal movement in the first quarter of the twentieth century by concluding that about half the traveling evangelists, divine healers and overseas missionaries were female. He also underscores the fact that many women set up and ran Bible institutes and orphanages, and that others established influential careers as tract writers, hymn writers and newspaper editors (*Heaven Below*, pp158-162).

<sup>152</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp158-162.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p164.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p167.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p164.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p158.

<sup>157</sup> Appearing in *Voice in the Wilderness*, volume, 2, probably late 1920, p2, cited in Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p78. According to Wacker, the 'racial attitude' of the 'founding father' of Pentecostalism, Charles Fox Parham, was ambivalent, if not confused. He would defer at times to segregationist attitudes but, having a missionary concern for blacks, believed that all races were included in God's plan of salvation. He preached to racially mixed audiences which was unusual for his time. Parham admitted a black man, William Seymour, to attendance at his Bible school in Houston, Texas in 1905. Seymour was one of the Asuza Street pioneers and, for a while, rose to considerable prominence. Seymour has been described by the *Christian History* magazine as "one of the ten most influential Christians of the twentieth century" (18 January 1978, p35). Parham's relationship with Seymour deteriorated for reasons which are unclear. Wacker concludes that these reasons may have included Parham being repulsed by what he considered to be the

Pentecostals may have had paternalistic attitudes towards blacks in the first half of the twentieth century, the movement remained steadfast in its adherence to the underlying message of essential equality in Christ.<sup>158</sup>

Wacker devotes attention to the fact that the Pentecostal revival broke down traditional social barriers and that, particularly in the specific context of worship, an unusual degree of equality prevailed.<sup>159</sup> He attributes the high status of women and blacks within the Pentecostal movement to the fact that they were able to speak freely and commanded respect because the Pentecostals believed that the Spirit was working through them.<sup>160</sup> The fundamental message of equality, Wacker suggests, provides an explanation for the following among black Americans within the Pentecostal movement: white Pentecostals may not have intended any consequences to arise from Pentecostalism's appeal across the racial divide but this non-racial quality of the movement did result in a large black following within the American Pentecostal movement.<sup>161</sup>

Glossolalia or 'speaking in tongues' may have played a role in the acceptance of women and blacks to positions of prominence within the Pentecostal movement because 'speaking in tongues' acknowledged no

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emotionalism arising from the Asuza Street revival as well as his concern at Seymour's growing prominence (See Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp, 7, 43, 77, 78, 131, 140-3, 231-2, 228-34).

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p105, 144, 226-235. Credence is given to this assessment by the words published in the Asuza's Street's *Apostolic Faith* in 1906: "No instrument of God can be rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education." (Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p144). Wacker emphasizes that the role of blacks and women within the movement was not politically driven (*Ibid.*, p205).

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p203

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p105

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p105, 144, 226-235. Wacker discerns that the movement was not immune from the drift towards racial separation which gathered momentum throughout North America from shortly before World War I to World War II. He observes that, on the whole, Pentecostal culture failed to provide a sustained theology of non-racialism. Pentecostals were influenced by their culture no less than they may have influenced it (*Ibid.*, pp226-235).

barriers of race and gender and was considered to be a gift of God.<sup>162</sup> Wacker contends that glossolalia has always been a feature of Pentecostal culture.<sup>163</sup> He recognizes that Parham's idea that glossolalia constituted the necessary initial evidence of Spirit baptism never quite gained universal approval.<sup>164</sup> Glossolalia is associated in the public mind with the Pentecostal movement to the extent that no serious research may ignore 'tongues'.

## 2.9 Glossolalia and Pentecostalism

Wacker acknowledges that 'speaking in tongues' has its scriptural foundation in various accounts in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>165</sup> In Wacker's view, Pentecostals adopted a sociological stroke of genius by relying on texts in the First Letter to the Corinthians in the Bible<sup>166</sup> to deem 'speaking in tongues' to be a gift which God bestowed selectively according to God's will and the believer's willingness to accept it: one need not necessarily have 'the gift of tongues' to join the movement.<sup>167</sup>

There have been various physiological, psychological and spiritual explanations for glossolalia.<sup>168</sup> What matters, from Wacker's point of view, is that glossolalia gave the socially disadvantaged a sense of supernatural validation, of their being recipients of divine energy.<sup>169</sup> It also facilitated leadership status.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p44, 83, 94.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p5 and 41; Wacker, G. 2008. "Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths" in Butler, J. Wacker, G. and Balmer, R. Eds. *Religion in American Life*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, p228.

<sup>164</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p5 and 41; Wacker, G. 2008. "Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths" in Butler, J. Wacker, G. and Balmer, R. Eds. *Religion in American Life*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, p228.

<sup>165</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p5, 44 & 74; See, for example, Acts 2:4, 10:44-6 and 19:1-7.

<sup>166</sup> See, for example, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

<sup>167</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p44.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp51-7.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p83, 94.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

In Wacker's perspective glossolalia explains, at least in part, the acceptance by Pentecostal whites of blacks, the prominence of women and blacks within the Pentecostal movement and Pentecostalism's special appeal, historically, to the disadvantaged.<sup>171</sup> Self-evidently, the movement was not confined to women and blacks.

Wacker believes that most of those who remained within the Pentecostal movement did so because it provided resources for stabilized and transformed lives.<sup>172</sup> Quite how did Pentecostalism transform lives? The explanation may be both theological and sociological.<sup>173</sup> It may relate to the ability of the movement to "hold two seemingly incompatible impulses in productive tension".<sup>174</sup>

Wacker reminds his audience that there are innumerable stories of transformed lives through the encounter with the Spirit: ordinary people, as a result of their spiritual experiences, believed themselves to be empowered to cope with the vagaries of life.<sup>175</sup> In practice, followers often found their problems in coping with daily living to have been ameliorated, if not solved, through this belief.<sup>176</sup> There has also been a solid track record of practical ability to make adaptations to the world as it is.<sup>177</sup> These two poles have often interacted to provide sustained energy in the work of mission.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p44, 83, 94.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p86.

<sup>173</sup> By "sociological" is meant, in this context, accounts of a social phenomenon, pattern, tendency or trend that are, essentially, functional in their analysis but which exclude any "spiritual" explanation.

<sup>174</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10; See, also, Wacker "Early Pentecostals", pp133-143; See also Welker's observations in *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xiv.

<sup>175</sup> See Wacker, "Early Pentecostals", pp133-143; See also Welker's observations in *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xiv.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

As Wacker recognizes, this raises the issue of the relationship between Pentecostals and other religious movements.<sup>179</sup> What are the prospects for this relationship?

## **2.10 The Prospects for Pentecostalism's Theological Dialogue with Other Christian Denominations, Other World Religions and Those Who Profess No Religion**

Wacker maintains that, historically, Pentecostals invested much energy in drawing boundaries, for the reason that, since the days of the Asuza Street revival, they had considered themselves to have been blessed with knowledge of the truth.<sup>180</sup> In Wacker's assessment, there was, in the past, a particular wariness in Pentecostal attitudes concerning any kind of dealings with Roman Catholics.<sup>181</sup> Wacker qualifies this remark with the observation that it should be borne in mind that, at that time, a similar attitude was pervasive among Protestants generally.<sup>182</sup>

In Wacker's essay "Travails of a Broken Family" in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, he alludes several times to the tensions between Pentecostals and other American Protestants.<sup>183</sup> The reason was to be found not only in the fact that Pentecostals considered themselves to possess the truth but also in resentments relating to social class and mobility.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> See Wacker, "Early Pentecostals", p143; See also Welker's observations in *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xiv.

<sup>180</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp177-8.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, pp178-190.

<sup>182</sup> Wacker, G. 2008. "Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths" in Butler, J., Wacker, G. and Balmer, R. Eds. *Religion in American Life*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, pp253-4.

<sup>183</sup> Blumhofer, E, Spittler, R and Wacker, G. eds. 1999. *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, p199.

<sup>184</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p190.

Within the Pentecostal movement, the tensions arose around the concept of the Trinity.<sup>185</sup> The reasons are not clear but they may have had to do with one or both of the following: (i) the Trinitarian concept could not, strictly speaking, be considered scriptural and (ii) the Pentecostals were unaware of the depths of the debate which gave rise to the adoption of the so-called 'Nicene Creed'.<sup>186</sup> No conversation about ecumenical relations can avoid dealing with the concept of the Trinity.

## 2.11 Trinitarianism and Pentecostalism

It is trite that the controversy relating to whether the Son and the Spirit were co-equally divine with the Father raged within the Christian community during the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>187</sup> The fraught history of the formulation of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed (commonly known as 'The Nicene Creed'), adopted in fact at the Council of Chalcedon, held in 451 A.D. (C.E.), demonstrates the potential divisiveness that Trinitarian debates may generate.<sup>188</sup>

Wacker records that in 1916 a dispute arose in the Assemblies of God over the nature of the Trinity.<sup>189</sup> That controversy contributed to the formation of several 'Oneness' organizations, as they came to be called. The latter held, among other things, that God was one (not

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, pp6-7.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, pp6-7 and 87-91.

<sup>187</sup> Congar, Y. 1999. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Part 1, New York: Crossroads, pp73-4; Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Part 3, pp19-49.

<sup>188</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Part 1, p34, 19-49 and 73-4; Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Part 3, pp19-49; Payne, R. 1980. *The Holy Fire*, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp18-93 and 85; Hill, J. 2003. *The History of Christian Thought*, Oxford, England: Lion Publishing, p93; Drobner, H. 2007. *The Fathers of the Church*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrikson Publishers, p33, 49-51 and 292; Meredith, A. 1995. *The Cappadocians*. London: Chapman, pviii, pp20-21; Meredith, A. 1999. *Gregory of Nyssa*, London and New York: Routledge Publishers, p11.

<sup>189</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp6-7.

triune), fully revealed in Jesus Christ.<sup>190</sup> In time, the largest of the Oneness bodies would include the mostly white United Pentecostal Church and the mostly black Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.<sup>191</sup> Another Oneness body, the mainly Latino Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Christ Jesus, emerged independently on the West Coast in the 1910s.<sup>192</sup>

According to Wacker, the emergence of the so-called ‘Oneness’ following provoked bitter divisions among Pentecostals.<sup>193</sup> The ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals are nowadays often referred to by the more neutral, less emotive word ‘Apostolic’ but the term ‘Oneness’ provides an easy descriptive resonance.<sup>194</sup> ‘Oneness’ followers tended to be more ‘Jesus-centered’ than the others.<sup>195</sup> Common to both ‘factions’ was a focus on the Spirit.<sup>196</sup> ‘God the Father’ tended to recede into the background.<sup>197</sup> Wacker records that tensions also emerged within the Pentecostal movement as to whether the Spirit’s character should be regarded not as a person but rather as an impersonal power.<sup>198</sup>

Wacker suggests that the Spirit-focus of Pentecostalism may ultimately break down the divisions within Pentecostalism.<sup>199</sup> He reasons that it may even facilitate conversations between Pentecostals and the Christian denominations because of the transformative power of the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*; Lippy, C. and Williams P. Eds. 1988. *Encyclopedia of American Religious Experience*. Vol 2. New York: Scribner’s, pp933-45.

<sup>192</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p6-7; Lippy and Williams, *Encyclopedia of American Religious Experience*, pp933-45.

<sup>193</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p28, 79, 85, 88 118, 147.

<sup>194</sup> See chapter five of this research.

<sup>195</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp88-91

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p89.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, pp89-90.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p10; Wacker, *Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*, p17.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

The reality has been more complex than that the early Pentecostals considered that they professed an immutable truth, untouched by the forces of history.<sup>201</sup> Wacker has been non-committal about the prospects for Pentecostalism's relationship with those who have other religious perspectives.<sup>202</sup> He emphasizes that, in the end, Pentecostals are much like everyone else.<sup>203</sup> Past positions are unlikely to have been immutable.<sup>204</sup> Whether conflict between science and Pentecostalism is inevitable is another matter that invites further enquiry.

## **2.12 Summary of Grant Wacker's Historical Perspectives**

Wacker reminds us that the appeal of Pentecostalism has baffled a number of contemporary scholars. He puts forward the explanation that the Pentecostal movement has maintained a creative tension between an ecstatic experience of the Spirit and worldly practicalities. Will this tension snap? Can other Christian denominations, other religions and even those who have no religion at all benefit from a better understanding of the nature and the dynamic of this tension? What of the importance of discerning the spirits in the shaping of Christian mission and theology? Pentecostalism is faced with challenges. Among them is the pervasive influence and affect of science. How is the movement likely to respond to these challenges? Wacker has touched upon 'the sociology of religion'. Might a more contemporary and sociological perspective deepen these perspectives? All these questions may invite reflection.

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<sup>201</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p70.

<sup>202</sup> See Wacker, "Early Pentecostals", pp143-6.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*



# CHAPTER THREE

## A HIGHWAY OVER THE CROSSROADS: MARGARET POLOMA'S PERSPECTIVES AS A SOCIOLOGIST CONCERNING THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

### 3.1 Introduction

An examination from a sociological perspective may assist with an understanding of issues which have been raised in chapter one. Is there perhaps a correlation between religious affiliation and factors such as class, income and educational levels which may assist in understanding patterns in the numerical growth of the Pentecostal movement and its theological development?<sup>205</sup> Are Grant Wacker's historical explanations of a willingness to adapt and to embrace diversity sufficient to explain the growth of Pentecostalism?

The work of the American sociologist, Margaret Poloma, will now be examined, bearing in mind the issues that have been raised in the previous chapters.

Poloma is emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Akron.<sup>206</sup> She has undertaken much research into Pentecostalism.<sup>207</sup> She

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<sup>205</sup> See, for example, Poloma's analysis of the familiar paradigms of sociology in Poloma, M. 2009. "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible? A Postmodern Research Odyssey" in Smith, J. and Yong, A. Eds. *Science and the Spirit. Questions and Possibilities for a Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press (chapter 9); and Poloma, M. (Awaiting Publication). "Sociology, Philosophy and the Empirical Study of Godly Love" in Lee, M. and Yong, A. Eds. *The Study of Godly love: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Chapter 10.

<sup>206</sup> Poloma, M. 1989. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, the cover.

acknowledges that her role as an ‘insider’ has not only sharpened her understanding of the Pentecostal movement but has also made her keenly aware of the role which experience plays in religious affinity and commitment.<sup>208</sup> Poloma has published prolifically.<sup>209</sup>

### 3.2 The Background of Margaret Poloma

Poloma acknowledges that her sociological interest in the Pentecostal movement, more particularly the large Assemblies of God denomination, was awoken during 1979 and 1980 while she was undertaking research into the broader, so-called ‘charismatic movement’.<sup>210</sup> Poloma adopts a broad definition of Pentecostalism: it includes not only the Assemblies of God church but also ‘ethnic’ Pentecostals, the so-called ‘charismatic movement’ and what she describes as neo-Pentecostalism or non-denominational Pentecostalism.<sup>211</sup> Poloma’s past focus on Pentecostalism has, correspondingly, been concentrated on the Assemblies of God church.<sup>212</sup> By necessary implication, her observations have extended, as a general rule, to the larger religious movement considered to be ‘Pentecostal’. For approximately the past 15 years her focus has been on the ‘neo-Pentecostals’.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> See, for example, Poloma, M. 1982. *The Charismatic Movement: Is There a New Pentecost?* Boston: Twayne; Poloma, M. 1986. “Pentecostals and Politics in North and Central America” in Hadden, J. and Shupe, A. Eds. *Prophetic Religions and Politics*. New York: Paragon House, pp329-52; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*; Poloma, M. 2003. *Main Street Mystics: the Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.

<sup>208</sup> Poloma, “*Is Integrating the Spirit and Sociology Possible?*”, p17.

<sup>209</sup> See, for example, the Bibliography for this research.

<sup>210</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p.xi. Her work on the charismatic movement is *The Charismatic Movement: Is There a New Pentecost?* (1982). The “Charismatic Movement” may be considered to refer to those who are well disposed towards glossolalia or “speaking in tongues” as a feature of religious experience. See, Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, pp21-3 and, more generally, Poloma, *The Charismatic Movement*.

<sup>211</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, pp21-3 and, more generally, Poloma, *The Charismatic Movement*.

<sup>212</sup> See, for example, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*.

<sup>213</sup> This is evident from a glance at the titles in the bibliography herein.

Originally, Poloma held prejudicial views towards Pentecostals.<sup>214</sup> Poloma acknowledges that she is sympathetic to the Pentecostal movement, more particularly the Assemblies of God church, but is not a member.<sup>215</sup> She claims that she has not only observed but also personally experienced charismatic phenomena.<sup>216</sup> At one time, she described herself as a “charismatic Roman Catholic” but for nearly 30 years she has not considered herself to be a Roman Catholic.<sup>217</sup> Poloma considers her sociology and her faith to function in a mutually reinforcing relationship.<sup>218</sup> In 1994 and 1995 she participated in the religious revival known as the ‘Toronto Blessing’.<sup>219</sup>

After a traditional Roman Catholic upbringing, Poloma later moved towards agnosticism, influenced by her training as an academic sociologist.<sup>220</sup> Her exposure to the Pentecostal movement has contributed to her rediscovery of faith.<sup>221</sup> Poloma’s encounters with Edward Decker, an Assemblies of God minister and Eugene Meador, pastor of Akron’s First Assembly of God Church, challenged her prejudicial attitudes towards the Assemblies of God church.<sup>222</sup>

Pentecostalism had originally been the primary research focus for Poloma but she has since moved on to study spiritual experiences in a larger context which includes attention being given to the sociological examination of prayer.<sup>223</sup> She has also become interested in the study

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<sup>214</sup> She has described them as “narrow-minded religious bigots”. See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p.xi.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xx.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.* Charismatic phenomena include glossolalia or ‘speaking in tongues’, healing and prophecy. These aspects are dealt with in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xx.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xx and 246.

<sup>219</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p239-40.

<sup>220</sup> Poloma, “Is Integrating the Spirit and Sociology Possible?”, chapter 9.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> She thought it was sect-like, conservative in its proscriptions and obsessed with the practice of glossolalia or ‘speaking in tongues’ (Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p247).

<sup>223</sup> Poloma, “Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?”, p18.

of Godly love.<sup>224</sup> Poloma's intellectual journey has, by her own admission, entailed the modification of her ideas as research opportunities and events unfolded for her.<sup>225</sup> Key aspects of this journey will now be considered.

### **3.3 The Genealogy of Poloma's Ideas**

Poloma acknowledges the influences of the following prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century sociologists on her thinking: Peter Berger, William James, Abraham Maslow and Max Weber.<sup>226</sup> These influences did not prevent her from distancing herself from Berger and Hunter's thesis of the inevitability of secularization.<sup>227</sup> Poloma accepts that Abraham Maslow, himself influenced by Carl Jung, led her to understand that the intense, personal, religious experiences claimed by the adherents of religious movements such as Pentecostalism, had sociological implications.<sup>228</sup> She is convinced that intense, personal, religious experiences may affect human social behaviour.<sup>229</sup>

Poloma records that, as a graduate student in the 1960's, she was influenced by the fact that sociology had been dominated by positivism.<sup>230</sup> Positivists, she now complains, held the view that the only knowledge that was real is that which can be derived from direct observation.<sup>231</sup>

James Davison Hunter, the American sociologist who has specialized in religious studies, influenced many of the perceptions that shaped

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<sup>224</sup> See, for example, Lee, M. and Poloma, M. 2009 *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism: the Practice of Godly Love as Benevolent Service*. Lewiston, Idaho: Edwin Mellen Press.

<sup>225</sup> Poloma, "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?", p18.

<sup>226</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p4.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p21; Maslow, H. 1964. *Religions, Values and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Viking.

<sup>229</sup> Poloma, "Sociology, Philosophy and the Empirical study of Godly Love", p3.

<sup>230</sup> Poloma, "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?", p4.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

her study of the Assemblies of God church in the late 1980's.<sup>232</sup> Poloma concedes that she was originally reluctant to employ otherworldly explanations for the pulling power of the Pentecostal experience.<sup>233</sup> She thought that there was a paradox in Pentecostalism providing spiritual meaning and purpose for those who were functioning in an increasingly rationalistic world.<sup>234</sup> She acknowledges that her perception of this paradox was influenced by Jerry Cardwell some 22 years ago.<sup>235</sup>

Influenced by Hunter, Poloma previously concluded that the Pentecostal movement was a “protest against modernity”.<sup>236</sup> In her later work, Poloma has shifted her position, arguing that Spirit-filled Christianity, which characterizes the broad Pentecostal movement, is “not primarily a reaction to modernity”.<sup>237</sup>

Gradually, Poloma has been drawn to postmodernist ideas.<sup>238</sup> Poloma has described the development of her own ideas as “a postmodern research odyssey”.<sup>239</sup> Poloma describes how she has become sceptical of the worldview, derived from the Enlightenment, that all knowledge can be rationally and scientifically explained.<sup>240</sup> This shift in Poloma’s thoughts was affected by the sociologist George Hillery.<sup>241</sup> Today

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<sup>232</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p1. See also, Hunter, J. 1981 “The New Religions: Demodernization and the Protest Against Modernity” in Wilson, B. Ed. *Impact of New Religious Movements*. New York: Rose of Sharon Press, pp1-20; Hunter, J. 1983. *American Evangelicism*. Hew Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>233</sup> Poloma, “Is Integrating the Spirit and Sociology Possible?”, p6.

<sup>234</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p7; Cardwell, J. 1985. *A Rumor of Trumpets: the Return of God to Secular Society*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp1-20 and *Main Street Mystics*, p15.

<sup>237</sup> Poloma, M. 2006. “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity” in Welker M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p154.

<sup>238</sup> Poloma, “Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?”, pp4-5 and 21-22.

<sup>239</sup> This is the subtitle of her “Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?”.

<sup>240</sup> Poloma, “Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?”, p22.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, pp4-10.

Poloma overtly acknowledges the power of spiritual experience in the lives of religious adherents, including Pentecostals.<sup>242</sup>

Poloma confronts sociology's reluctance to talk about God, love, or heaven.<sup>243</sup> She is reproachful of this reluctance, justifying her position by reference to the fact that research polls have repeatedly demonstrated that concepts such as God, love and heaven matter to most Americans.<sup>244</sup> In her latest published book, *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism: the Practice of Godly Love As Benevolent Service*, Poloma has drawn on the work of the other scholars upon whom this work has focused, Grant Wacker, Frank Macchia and Amos Yong, to the extent that she acknowledges her indebtedness to their development of the concept of Spirit baptism as a religious experience.<sup>245</sup>

In "From Prayer Activities to Receptive Prayer: Godly Love and the Knowledge that Surpasses Understanding"<sup>246</sup> Poloma contends that prayer should be conceptualized as integrating aspects which are both active and receptive.<sup>247</sup> This has been a departure from her earlier

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<sup>242</sup> See the review by William Kay of Glyndŵr University of Lee, M. and Poloma, M. 2009 *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism: the Practice of Godly Love As Benevolent Service*. Lewiston, Idaho: Edwin Mellen Press. In H-Pentecostalism, H-Net Reviews, May 2010. William Kay commends Poloma for dealing with the question of love and, more especially, "Godly love" in her sociological studies. In this regard, he observes: "Love in all its manifestations is vital to theology and permeates much popular culture but, oddly enough, has been almost entirely avoided as a topic of study by sociologists and psychologists". Of Poloma's *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment*, Kay remarks that: "This is a groundbreaking book that seriously addresses matters about which the academy has been almost entirely silent".

<sup>243</sup> Poloma, "Sociology, Philosophy and the Empirical Study of Godly Love", p2.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> See the review by William Kay of Glyndŵr University of Lee and Poloma, *A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism*.

<sup>246</sup> Poloma, M. and Lee, M. 2011. "From Prayer Activities to Receptive Prayer: Godly Love and the Knowledge that Surpasses Understanding", *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Volume 39, Summer 2011, pp143-154.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p143. See also, more generally, Poloma, M and Gallup, G. Jr. 1991. *Varieties of Prayer: A Survey Report*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press.

position in *Varieties of Prayer: a Survey Report* in which active prayer and receptive prayer were seen as distinct from one another.<sup>248</sup>

Poloma previously considered charismatic experiences to have become routinized and individualized whereas she now considers these experiences to be part of the broader revival of American Pentecostalism as a whole. This shift in Poloma's thinking is apparent in her published works. For example, in *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, she describes glossolalia, which has generally been associated with Pentecostalism as one of the more well known charismatic experiences, as being "normative" within the Pentecostal movement.<sup>249</sup> In *Main Street Mystics*, published in 2003, she describes glossolalia differently, as an "experience of the power and person of the Spirit".<sup>250</sup>

Poloma has equated fundamentalism with Biblical literalism.<sup>251</sup> In her past analysis, both the adherence to Biblical literalism and the wariness of debate with other religious affiliations, which have characterized the Assemblies of God church from the beginning, were related to a fear of compromise with the 'truth' – something with which Pentecostals believed they had been uniquely blessed.<sup>252</sup> Poloma has agreed with Cox, Hollenweger and Spittler that fundamentalism poses dangers for Pentecostal identity but she has contended in her more recent work that the attachment to fundamentalist positions has more to do with efforts by the pastors in the white Pentecostal denominations to maintain a sense of identity, apart from others, rather than a fear that the truth will become contaminated.<sup>253</sup> Contrariwise, Poloma also posits the perspective that Pentecostal revivals will be led by Hispanics, Asians and Blacks while

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p27.

<sup>250</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, pp239-40.

<sup>251</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p236.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> Poloma, M. "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp159-165.

white American Pentecostals seek acceptance from post-Enlightenment and secular communities.<sup>254</sup>

In her earlier work Poloma, like Wacker, was confident that the pragmatism within the Assemblies of God church as well as its tradition of rational leadership would erode its commitment to Biblical literalism.<sup>255</sup> She perceived that there were tensions within that church between, on the one hand, a fear of a loss of identity through religious communion with others and a desire for recognition and acceptance by other religious communities on the other.<sup>256</sup> She made a cautious assessment that these tensions would be resolved over time, precisely by reason of the church's pragmatism and rational leadership.<sup>257</sup> Poloma's more recent perspective is that Pentecostalism, precisely because of its emphasis on religious experience, is being revitalized by ethnic churches that are indifferent to the worldview of other Christian denominations and other religions.<sup>258</sup>

Poloma has also attributed the growth of Pentecostalism to its facility for combining missionary activities with a teaching of empowerment.<sup>259</sup> Poloma sees 'empowerment' as having both 'spiritual' and 'social' dimensions.<sup>260</sup> She now believes that the explanation for the growth of Pentecostalism is to be found in what may be described as the otherworldly or spiritual experience which

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, pxiv and pp164-5. Cox, H. 1995. *Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley; Hollenweger, W. 1997. *Pentecostalism: Origins and developments Worldwide*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson; Spittler, R. 1994. "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of These Categories" in Poewe, K. Ed. *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

<sup>255</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p66 and 87.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165;

<sup>259</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p219.

<sup>260</sup> This conclusion is drawn against the background of Poloma's own account of her "spiritual odyssey", as well as the genealogy of her ideas.



the religious movement affords its followers.<sup>261</sup> Poloma's understanding now is that there may be an otherworldly explanation for the growth of Pentecostalism and other Christian denominations that have grown in large measure around the world in recent decades.<sup>262</sup>

Without abandoning more traditional sociological explanations for observed realities, she attributes this otherworldly explanation for the appeal of Pentecostalism to their ecstatic, Spirit-filled approach to religion.<sup>263</sup> Her assessment in this regard may provide answers to one of the large questions with which this research is concerned: the reasons for this rapidly developing following among the Pentecostals worldwide.

In the previous chapter, the question was explored as to whether the social dimension of the experience of empowerment may entail a special attraction for those who have been socio-economically disadvantaged. This aspect will now be further examined, viewed through the lens which Poloma has held up before us, before her stronger emphasis on the spiritual aspects of religion became more developed.

### **3.4 The Question of Pentecostalism's Special Appeal for the Disadvantaged in Poloma's Assessment of the Reasons for Pentecostalism's Growth Worldwide**

Poloma refers approvingly to Weber's assessment that an emphasis of equality for women has been greater among those religious denominations appealing especially to the socially disadvantaged than

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<sup>261</sup> Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165.

<sup>262</sup> Poloma, "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?", chapter 9.

<sup>263</sup> Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", p165.

has been the case in the more traditional Christian churches.<sup>264</sup> She relies on the research of Charles Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard to provide objective support for this thesis when applied to American Pentecostalism.<sup>265</sup> She records that originally, when the charismata were seen as a sign of Spirit baptism, this resulted in those women who manifested such charismata receiving special recognition.<sup>266</sup> Poloma observes that in the Assemblies of God church, women outnumber men by a ratio of six to four but notes that there is a considerable body of evidence which suggests that, in general, women are more likely to be interested and involved in religion than men.<sup>267</sup>

Poloma contends that the adherents of the Assemblies of God church are no longer the disadvantaged of society but represent all walks of life and educational levels.<sup>268</sup> Poloma acknowledges that the early days of the Azusa Street revival blurred distinctions as to race, class and gender but concludes that these soon gave way to structures that

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<sup>264</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p102; Weber, M. 1963. *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, p104; Barfoot, C. and Sheppard, G. 1980. "Prophetic vs Priestly Religion: the Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches" in *Review of Religious Research* 22, no.1 (Sept): pp2-17.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp101-121. Charismata include glossolalia or 'speaking in tongues', healing and prophecy. They are considered by Pentecostals to be gifts of the Spirit. (See, for example, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp25-7.) See, also, section 3.7 below.

<sup>267</sup> Batson C. and Ventis L. 1982. *The Religious Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp36-40; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p29. Poloma suggests that opportunities for Pentecostalism to take a lead with regards to the role of women in contemporary society were lost. (*The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp208-9). Poloma concludes that, as Pentecostalism began to grow, it deliberately tried to exclude women from the ministry but this position has more recently, begun to soften (*Ibid.*, pp101-121). Poloma concedes that she has feminist biases or impulses ("Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible", p6). Charismata include glossolalia and other divinely conferred powers such as prophecy and healing (See, for example, Yong, A. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 20. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, p229; Yong, A. 2002. *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*. New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, p248.

<sup>268</sup> Anderson, R. 1979. *Vision of the Disinherited: the Making of American Pentecostalism*. New York: Oxford University Press; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p7.

mirrored those of the rest of society.<sup>269</sup> The appeal of Pentecostalism has expanded to a broad spectrum of society. In the early stages of the Pentecostal movement's development, there may have been some truth in the notion that Pentecostalism's appeal to the socially disadvantaged provided the explanation for the appeal of the movement. This correlation now appears to be too weak to justify such a conclusion. Poloma discerns that there are now tensions within the broad Pentecostal movement arising from the privileged white Americans among them wanting to tame or downplay the pneumatic revivals being experienced by others.<sup>270</sup>

If the profile of people to whom Pentecostalism appeals is much the same as that of the rest of society, may there may be a sociological explanation, other than socio-economic status, for the worldwide growth of the movement? Could the school of thought which sees Pentecostalism as a 'protest against modernity' prevail?

### **3.5 The Protest against Modernity Theory**

Drawing on Hunter, Poloma has alluded to the dilemma of contemporary being in society.<sup>271</sup> She has referred to the fact that human beings struggle to find a well-integrated system of meaning which gives a sense of belonging and purpose to their lives.<sup>272</sup> This struggle arises from the fact that society is structurally incapable of

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<sup>269</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p194. Poloma considers that in terms of its social profile, Pentecostalism has become typical of much of the rest of the society in which it was located. She remarks that, as Pentecostals have made socio-economic strides forward, this has resulted in their having less focus on the poor and more on the "Protestant ethic of wealth as a sign of God's blessings" (*The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p239; *Main Street Mystics*, p194). The significance of the so-called 'Azusa Street revival' is dealt with in more detail in chapters one and two.

<sup>270</sup> Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165.

<sup>271</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p1; Hunter "The New Religions: Demodernization and the Protest Against Modernity", p5.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

providing individuals with meaning, affirmation and a sense of identity in their everyday lives.<sup>273</sup>

Poloma has reasoned that the broad charismatic/Pentecostal movement not only gives meaning to people's lives but is a well-networked and well-organized operation, attractive to many precisely by reason of the fact that it does not view tradition or received patterns of institutional behaviour with deference.<sup>274</sup> This observation resonates, in part, with Wacker's observation that Pentecostalism has adapted well to the times in which it operates. This adaptation may, as Wacker has suggested, simply be a pragmatic response to the prevailing realities in which Pentecostalism is located.

Poloma has discerned that within the broad following known as 'Pentecostal', there is, particularly among the elements thereof that have aligned with the 'charismatic movement', not so much a reaction to modernity as an ecstatic experience of an otherworldly power, which, in itself, may have an inherent attraction.<sup>275</sup> She argues that while fundamentalist tendencies are never far from the surface in this movement, the impetus to focus on belief in and experience of the creative Spirit is even stronger.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p6.

<sup>275</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p23. Poloma uses the term "transrational" to describe knowledge as "not limited to the realms of reason and sensory experience" (*Ibid.*).

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.* Poloma submits that basic to this worldview is "the belief that God is active in an ongoing way in the world". She describes adherents of this type as "Main Street Mystics". Poloma uses the term "Main Street Mystics" to describe ordinary people who believe that they have encountered truths beyond present human understanding by reason of their having attained a unity with God (or "the Deity" or "the absolute"- see Murray, J., Bradley, H., Craigie, W. and Onions, C. Es. 1989. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Second edition. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press). Perhaps, an intellectually more neutral term for "unity with God" would be "existential harmony". "Transrational" might be said to be a term used by Poloma to describe this encounter with truths beyond human understanding (*Main Street Mystics*, pp23-7).

In Poloma's postmodern perspective, it is an inadequate explanation for Pentecostalism's appeal that it provides comfort in the face of the alienation and dislocation pervasively experienced by persons in contemporary society. Poloma now accepts that religious affiliation and practice may not be escapist delusions and that not all knowledge and awareness can be scientifically derived.<sup>277</sup>

A more complex explanation for Pentecostalism's appeal is required than the diagnosis that it is a 'protest against modernity'. Our rationalist traditions teach us that nothing happens without a reason: there must, in these traditions, be an explanation for the drawing power of Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism, according to Poloma, has been an activist rather than a contemplative movement.<sup>278</sup> Referring to Lee McClung, Poloma suggests that the practical rather than the intellectual emphasis of the Pentecostal movement may explain why the historical perception that its tradition was 'anti-intellectual' has erroneously persisted.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Poloma, "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?", chapter 9. This concept of ordinary people functioning in the present times as "Main Street Mystics" accords with Poloma's later postmodern worldview that not all knowledge is or can be derived "from scientific enquiry and autonomous rationality". Quoting from Walter Anderson, she contends that "reality isn't what it used to be" (*Main Street Mystics*, p24).

<sup>278</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p237 and 282.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.* Poloma notes that, demographic studies indicate that within the Assemblies of God church, at least, educational levels among both the leadership and the general body of adherents are not dissimilar from the rest of American Society. The Assemblies of God has, in recent decades, taken steps to promote tertiary education, even to the extent of graduate schools of theology. Education is not necessarily destructive of anti-intellectualism and, conversely, a lack of education need not necessarily have 'anti-intellectual' manifestations. To the extent that there is any correlation between a lack of education and anti-intellectualism, exposure to education and the social and intellectual confidence that often accompany educational attainment will, as a general rule, lead to less defensive positions when it comes to 'intellectual' issues. Other Christian denominations are not dominated by the pursuit of intellectual exercises. 'Intellectualism', or the lack of it, can hardly explain any religious following. See Stark, R. and Bainbridge, W. 1985. *The Future of Religion*. Berkley, California: University of California Press; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p160, 164, 260.

Poloma has described what is known as ‘Spirit baptism’ as always having been considered to be a central tenet of Pentecostalism.<sup>280</sup> Might this not be the key to understanding Pentecostalism’s wide appeal? What might Spirit baptism be?

### **3.6 The Central Tenet of Spirit Baptism in Pentecostalism**

Poloma contends that without an awareness of the concept of Spirit baptism, it is difficult to come close to a real understanding of the broad Pentecostal movement.<sup>281</sup> Briefly stated, Poloma considers Spirit baptism to be an intense, personal, religious experience.<sup>282</sup> An ecstatic experience of otherworldly power may be another way of describing it.<sup>283</sup>

Poloma accepts that Spirit baptism, as an ecstatic experience of otherworldly power, may have sociological implications: she argues that much of institutionalized religion, in its more traditional forms, becomes legalistic, bureaucratic, empty and, therefore, unappealing, whereas this vacuity is absent from Pentecostal worship.<sup>284</sup> This proposition resonates with Poloma’s earlier thesis that Pentecostalism provides a protest against modernity.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p26. She argues that the concept of Spirit baptism has always been considered a central tenet of Pentecostalism, whether from the beginnings of Pentecostalism where she traces back to Charles Fox Parham speaking in tongues at the Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas in 1901 or a little later to the so-called Asuza Street revival in Los Angeles, led by one of Parham’s protégés, William Seymour, in 1906 (*Ibid.*).

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p232.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p21.

<sup>283</sup> See, for example, Welker M. 2006. “The Introduction” in Welker M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p.xiv.

<sup>284</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p21.

<sup>285</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p23. Poloma uses the term “transrational” to describe knowledge as “not limited to the realms of reason and sensory experience” (*Ibid.*).

‘Spirit baptism’ is a metaphorical concept.<sup>286</sup> The word ‘baptism’ derives from the Greek word ‘baptizein’ which means, literally, ‘to wash’ or ‘to clean (with water)’ and, in certain contexts, ‘to immerse (in water)’.<sup>287</sup> ‘Spirit baptism’ is not a concept to which there is direct allusion in the Bible. ‘Spirit baptism’ as a concept is derived by way of inference: in Acts 1.5 Jesus may be understood as comparing and contrasting baptism with the Spirit with the baptism with water by John. Almost immediately thereafter, Jesus is recorded as promising empowerment when the Spirit comes upon the faithful.<sup>288</sup>

‘Baptism’ and ‘regeneration’ may be understood as being almost synonymous terms.<sup>289</sup> In addition to being an intense, personal,

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<sup>286</sup> The “tongues of fire” imagery is found in Acts 2.1-4: “The day of Pentecost had come, and they were all together in one place. Suddenly there came from the sky what sounded like a strong, driving wind, a noise which filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them flames like tongues of fire distributed among them and coming to rest on each one. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them power of utterance”. Peter is recorded as having said to the crowd that had gathered after the Pentecost event: “In the last days, says God, I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy; young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Yes, on my servants and my handmaids I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. I will show portents in the sky above, and signs on the earth below – blood and fire and a pall of smoke” (Acts 2.17-19). Paul writes that: “... for in the one Spirit we were all brought into one body by baptism, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free; we were all given that one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12.12-13). In Greek, the word ‘baptism’ has a ‘watery’ or ‘liquid’ quality, an association with ‘liquidity’ or ‘fluidity’. This property or quality is found in the scriptural allusions to Spirit baptism (cf. “I will *pour* out my Spirit” and “we were all given that one Spirit to *drink*”.) Spirit baptism is associated not only with water but also with wind and “flames like tongues of fire”. In the ordinary experience of human beings there is an incompatibility between water and fire. Different, almost contradictory, metaphorical images have been employed in these allusions to baptism. These differing allusions may reflect the fact that, when it comes to Spirit baptism, persons are trying to describe something that eludes the power of human beings. (The *Revised Standard Version*. 1965. New York: William Collins, has been used for the quotations in this footnote).

<sup>287</sup> See, for example, *The Oxford English Dictionary; Classical Greek: A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1968. Oxford, England: Liddell & Scott; and Bauer, W. 2000. *New Testament Greek: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Translated by Arndt, W., Gingrich, W. and Danker, F.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>288</sup> Acts 1.8. *Revised Standard Version*. 1965. New York: William Collins; and *Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha*. 1989. Oxford and Cambridge, England: Oxford and Cambridge University Press.

<sup>289</sup> In Paul’s letter to Titus he says: “But when the kindness and generosity of God our Saviour dawned upon the world, then, not for any good deeds of our own, but because he was merciful, he saved us through the water of rebirth and the renewing

religious experience, Spirit baptism may also be understood to be regeneration in and through the Spirit. Poloma's research suggests that one of the keys to understanding the appeal of Pentecostalism is that it results in regeneration in and through the Spirit.<sup>290</sup>

Might this experience of otherworldly power be inextricably linked to charismata such as glossolalia? Poloma, like Wacker, confirms that Spirit baptism has, within the Pentecostal movement, been considered to be closely linked with glossolalia or 'speaking in tongues'.<sup>291</sup> It has been apparent in both chapter two, which deals with Wacker's work, and in the observations concerning Poloma's initial prejudice towards the Pentecostals, that glossolalia or 'speaking in tongues' is associated in the mind of the general public as a feature which is characteristic of the Pentecostal movement. Is 'speaking in tongues' connected in some as yet imperfectly understood manner with Pentecostalism or is it merely an incident of Spirit baptism? Does it perhaps have some other function? Is 'speaking in tongues' part of, but not essential to, a wider and deeper experience of 'Spirit baptism' among Pentecostals?

### **3.7 Glossolalia or 'Speaking in Tongues'**

Wacker regards glossolalia or 'speaking in tongues' as having been a feature of vital importance to Pentecostalism since the days of the Azusa Street revival, almost to the extent of distinctiveness. Poloma emphasises that glossolalia is but one of the charismatic experiences

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power of the Holy Spirit, which he lavished upon us through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, justified by his grace, we might in hope become heirs to eternal life" (The Letter of Paul to Titus 3: 4-7. This is the translation appearing in *The Revised English Bible*). In the original Greek text of this passage the word 'palingenesia' was used for the word which is often translated into English as 'rebirth'. In the *Revised Standard Version* and *The Authorised (King James) Version* of the Bible it is translated in this passage as "regeneration". (See *Revised Standard Version*; and *The Authorised King James Version*. 1970. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press). The word "baptism" itself is also often defined as meaning "regeneration" (See *The Oxford English Dictionary*).

<sup>290</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p207.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, p26.



that is viewed as normative within Pentecostalism.<sup>292</sup> Another is prophecy.<sup>293</sup> Yet another is healing.<sup>294</sup> Charismata are considered among Pentecostals to be gifts of the Spirit.<sup>295</sup>

In Poloma's early work on the Assemblies of God church, she considered that these charismata provided, collectively, the social-psychological key that best accounts for the origin, development and growth of the Assemblies of God church.<sup>296</sup> Poloma concluded that glossolalia constitutes a vital charismatic experience within the Assemblies of God church.<sup>297</sup>

There may be universal agreement that 'speaking in tongues' is a prominent feature of Pentecostalism but Poloma recognizes that there is, increasingly, a subtle shift towards a position that glossolalia is not exclusive evidence of Spirit baptism.<sup>298</sup> Spirit baptism and glossolalia may run parallel with one another in much the same way as occurs with Pentecostalism and 'speaking in tongues', but Spirit baptism and 'speaking in tongues' should not be considered as synonymous. Glossolalia may be distinctive to Pentecostalism but 'speaking in tongues' is not an exclusively Pentecostal attribute.<sup>299</sup> Glossolalia and Spirit baptism have a close association but the two are not coextensive. The available evidence suggests that 'speaking in tongues' is an incomplete and inadequate explanation for the resonance which Pentecostalism has for so many people.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, p27.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p25.

<sup>295</sup> Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165.

<sup>296</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp88-90.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p91. Even in her later work, Poloma describes 'speaking in tongues' as being the critical sign of Spirit baptism for many Pentecostals ("The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165).

<sup>298</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p41.

<sup>299</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p67.

<sup>300</sup> Poloma quotes William Samarin as postulating that more traditional Christian denominations may have been wary of glossolalia by reason of the fact the "rational tradition in the west looks with disfavour on emotionalism in religion". Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p47; Samarin, W. 1972. *Tongues of Men and Angels*. New York: Macmillan, pp42-3. This statement by Samarin may be too

Spirit baptism, in Poloma's analysis, cannot be understood by reference to charismata alone. Charismata, including glossolalia, are thus merely tangentially relevant in exploring the question of why it is that Pentecostalism is able to attract and sustain such a large and growing following worldwide. Spirit baptism may be a more complex concept than sociological definitions will allow. 'Spirit baptism' as a metaphor or symbol invites a more theological consideration – a matter to be considered in greater detail in the ensuing chapters when the work of the theologians is considered.

Poloma has remarked that, essentially, the practice and method of the Pentecostals has been experiential: the experience being that of the power and person of the Spirit.<sup>301</sup> Permeating through Poloma's work is the conviction that one cannot understand the character of Pentecostalism without coming to terms with this strong experience of the Spirit, encounters with which have been found to be empowering to live a life of love.<sup>302</sup>

In underlining the importance of the religious experience encountered by the followers of Pentecostalism, Poloma's research suggests that this experiential quality, above all else, needs to be grasped if one is to gain a correct perspective as to the pulling power of the movement. Poloma has referred, approvingly, to Daniel Albrecht's observation that, at its heart, Pentecostalism is about the experience in and of the Spirit.<sup>303</sup>

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sweeping: it is not necessarily true that western "rational tradition" looks askance at emotionalism in religion or that, outside of Pentecostalism, there is a blanket "western" aversion to glossolalia.

<sup>301</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p237; McClung, L. 1985. "Truth on Fire. Pentecostals and an Urgent Missiology" in *The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology*. Photocopies of papers presented at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

<sup>302</sup> Poloma, "Sociology, Philosophy and the Empirical Study of Godly Love".

<sup>303</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p21; Albrecht, D. 1999. *Rites in the Spirit. A Ritual approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, pp28-9.

Upon a review of Poloma's work, it appears that Spirit baptism may explain why Pentecostalism features on the global religious stage as it does today. For the purposes of this research the explanation that Spirit baptism may provide the key to Pentecostalism's extensive following is, at this stage, necessarily tentative and provisional.

Poloma's work suggests that the explanation for the growth of Pentecostalism is to be found in considerations that lie beyond the criteria traditionally relied upon by sociologists. Truth is often multi-faceted: answers are not always found in a single explanation. Different factors may operate in a catalytic relationship with one another. Explanations may be found in parts making up a whole.

If Spirit baptism provides the explanation of the force behind the growth of the Pentecostalism movement, what might be the implications thereof? Being 'baptized in the Spirit' may be an experience that profoundly affects the lives of those who encounter it but if baptism is a metaphor, having a scriptural foundation, it is shared by, or at least available to, all Christians. The question then arises: how differently – if at all – do Pentecostals understand that metaphor from other Christian denominations?

The historical narrative of what is commonly known as the 'Nicene Creed' informs us that, while there may be debate about the particularities of meaning of 'the Spirit', the notion of 'the Spirit' is universally shared among Christians. Experience in and of the Spirit is not uniquely Pentecostal. How that experience is encountered, as well as the implications thereof may, conceivably, be different among different Christian denominations.

Historically, the apparent distinctiveness to Pentecostals of Spirit baptism has been perceived as that which sets them apart from

others. That distinctiveness may not be as acute as may have been imagined, either by Pentecostals or other religious adherents. Spirit baptism is a Spirit-focused or Spirit-centred experience: the Spirit dominates in the accounts of Spirit baptism. The Spirit may provide a natural point of reference from which to base ecumenical dialogue between Pentecostals and other Christians.

Inasmuch as Spirit baptism is inextricably linked to an ecstatic awareness of otherworldly power, those who are outside of the Pentecostal fold may benefit from developing an understanding of what this experience entails. For this possibility to materialize, dialogue is necessary. If baptism itself is a metaphor and ‘spirit’ a concept that has resonance in other religions – and even perhaps among those who have no religion at all – the scope for dialogue across religious boundaries may extend beyond the confines of the Christian community.

Dialogue across religious boundaries, in Poloma’s assessment of the situation, raises complex dilemmas for the Pentecostal movement.<sup>304</sup> Against this background, the prospects of religious dialogue between Pentecostals and those of differing religious affinities will therefore be explored.

### **3.8 The Prospects for Pentecostalism’s Theological Dialogue with Others: Past Perspectives and Present Dilemmas**

In order to understand the prospects for Pentecostalism’s dialogue with others, one needs first to look back into the past and then

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<sup>304</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p47 and 141-42 and 207-12; Poloma, “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity”, pp147-165. Synan, V. 1971. *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p142.

examine the present in order to obtain an appropriate orientation, the better to gaze into the future.

Poloma has proposed that critical to the question of possible dialogue by Pentecostals with others is whether it would remain mired in a fundamentalist theology rather than adopting an 'experiential' theology, the former acting as a brake upon dialogue, the latter as an accelerator.<sup>305</sup>

She has reasoned that a focus on Biblical literalism, whether by Pentecostals 'looking out' or outsiders 'looking in' may obscure Pentecostalism's charismatic 'core values'.<sup>306</sup> These core values, in her opinion, relate to "experience in and of the Spirit".<sup>307</sup> Herein is to be found the justification for the title of one of her books: Pentecostalism, in her view, is at the crossroads. The dilemma for Pentecostalism, in Poloma's earlier perspective, was thus not confined to whether or not to engage in ecumenical dialogue but also extended to what direction to take in respect of emphasis: "eternal truths" versus "core values".<sup>308</sup>

Poloma recognizes that, in the past, Pentecostalism and ecumenical dialogue did not have a natural affinity for one another.<sup>309</sup> Poloma

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<sup>305</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p236.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p21; Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, pp28-9.

<sup>308</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p140.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, p131. Poloma provides the example of David Du Plessis. She relates how Du Plessis, a South African who became known as 'Mr Pentecost', and was ordained after his move to the United States. He was dismissed from the Assemblies of God in 1962 as a result of his efforts to promote interdenominational dialogue. Reinstated in 1980, he died in 1987 without there being any special memorial tribute to him by the Pentecostal movement. Poloma contends that the story of Du Plessis hardly bodes well for the future. (*Ibid.*, pp131-2, 181). Poloma has observed that serious ecumenical discussions between Pentecostals and others have been relatively isolated. (*Ibid.*, p183; *Main Street Mystics*, p194; "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp159-165.) Poloma has also observed that, from the onset stages of their development, Pentecostals practiced not only a separation but also a rejection of the rest of the world, but suggests that this is common among new religious formations (*The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p141). Separation and rejection of the rest of the world is hardly unique to new religious formations:

perceives that the predominantly white Assemblies of God church has become “Evangelical”.<sup>310</sup>

Poloma illuminates a paradox which arises from the question of whether or not Pentecostals should be interactive with others in matters of religion.<sup>311</sup> This paradox generates dilemmas, tension and ambiguity.<sup>312</sup> These dilemmas are not dissimilar to those posed by Wacker. Poloma today contends that concern for maintaining identity is what has kept Pentecostals apart from other Christians.<sup>313</sup> While recognizing that sections among the Pentecostals now seek recognition and acceptance from other religious affiliations, Poloma also discerns that if Pentecostal pastors are less assertive at maintaining a separate identity for their churches, this may put Pentecostalism’s uniquely otherworldly perspective of the experience of the Spirit at risk.<sup>314</sup> This, she predicts, may result in a falling off of adherence within the Pentecostal church thus affected.<sup>315</sup> Therein lays the paradox.

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monasticism, the very term of which derives from the Greek word ‘monazein’, meaning to ‘live alone’ is an ancient and familiar example of religious formation resulting in at least a degree of separation from the wider community (*The Oxford English Dictionary*).

<sup>310</sup> Here she is referring to Frank Macchia’s description of a “paradigm shift from an exclusive focus on holiness to an outward thrust that invoked a dynamic filling and an empowerment for global witness” (Macchia, F. 1999. “The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology” in Dempster, M., Klaus, B. and Petersen, D. Eds. *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*. Carlisle: California: Peaternoster Publishing, p.16). See also Poloma, “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity”, p153. Poloma detects signs that the past inclination by Pentecostals towards religious separation may be changing, especially as large groupings, like the Assemblies of God church, have become institutionalized and charismatic experiences within it are routinised. See: *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p47, 141-42 and 207; “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity”, pp147-165; Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, p142.

<sup>311</sup> Poloma, “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity”, p165.

<sup>312</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p47, 141-42 and 207; Poloma, “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity”, pp147-165. Referring to Vinson Synan, Poloma concludes that the tension between Pentecostals and the rest of society was mutual: Pentecostals have been considered by other Christians to be “fanatical, self-righteous, doctrinally in error and emotionally unstable” (*The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p142).

<sup>313</sup> Poloma, “The Future of American Pentecostal Identity”, p165.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

Poloma recognizes that the paradox eludes easy resolution.<sup>316</sup> For this reason she believes that there will be continuing ambiguity for quite some time in the matter of Pentecostalism's stance towards ecumenical dialogue.<sup>317</sup>

Poloma's own position on the issue of ecumenical dialogue is not free from ambiguity and even contradiction: on the one hand, she is critical of the white Assemblies of God church for maintaining too fundamentalist an orientation. She has suggested that a reason for its having done so is to maintain a sense of identity but, on the other hand, she criticizes it for seeking acceptance and accommodation with other religious groupings, predicting that new, ethnic churches will thrive by reason of their "Spirit-filled" Christianity.<sup>318</sup>

Poloma has concluded that it is impossible to predict the extent to which Pentecostals, as a whole, will cooperate and exchange ideas with others in matters of religion.<sup>319</sup>

*En passant*, there is an aspect which Wacker touched upon which Poloma also considers to be tangentially relevant when considering Pentecostal interactions with religious 'others': mutually perceived social difference and social distance both from those 'looking in' at Pentecostalism and also those 'looking out' from Pentecostalism's

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<sup>316</sup> This nature of this paradox has already been outlined previously. In her earlier work, Poloma has suggested that Pentecostals have feared that, in the exchange of ideas with other, more institutionalized, Christian denominations, they will be confronted, on the one hand, with a sense of rationality that will detract from Pentecostalism's charismatic character (*The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p207). Elsewhere, she has referred to fear of losing a sense of identity through religious conversations with others as being a factor inhibiting dialogue. In turn, juxtaposed against this fear of losing identity, is a yearning for acceptance and recognition by others ("The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", p.xiv and pp159-165).

<sup>317</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p47, 141-42 and 207; Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, p142; Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165.

<sup>318</sup> Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-65.

<sup>319</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p47, 141-42 and 207, 243; Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", pp147-165.

enclaves.<sup>320</sup> The use of the terms ‘social difference’ and ‘social distance’ in this context refers not so much to social status as to perceived differences in ‘ways of being’. Are the ‘ways of being’ of Pentecostals so different from the rest of society?

### **3.9 Different ‘Ways of Being’ as Potential Barriers to Pentecostalism’s Ecumenical Dialogue**

In general terms, the issues of difference between Pentecostals and other Christian denominations in matters of prohibited life-styles have dissipated considerably since the 1950’s.<sup>321</sup> To the extent that ‘social distance’ (or perceptions thereof) has played a role in inhibiting dialogue between Pentecostals and other Christian denominations, it is reasonable to expect that the obstacles that arise in consequence thereof should diminish as well.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>321</sup> Wagner C. 1986. “Characteristics of Pentecostal Church Growth” in McClung, G. Jr. Ed. *Azusa Street and Beyond*. South Plainfield, New Jersey: Bridge Publishing, p127; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p15 and 271. “Social distance” adopted by other Christian denominations towards Pentecostals, more than any intellectual or theological conviction, may partially explain the historically dismal record of ecumenical dialogue between Pentecostals and other Christian denominations. In colloquial terms, the term “cultural snobbery” rather than “social distance” would be used to describe this explanation for the lack of dialogue. William Samarin’s suggestion, to which Poloma has referred, that other Christian denominations viewed with disdain the “emotionalism” in Pentecostal forms of worship is indicative of this attitude (Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, pp42-3). “Emotionalism” in religion, if it is a feature of Pentecostalism, is hardly peculiar to Pentecostals alone. Emotionalism is a fairly pervasive aspect of popular culture throughout the world. One has merely to witness television coverage of behaviour at many concerts at which ‘celebrities’ are the ‘stars’ to derive some sense of this pervasive emotionalism. Poloma notes that remnants of the ‘social distance’, in terms of *mores*, between Pentecostals and other Christian denominations still remain: drinking, smoking and gambling are still largely eschewed by Pentecostals. Some Pentecostals still reject dancing, the wearing of make-up, elaborate jewellery and revealing clothing, playing cards, attending cinema and the theatre and the ‘non-observance’ of the Sabbath by playing sports and shopping on Sundays (*The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p15, 42-7, 142 and 271). See also Wagner, “Characteristics for Pentecostal Church Growth”, pp124-32. Care must be taken in attaching importance to differences of this kind: none of these aversions are peculiar to Pentecostals.

<sup>322</sup> While social difference and distance do not impact directly upon issues of theology, these may have an indirect impact upon ecumenical discourse inasmuch as it impacts upon social affinity and, therefore, the natural inclinations of the different parties to ‘break bread together’. If vegetarian Buddhists and the



The pragmatism within the Pentecostal movement to which both Wacker and Poloma have referred may be driven by its increasingly large role in society.<sup>323</sup> It is inherent in the nature of pragmatism to be amenable to new possibilities. This, in addition to the softening of social horizons between Pentecostals and others, may produce further fertility in the possibilities for ecumenical dialogue.

### **3.10 The Potential for Pentecostalism in Ecumenical Dialogue**

The implications of an emerging theology that focuses on religious experience rather than the fundamentalism or literalist interpretations of the Bible would extend beyond the field of relations between different Christian denominations: religious experience is common to large swathes of society across the globe.

Michael Welker has contended that, in emerging academic and religious processes, an understanding that the Spirit may work as a truth-revealing power is required.<sup>324</sup> He suggests that, in addition to an awareness of metaphors such as Spirit baptism, there needs to be a fresh sensitivity to the hiddenness of the Spirit's patient work, guiding towards the truth.<sup>325</sup>

Constructive dialogue between science and religion may be but one way in which academic discourse in theology may respond positively to this truth-seeking quest. There may be others. Poloma recognizes that all religious faith faces challenges in withstanding scientific

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carnivorous among Christians can fruitfully engage in dialogue with one another, one must be circumspect in attaching significance to these issues of perceived social difference and distance.

<sup>323</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p211.

<sup>324</sup> Welker, "The Introduction", pp164-5 and p.xvii.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

findings that are in conflict with religious tenets.<sup>326</sup> In her view religion and science are in a state of tension.<sup>327</sup> She has postulated that emerging postmodern thought makes room for dialogue between religion and science.<sup>328</sup> Poloma perceives that postmodern thought has enabled social scientists to take God, or at least perceptions about and experiences of God, seriously.<sup>329</sup> Postmodernism, Poloma suggests, provides a means of resolving the tensions between science and religion because postmodernism entails a shift from the belief that knowledge is derived solely from scientific inquiry and autonomous rationality.<sup>330</sup> Responding positively to the work of the Spirit will be explored further as this research progresses.

### **3.11 Summary of Poloma's Perspectives**

In Poloma's analysis, the metaphorical experience of Spirit baptism explains the strength and power of Pentecostalism. The development of an experiential theology within Pentecostalism may create opportunities for ecumenical dialogue among Pentecostals and other Christian denominations as well as fruitful conversations among the adherents of other religions and even those who have no religious belief: spiritual experience is not unique to Pentecostals. An experiential and pneumatic approach to Christianity raises possibilities that invite further exploration.

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<sup>326</sup> Poloma, "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?", p3.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p6.

<sup>328</sup> Poloma, "Sociology, Philosophy and the Empirical study of Godly Love", p4.

<sup>329</sup> Poloma, "Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible?", p5.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p4. Poloma quotes from Dempster, M. 1999, "Issues Facing Pentecostalism in a Postmodern World" in Dempster, M.W., Klaus, B.D. and Petersen, D. Eds. *The Globalization of Pentecostalism. A Religion Made to Travel*. Oxford, England: Regnum Books, International, p261.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE METAPHOR OF SPIRIT BAPTISM: THE THEOLOGY OF FRANK MACCHIA

### 4.1 Introduction

The published academic works of Frank Macchia, a Pentecostal theologian and American citizen will now be considered.

### 4.2 The Background of Frank Macchia

Macchia's father was a minister in the Assemblies of God church.<sup>331</sup> After some youthful rebellion, Macchia attended the Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri in the United States of America.<sup>332</sup> Macchia has a Th.D degree from the University of Basel in Switzerland. He has been President of the Society of Pentecostal Studies and a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches in the USA.<sup>333</sup> Macchia is the senior editor of *Pneuma: the Journal for Pentecostal Studies* and is currently a Professor of Theology at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California.<sup>334</sup> He describes himself as a Christian, remaining within the Pentecostal fold.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Macchia, F. 2006. *Baptized in the Spirit, A Global Pentecostal Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, p11.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p12.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, frontispiece.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, p13-18.

Macchia welcomes the gathering international academic interest in the Pentecostal movement.<sup>336</sup> In this regard, he has commended the contribution of Douglas Petersen in organizing a conference in Costa Rica in 1997, together with Murray Dempster and Byron Klaus, which had the globalization of Pentecostalism as a theme.<sup>337</sup> This was the first of its kind.<sup>338</sup>

Walter Hollenweger contributed to Macchia's understanding that there is much more to Pentecostal distinctiveness than either (i) Spirit baptism as a concept that occurs subsequent to conversion or (ii) speaking in tongues as being seen as evidence of Spirit baptism.<sup>339</sup> An examination of the influence of Hollenweger's ideas upon Macchia's thinking indicates that Macchia's understanding of the 'latter rain of the Spirit' is "charismatic and missionary empowerment given in preparation for Christ's imminent return".<sup>340</sup> Hollenweger influenced Macchia's understanding that it is the spirituality of the Pentecostal movement that provides the *realgeschichtliche* understanding of the movement.<sup>341</sup>

Peter Hocken assisted Macchia in coming towards an understanding of the renewal of the Spirit baptism metaphor to take account of the Pentecostal latter rain.<sup>342</sup> The genealogy of Macchia's thought has

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<sup>336</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p33; see also Dempster, M., Klaus, B. and Petersen, D. Eds. 1999. *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*. Irvine, California: Regnum.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>339</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p50. See also Hollenweger, W. 1988. *The Pentecostals*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Peabody: Massachusetts: Hendricksen.

<sup>340</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p28 and 38-49; Macchia, F. 2010. *Justified in the Spirit: Creation Redemption and the Triune God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p93. See also Faupel, W. 1996. *The Everlasting Gospel: the Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

<sup>341</sup> Macchia, F. 1998. "The Tongues of Pentecost: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Promise and Challenge of Pentecostal/Roman Catholic Dialogue", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 35:1 (Winter 1998). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University, pp1-18 at p3.

<sup>342</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p46. See also Hocken, P. 1992. "Baptism in the Spirit as a Prophetic Statement: A Reflection on the New Testament and on

been indebted to William Faupel, especially in regard to the significance of the shift from the emphasis upon Spirit baptism within the Pentecostal movement to an eschatological one of ‘the latter rain of the Spirit’.<sup>343</sup> Macchia acknowledges the contributions to his ideas of the Catholic theologian, Donald Gelpi and the Methodist, Lyle Dabney, who helped him to see that Spirit baptism may be understood as an eschatological gift preparing the way for the salvation of the world.<sup>344</sup>

Macchia also acknowledges the influence of Steven Land who assisted him in reconciling the concepts of sanctification and eschatology such that one can be purified and empowered at the same time in a life-transforming way.<sup>345</sup> Macchia has concluded that Land leaned too far away from the concept of Spirit baptism and that some redefinition on the matter is necessary for Spirit baptism to be placed in proper perspective.<sup>346</sup> Macchia’s treatment of the significance of Spirit baptism will be considered in the section that follows. It is a concept that eludes easy understanding. More recently, he has acknowledged how Dale Coulter and Smith Wigglesworth focused his attention upon the indwelling of the Spirit as that which distinguishes Pentecostal from all other religious affiliations.<sup>347</sup>

Macchia recognizes that he and other contemporary Pentecostal theologians have been influenced in recent decades by the following scholars who have taken an academic interest in the Pentecostal movement: Harvey Cox, Lyle Dabney, Donald Dayton, Ralph Del Colle,

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Pentecostal Origins”, paper delivered at the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield: November 12-14 1992, pp16-17.

<sup>343</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp23-24 & 41-45. See also Land, S. 1993. *Pentecostal Theology: A Passion for the Kingdom*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

<sup>344</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp47-48; Macchia, F. 2006. “The Kingdom and the Power” in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, p114.

<sup>345</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp23-24 & 41-45. See also Land, *Pentecostal Theology*.

<sup>346</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p41.

<sup>347</sup> Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p78. Coulter, D “Delivered by the Power of God’: Toward a Pentecostal Understanding of Salvation”, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, No.4 (October 2008): pp447-67.

Walter Hollenweger, Dale Irvin, Clark Pinnock, Miroslav Volf and Michael Welker.<sup>348</sup>

Geoffrey Wainwright contributed to Macchia's understanding of the ecumenical significance of worship: that through worship human beings are led in the way of the truth.<sup>349</sup> Macchia has attached increasing importance to ecumenism, remarking that it is fortunate that contemporary Pentecostal theologians have been influenced by Wainwright and the ecumenical scholars who have taken an interest in Pentecostalism.<sup>350</sup> He has expressly acknowledged that the provocation to write his book *Baptized in the Spirit* was influenced by his ecumenical critics, James Dunn and Kilian McConnell, who challenged him to think more broadly about Spirit baptism than he had in the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>351</sup> Additionally, Macchia has acknowledged the influence of Dabney and Jürgen Moltmann in shaping his thoughts on justification by the Spirit.<sup>352</sup>

Macchia argues that too great a concentration on that which distinguishes Pentecostalism from other denominations within Christianity undermines ecumenical conversations between Pentecostals and others, depriving them all of potentially valuable theological insights.<sup>353</sup> The extent to which Macchia considers there to be distinctiveness to Pentecostal theology will therefore be examined.

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<sup>348</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p25; Macchia, F. 2006. "The Kingdom and the Power" in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, pp109-25; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp78-99.

<sup>349</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p54. Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", pp110-22; See also Wainwright, G. 1980. *Doxology: the Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp218-50.

<sup>350</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p25; Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", pp110-22; and Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp75-102.

<sup>351</sup> Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", p115.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, pp110-22; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*: p3, 71, 132, 135, 153, 162, 176, 178, 206, 214, 301, 306.

<sup>353</sup> Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", pp110-22; Macchia: *Baptized in the Spirit*, p25; *Justified in the Spirit*, pp12-3.

### 4.3 Macchia's Assessment of Pentecostalism as a Feature of the Global Religious Stage: the Significance of 'Spirit Baptism'

Macchia submits that the distinctiveness of Pentecostalism lies primarily in its emphasis on 'Spirit baptism', suggesting that this may explain Pentecostalism's growing, globalizing appeal.<sup>354</sup> He invokes various other theologians from around the world, several of whom are Pentecostals themselves, to support this contention: Allan Anderson, Miguel Alvarez, Simon Chan, Velli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Henry Lederle and Koo Dong Yun.<sup>355</sup> Moltmann shares this view of the distinctiveness of Spirit baptism to Pentecostal theology.<sup>356</sup> Pinnock describes Spirit baptism as the "crown jewel" of Pentecostalism.<sup>357</sup> Precisely the same terminology has been used by Macchia in his more recent book, *Justified in the Spirit*.<sup>358</sup> The shift to such a superlative epithet to describe Spirit baptism may reflect Macchia's increasing confidence in the theological significance of Spirit baptism.

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<sup>354</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp19-25; Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", pp110-22.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.* See also Kärkkäinen, V-M. 1998. *Spiritus ubi vult spirat: Pneumatology in Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972-1989)*. Helsinki: Luther Agricola Society; Chan, S. 1999. "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence", *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2 (1999), pp195-211; Anderson, A. 2000. *Zion and Pentecost: the Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, p244; Yun, K. 2003. *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Ecumenical Theology of Spirit Baptism*. Lanham, Mississippi: University Press of America, pp23-44; Lee, S. 2001. "Pentecostal Prophecy" in *Spirit and Church* 3 (May 2001): pp148-9; Alvarez, M. 2002. "The South and Latin American Paradigm of the Pentecostal Movement", *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5 (2002): p141; Lederle, H. 1988. *Treasures Old and New: Interpretations of Spirit Baptism in the Charismatic Renewal Movement*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, p.xi.

<sup>356</sup> Moltmann, J. 2008. "On the abundance of the Holy Spirit: Friendly Remarks for *Baptized in the Spirit* by Frank D. Macchia", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008) pp9-13.

<sup>357</sup> Pinnock, C. 2008. "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology*", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008) pp1-4.

<sup>358</sup> Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p76.

Moltmann's 'friendly remarks' concerning Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit* may have contributed to this increased confidence.<sup>359</sup>

In weaving his arguments in support of the theological significance of Spirit baptism, Macchia has often relied on the work of Moltmann.<sup>360</sup> He also draws on Wolfhart Pannenberg<sup>361</sup> and Karl Barth.<sup>362</sup> He relies on St Gregory of Nyssa, one of the three Cappadocian Fathers who, in the fourth century, are credited with responsibility for the formulation relating to the Spirit in the Nicene Creed, as it is known today.<sup>363</sup> Macchia also draws inspiration from the work of Ralph Del Colle,<sup>364</sup> who has focused much in recent times on the Spirit and ecumenism.<sup>365</sup>

The notion of Spirit baptism as being distinct from spiritual regeneration (some might say regeneration through the Spirit) is also known as the doctrine of 'subsequence': Spirit baptism occurs after or

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<sup>359</sup> See Moltmann, "On the abundance of the Holy Spirit". Macchia devotes a whole chapter, "Spirit Baptism in Trinitarian Perspective", in his *Baptized in the Spirit* to argue that the concept of Spirit baptism is not only consonant with more traditional variations of Christianity but also helps to bring it to its full ripeness (*Baptized in the Spirit*, pp89-154). He adopts a similar position in *Justified in the Spirit* in the chapter "The Embrace of the Spirit: Toward a Trinitarian Theology of Justification" (*Justified in the Spirit*, pp293-312). This thrust of confirming that Spirit baptism is not merely consistent with Trinitarian theology but facilitates the understanding thereof permeates his other recent book, published in 2010, entitled *Trinity, Practically Speaking*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Biblica Publishing. Macchia may have grown in confidence and appears to have derived encouragement from the positive endorsement of *Baptized in the Spirit*.

<sup>360</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp95-96 100, 104, 112, 117, 120-122, 125,& 161; *Justified in the Spirit*, p3, 71, 132, 135, 153, 162, 301, and 306.

<sup>361</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp109-11, 118, 121-25, and 141; *Justified in the Spirit*, p29 and 304.

<sup>362</sup> Macchia, "The Tongues of Pentecost", p5 and 11; Macchia, F., Del Colle, R., Irvin, D. and Yong, A. 2003. "Christ and Spirit: Dogma, Discernment and Dialogical Theology in a Religiously Plural World", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Vol.12, No.1 (October 2003), pp15-83 at p63; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp119-121, 126-127 and 135; *Justified in the Spirit*, p3, 6, 107-9, 131, 137-42, 169-72 and 235.

<sup>363</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p89 & 95.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p155.

<sup>365</sup> Del Colle, R. 2001. "The Holy Spirit: Presence, Power Person", *Theological Studies*, 62 (2001), pp322-340; and Del Colle, R. 2005. "The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit: Implications for the Church and Ecumenism" in Donnelly, D., Denaux, A. and Famerée, J. Eds. *The Holy Spirit, the Church and Christian Unity: Proceedings of the Consultation Held at the Monastery of Rose, Italy, 14-20 Octobre, 2002*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.



subsequent to conversion.<sup>366</sup> It has been regarded, historically, as being distinctively ‘Pentecostal’.<sup>367</sup> In more recent work, Macchia has equated regeneration with justification.<sup>368</sup> Macchia points to the fact that most Pentecostals subscribe to the belief that the process of the indwelling of the Spirit begins with justification and comes to penultimate fullness in Spirit baptism, i.e. Spirit baptism occurs subsequent to regeneration or justification.<sup>369</sup>

Spirit baptism eludes easy definition, a fact which Macchia’s variously different allusions thereto will confirm.<sup>370</sup> In essence, it is a powerful, intense spiritual experience focused on the person of Jesus Christ. Inasmuch as Spirit baptism is a spiritual experience that is ‘Christ-focused’ or ‘Christ-centred’, it is not without resonance with the rest of Christianity.

Macchia contrasts ‘Spirit baptism’ with ‘water baptism’.<sup>371</sup> Macchia’s allusions to “water baptism” are synonymous with the dictionary definition of ‘baptism’: “the application of water to a person by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling, as a religious rite, symbolical of purification or regeneration, and betokening initiation into the

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<sup>366</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p34; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p76

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp86-93.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>370</sup> An assortment of Macchia’s descriptions of Spirit baptism contain the following: “an empowerment for ministry distinct from regeneration or initiation in Christ” linked to “involvement in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, especially speaking in tongues and divine healing”; as a “postconversion charismatic experience”; and, drawing on Chan’s description, as “a certain kind of spiritual experience of an intense, direct and overwhelming nature centering on the person of Christ” (See *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp20-21). More recently, he has viewed Spirit baptism as being intimately linked with justification, describing it following upon an indwelling of the Spirit that begins with regeneration. Macchia has also associated Spirit baptism with being “filled with” or “empowered” by the Spirit.<sup>370</sup> He has also, in a recent book, used references to Spirit baptism as “baptism in divine love”. He also refers to it as a profound experience, drawing any person who has encountered it, into a commitment to contributing to the achievement of God’s will for the world (See *Justified in the Spirit*, pp74-99). See also Macchia, “The Kingdom and the Power”, pp110-22.

<sup>371</sup> Macchia et al, “Christ and Spirit”; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p66, 67, 70, 71, 72-75, 79, 98, 248 and 250.

Church”.<sup>372</sup> Macchia accepts that the centrality of Spirit baptism as distinctive of the Pentecostal movement is not universally supported among observers of Pentecostalism or even among Pentecostals themselves – at least not without qualification.<sup>373</sup>

In *Baptized in the Spirit* Macchia has discerned the following reasons for the trend away from emphasis on Spirit baptism:

- (i) there are exegetical difficulties (and therefore ecumenical obstacles) with the notion of a person entering into the life of the Spirit in a piecemeal fashion;
- (ii) the experience of Spirit baptism can be perceived as being ‘elitist’ – the term ‘elitist’ is here not used in any socio-economic sense but rather in the sense of being available to an ‘elect’ or ‘select few’ or a ‘chosen few’;
- (iii) Pentecostalism is about more than Spirit baptism and glossolalia;
- (iv) The developing trend among Pentecostal theologians towards a shift of focus towards eschatology;
- (v) Questions have arisen as to whether ‘Spirit baptism’ is a doctrinal issue at all.<sup>374</sup>

In *Justified in the Spirit* Macchia has actively promoted Spirit baptism as a force to be reckoned with in ecumenical dialogue.<sup>375</sup> The endorsements which he has received from other theological scholars like Moltmann and Pinnock for *Justified in the Spirit* may have contributed to this change of emphasis.

Macchia contends that, as part of the narrative of the Christian story, Spirit baptism is a Biblical metaphor which is not simply doctrinal in

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<sup>372</sup> See *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>373</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p23.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid*, pp28-33.

<sup>375</sup> Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp12-3 and 75-99.

its scope.<sup>376</sup> Spirit baptism's pneumatological emphasis is, in Macchia's view, experiential, charismatic and eschatological.<sup>377</sup> Pentecostalism's focus on pneumatology, in Macchia's assessment, gives it a global and ecumenical significance.<sup>378</sup> The reason for this assertion may be found in the growing, recorded evidence that belief in the power of the Spirit appears to change individual lives not only profoundly but also for the better. In *Justified in the Spirit* Macchia describes how persons experience Spirit baptism as ecstasy, manifested in acts of self-giving.<sup>379</sup>

Drawing on Hollenweger, Macchia submits that Pentecostalism's unique success in blending Western rationalistic and perfectionist spirituality with a more personal and informal approach to theology than is the case in the more traditional Christian denominations accounts, at least in part, for its rapid spread throughout the world.<sup>380</sup>

The Trinitarian structure of the story of Jesus relates, in Macchia's perspective, to Spirit baptism inasmuch as Spirit baptism is concerned with the role of Jesus in pouring out the Spirit that comes from the Father in order to fulfil the kingdom of God.<sup>381</sup>

Macchia, in proclaiming the rediscovery of the metaphor of Spirit baptism,<sup>382</sup> brings Pentecostal theology into alignment with the doctrines of the older and more established churches. This view is

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<sup>376</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p32, 42 and 56; Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", pp110-22 and 123-4; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp75-99.

<sup>377</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p56. Macchia uses the word 'charismatic' when describing Spirit baptism's propensity to attract others towards the church and its mission (*Ibid.*, p156).

<sup>378</sup> Macchia, "The Tongues of Pentecost"; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p22 and 25; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp12-3.

<sup>379</sup> Macchia, "The Tongues of Pentecost"; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p97.

<sup>380</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p56. See also Hollenweger, W. 1989. "Priorities in Pentecostal Research: Historiography, Missiology, Hermeneutics and Pneumatology" in Jongeneel, J. Ed. *Experiences in the Spirit*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp9-10.

<sup>381</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp118-9; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp75-99.

<sup>382</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p107; Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", pp110-22.

shared by both Moltmann and Pinnock and to some degree by Del Colle as well.<sup>383</sup>

Macchia's understanding of Spirit baptism has undergone intellectual development since his book, *Spirituality and Social Liberation* published in 1993.<sup>384</sup> In that book, published prior to *Baptized in the Spirit*, he does not even mention Spirit baptism.<sup>385</sup> The centrality of Spirit baptism to Pentecostalism in Macchia's perspective can be seen to have been anticipated in 1998 when he emphasised the importance of Pentecostal 'spirituality' if one wished to understand the movement.<sup>386</sup> That he now joins hands with Pinnock in describing Spirit baptism as the crown jewel of Pentecostalism may reflect Macchia's increasing confidence in its significance.<sup>387</sup>

By necessary implication, Macchia accepts that there may be factors, other than Spirit baptism, that may explain Pentecostalism's growing, world-wide, appeal.<sup>388</sup> It may be useful to dig deeper into Pentecostalism's archaeology.

Michel Foucault used the term "archaeology" to designate an analysis of the conditions necessary for a given system of thought to come into being and to impose itself authoritatively.<sup>389</sup> "Archaeology", in this context, is to be understood as a history, but it is not a history of things, phenomena or people. Rather it is a history of the conditions necessary for given things, phenomena or people to occur.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Moltmann, "On the abundance of the Holy Spirit", p3; Pinnock, "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit*", p3; Del Colle, R. 2003. "Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue: Theological Suggestions for Consideration", *PNEUMA: the Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Spring 2003), p94.

<sup>384</sup> Macchia, F. 1993. *Spirituality and Social Liberation: the Message of the Blumhardts in the Light of Wuerttemberg Pietism*. Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> Macchia, "The Tongues of Pentecost", especially p3.

<sup>387</sup> Pinnock, "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit*, p3-4.

<sup>388</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p51.

<sup>389</sup> Downing, L. 2008. *The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, p9.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p10.

## 4.4 The Conditions that Gave Rise to the Pentecostal Tradition

Macchia concedes that, historically, Pentecostals stayed clear of the prevailing drift towards scientific objectivity and the use of historical method: Pentecostalism focused upon a spiritual quest for the truth and the authority of scripture.<sup>391</sup>

Macchia argues that the power of Pentecostalism's challenge to the more traditional Christian denominations is to be found not only in its willingness to adapt to cultural diversity but also its ability to offer a religious experience that affects people in a way that is not to be found elsewhere within the Christian religion.<sup>392</sup>

Macchia records that William Seymour, a black man who was one of the Azusa Street pioneers, wrote in 1906 that "God makes no difference in nationality, Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities worship together".<sup>393</sup> Macchia, like Grant Wacker and Margaret Poloma, observes that in the early stages of the Pentecostal movement commentators considered it remarkable that there was racially mixed worship.<sup>394</sup> Again, like Wacker and Poloma, Macchia recognizes that Pentecostalism may have held a special appeal for those who were historically disadvantaged, socially and economically, but he contends that, ironically, in its having adapted to cultural diversity and introduced people to a religious experience to

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<sup>391</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p52.

<sup>392</sup> Macchia, "The Tongues of Pentecost", p3; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p33.

<sup>393</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p35. See also Seymour, W. 1906, "The Same Old Way", *Apostolic Faith* (Sept. 1906), 3; and Macchia, F. 1995. "From Azusa to Memphis: Evaluating the Racial Reconciliation Dialogue among Pentecostals", *PNEUMA: the Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 10: pp3-28. See, additionally, Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", p122.

<sup>394</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p219. See also Hezmalhuch, T, 1907. "Among the Indians at Needles, California", *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907), 3. See also, Macchia, "From Azusa to Memphis".

which they could relate, Pentecostalism is now ready to participate in worldwide theological conversations.<sup>395</sup> How may Pentecostalism's contribution to these conversations unfold?<sup>396</sup> Any global contribution to theology is likely to begin with dialogue in ecumenical conversations. As in the case of a review of Poloma's work, it may be helpful to look back into the past and examine the present in order to get a sense of the future's challenges.

## **4.5 Pentecostalism's Theological Dialogue, Historically, with the World: are Past Tendencies Likely to be Inherent in the Present and the Future?**

### **4.5.1 Pentecostalism's Ecumenical Perspectives in the Past**

Macchia agrees that, historically, there has been a lack of Pentecostal involvement in ecumenical conversations.<sup>397</sup> Macchia attributes part of the explanation to Pentecostals' emphasis on an individualistic understanding of Spirit baptism.<sup>398</sup> Macchia asserts that, in the New Testament, Spirit baptism gives rise to a profoundly personal but not an individualistic experience.<sup>399</sup> This focused assertion may be attributable to his wishing to encourage (i) Pentecostals to develop a deeper sense of *koinonia* or shared experience and (ii) ecumenical conversations: immediately after the New Testament references to justify the assertion that Spirit baptism is not an individualistic experience, he refers to *koinonia*. This emphasis on the 'communal'

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<sup>395</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p219. See also Macchia "From Azusa to Memphis".

<sup>396</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p50. See also Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*.

<sup>397</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p61.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, p155.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p98.

aspects of Spirit baptism also reflects the development in his thinking since the early 2000s: it was absent from his earlier work.

The question then naturally arises: is it inherent within Pentecostalism that this lack of theological discourse with others will be an enduring feature of the movement? Macchia points out that, since the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, there has been a considerable degree of doctrinal diversity within that movement, not only in the USA but throughout the world as well.<sup>400</sup> Macchia records that the recognition of such diversity has been fairly widely acknowledged since Hollenweger published his *The Pentecostals* in the early 1960s.<sup>401</sup> Pentecostalism is not monolithic.

#### **4.5.2 Will the Past Determine Pentecostalism's Future Engagement with the Rest of the World?**

Building communities in which people reach out to one another is, in Macchia's perspective, a key feature of Pentecostalism.<sup>402</sup> Macchia has also described Spirit baptism as a "relational dynamic".<sup>403</sup> This relational dynamic does not function merely between individual human beings and God but also comes into operation among all human beings through their relationship with God.<sup>404</sup> Macchia argues

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<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, p34.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.* See also Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*.

<sup>402</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp156-166. Macchia refers with approval to Leslie Newbigin's observation that: "It is surely a fact of inexhaustible significance that what our Lord left behind Him was not a book or a creed, nor a system of thought nor a rule of life but a community" (Newbigin, L. 1964. *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church*. London: SCM Press, p27). Pinnock, in his review of Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit*, emphasizes this passage, describing it as a "memorable sentence" (Pinnock, "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit*", pp3-4).

<sup>403</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p156 and 165.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, p160. Another way of describing this relational dynamic would be to say that it has vertical and horizontal dimensions: the vertical is as between every individual human being and God; the horizontal is among different human beings themselves and that for each of us this dynamic all comes together at the intersection of the cross.

that Spirit baptism, properly understood, gives rise to the universal church and its mission, as well as its propensity to attract others towards it (a propensity which is often described as its “charismatic character”).<sup>405</sup>

Macchia reminds the reader that a sense of community (*communio* or *koinonia*) is critical for any form of Christianity that is to be true to its origins.<sup>406</sup> It is this sense of community that explains, in Macchia’s assessment, the growth in Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere in which the role of the Pentecostals has been prominent.<sup>407</sup> Macchia is mindful that, in scripture, the response of the early Christians to baptism is an outreach to others in a spirit of joy.<sup>408</sup>

Spirit baptism, according to Macchia, entails an indwelling of God’s love, requiring that Christians reach out to and seek out one another.<sup>409</sup> He describes baptism as being intimately participatory and interactive, involving God in us and we in God.<sup>410</sup> Spirit baptism, Macchia contends, is fundamentally connected with pluralism and diversity.<sup>411</sup>

In Macchia’s analysis, there is nothing inherent within Pentecostalism’s theology that inhibits its dialogue with others. On the contrary, he reasons that, properly understood, Spirit baptism requires that Pentecostals should joyously embrace the possibility of theological dialogue.<sup>412</sup> More recently, Macchia’s position has shifted: he does not merely assert the merits of ecumenical dialogue between Pentecostals and those of other religious persuasion, but he takes these ecumenical conversations as a given: in *Justified in the Spirit* he

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<sup>405</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p156.

<sup>406</sup> *Communio* is the Latin word, *koinonia* the Greek.

<sup>407</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p158.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, p166; and Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp97-8.

<sup>409</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p161.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, p159.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, p178.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, p161.



declaims: “I believe that the emphasis of the Pentecostal movement on baptism in the Spirit can thus give the ecumenical discussion about justification the broad narrative framework it needs to develop this link further”.<sup>413</sup> Here again, we may detect Macchia’s increasing confidence – a confidence that may be attributed to the positive response by internationally respected scholars to his arguments in favour of participation both with and by Pentecostals in ecumenical dialogue.

What of the challenges that await ecumenical dialogue in which Pentecostals may be participants? What of doctrinal issues, perhaps foremost of which is ecclesiology? One cannot consider the question of who constitutes the church without touching upon the questions of apostolicity and catholicity. Macchia contends that Pentecostalism’s understanding of the Christian story is pneumatological in its emphasis.<sup>414</sup> What are the pneumatological implications for ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity?

#### **4.6. The Pneumatological Implications for Ecclesiology, Apostolicity and Catholicity**

Macchia records that Pentecostalism has always considered itself ‘apostolic’ to the extent that many Pentecostal churches around the world have used the term ‘apostolic’ in their descriptions of themselves.<sup>415</sup> Apostolicity raises the question not only of who the apostles may be considered to be but also the question of who constitutes the Church.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Pinnock, “Review of Frank D. Macchia’s *Baptized in the Spirit*”; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p75.

<sup>414</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p56.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, p229.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, pp229-241; and Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp258-92.

A related difficulty is the question of the ordained ministry, often referred to as the ‘clergy’.<sup>417</sup> All Christians would agree that, in the wider sense of the term, the apostles are those who pass on the teaching of Christ through the Spirit to the church.<sup>418</sup> Difficulties arise with the question, “What is the Church?”<sup>419</sup> If one subscribes to the notion of the ministry of all believers, is the ordained ministry either a correct or desirable feature within the Church?<sup>420</sup>

Macchia recognizes that, historically, the Pentecostals were antipathetic to an ordained ministry.<sup>421</sup> Pentecostals used to justify their opposition to the ordained ministry by the fact that there is no explicit reference to an ordained ministry in the New Testament.<sup>422</sup> Macchia endorses the perspective that, in scripture, there is recognition of the need for an oversight function within the Church as well as the fact that certain persons have particular gifts of ministry.<sup>423</sup> This is a view shared by Macchia.<sup>424</sup>

Macchia is now confident that the divergent views as to the role of an ordained ministry will be resolved among the different churches in an eschatological spirit of freedom and tolerance.<sup>425</sup> Macchia’s faith that tolerance will resolve the divergence of opinion on the issue is a shift from his earlier position. In *Baptized in the Spirit* Macchia accepted that formidable barriers remain on the question of the ordained ministry.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp230-235.

<sup>418</sup> In a more restricted sense, Christians generally refer to “the Apostles” as the twelve appointed by Jesus. St Paul is also widely referred to as “Paul, The Apostle”.

<sup>419</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp230-233; and Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp258-92.

<sup>420</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp230-233.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p239-241.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, p230-233.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, pp232-241.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, pp230-233.

<sup>425</sup> Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp258-92.

<sup>426</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp239-41.

With regard to the Roman Catholic claim that the Pope, as the holder of the Petrine Office, is the symbol of the unity within diversity of the Church and has “full, supreme, and universal power over the Church”, Macchia said in *Baptized in the Spirit* that the Papacy has been “the office that represents one of the greatest barriers to unity”.<sup>427</sup>

Macchia proposes that through Spirit baptism, the ministry of Peter and the other apostles belongs to us all and that these barriers cannot prevent the Church, as a diversity of believers in the Christian faith, from continuing to be apostolic in the world as a whole.<sup>428</sup> Attractive though this argument may be, it does not address (because it cannot) the issue that is intrinsic to the question of the ordained ministry: authority. Who has authority over whom and who has authority to do what? These are not arcane questions that intrigue a few scholars alone. Who, for example, has authority to preach? Who has authority to baptize?<sup>429</sup>

As Macchia observes, in addition to questions relating to who has authority to baptize and whose baptism is recognized, difficulties

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<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, p239.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, pp240-241.

<sup>429</sup> Related to the question of who has authority to baptize is that of who is to be recognized as having been baptized? Who has authority to administer Holy Communion? Related to the question of who has authority to administer Holy Communion, is the question of whether it can be believed among all who take an interest in the matter that Jesus, through the Spirit, is somehow present in a special way during the process? Even if apostolicity were not a vital component of Christian belief, questions would continue to exist about the necessity of a process of selection and training such as ordination. Apostolicity refers, *inter alia*, to the passing down of the faith of the early Christians from generation to generation. Religion is, almost axiomatically, an organized system of knowledge. Almost all organized systems of knowledge are too vast in their scope to be learned in a single generation. These systems of knowledge have to be developed and passed down from one generation to another. The effective process of passing down knowledge from generation to generation nowadays relies upon the acquisition of expertise, through specialized education and training. The concept of consecration, being set aside for a special purpose, is not completely religious in its scope. In addition, when it comes to religious dialogue, it is not difficult to imagine that it may be valuable for the different participants to know whether certain views are representative of those of a wider constituency of adherents. Representation ordinarily entails some form of authorization.

remain with regard to the question of infant baptism: should infants, entirely oblivious to the meaning and significance of baptism, undergo the process?<sup>430</sup>

Macchia provides evidence that Pentecostals and various other Christians have begun to make progress in entering into dialogue with one another.<sup>431</sup> Dialogue among Christians of different denominations may be described as a necessary but not sufficient condition for catholicity. ‘Catholic’ is generally understood as meaning ‘universal’ but, in this context, ‘catholicity’ also includes the element of unity.

That the Church should be both universal and one (or unified) is the ecumenical ideal.<sup>432</sup> Macchia refers approvingly to the Final report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue that took place in 1989, in which it was recorded that Catholics “stress the God-giveness of the *koinonia* and its trinitarian character” and that “Pentecostals have been reminded of the importance of the communitarian dimension of the New Testament understanding of *koinonia*”.<sup>433</sup> Del Colle, the contemporary Roman Catholic theologian,

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<sup>430</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp250-253.

<sup>431</sup> Macchia, “The Tongues of Pentecost”; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp163-4. See also Macchia, F. 1990. “Perspectives on Koinonia: Final report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1985-1989)”, 31-33, *PNEUMA* 12:1 (1990), p119; Del Colle, “Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue”. See also “Final report of the Dialogue between the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church and Leaders of Some Pentecostal Churches and Participants in the Charismatic Movement within Protestant and Anglican Churches, 1976”, 34, in *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, 428.

<sup>432</sup> Among the reasons for this is that Jesus is recorded as having commanded the first apostles to spread the word of his teachings to make disciples of ‘all nations’ and to baptize these disciples ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Spirit’ (the so-called ‘Great Commission’) (See Matthew 28:19. *The Revised Standard Version*. 1965. New York: William Collins and the Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha. 1989. Oxford and Cambridge, England: Oxford and Cambridge University Press.) Jesus refers to Peter as the rock upon which He will build His church (See Matthew 16:18. *The Revised Standard Version* and the *Revised English Bible*). There is scope for debate as to whether this refers to the Church as a single entity or whether Jesus is using figurative language for a broad movement of discipleship. So, too, there are doubts as to the authenticity of the ‘Great Commission’.

<sup>433</sup> Macchia, “The Tongues of Pentecost”; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp163-4. See also Macchia, “Perspectives on Koinonia”.

with whom Macchia published the article “Christ and Spirit: Dogma, Discernment and Dialogical Theology in a Religiously Plural World” in the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* in 2003,<sup>434</sup> contends that Catholics and Pentecostals share this commonality: the Church exists in the outpouring of the Spirit into which believers are incorporated via the rite of Christian initiation – in the case of Catholics by baptism and confirmation and, in the case of Pentecostals, by conversion or Spirit baptism.<sup>435</sup> The Pentecostal-Catholic Report of 1976 affirms that “Our Lord is present in the members of his body, manifesting Himself in worship by means of a variety of charismatic expressions”.<sup>436</sup>

Macchia contends that *koinonia* is at least implicitly a pneumatological concept in scripture: the early Christians, after receiving the Spirit at Pentecost, experienced *koinonia*.<sup>437</sup> Macchia accepts that Pentecostals would not normally perceive their ecclesiology through the imagery of Trinitarian *koinonia*.<sup>438</sup> Recognizing that the concept of *koinonia* is to be found in the New Testament, he also acknowledges that the analogy between a participatory relationship within the Trinitarian life of God and the fellowship of the church is an insight drawn from later Trinitarian theology rather than biblical texts themselves.<sup>439</sup>

Macchia recognizes for example, that Pentecostals have tended to focus upon the authority of the Bible as intrinsic to the notion of *sola scriptura*.<sup>440</sup> Macchia believes it is not without significance that there

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<sup>434</sup> Macchia in Macchia et al, “Christ and Spirit”, p46.

<sup>435</sup> Del Colle, “Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue”.

<sup>436</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p255. See also “Final report of the Dialogue between the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church and Leaders of Some Pentecostal Churches and Participants in the Charismatic Movement within Protestant and Anglican Churches, 1976”.

<sup>437</sup> Acts 2:42; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p163.

<sup>438</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p162.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, pp163 -164.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, p61. ‘*Sola scriptura*’ or ‘*sola scriptura regnare*’ is a Protestant concept that entails, *inter alia*, that Scripture has higher authority in religious matters than, for example, tradition or hierarchy because Scripture is, to a certain degree, self-explanatory (*sui ipsius interpres*). The focus upon *sola scriptura* by Pentecostals has

should have been a meeting of minds between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics on beliefs such as the trinity and *koinonia*.<sup>441</sup> As Macchia himself recognizes, the questions that arise from the larger enquiry of ‘What is the church?’ cannot for long avoid issue of the Trinity, regardless of whether these ecclesiological questions are raised in the context of Spirit baptism.<sup>442</sup> In this regard, he addresses the fact that, under the influence of William Durham, there are those who maintain that the so-called ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals hold fast to the true, quintessential Pentecostal soteriology.<sup>443</sup> Macchia confronts the fact that there is a schism between the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the others on the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>444</sup>

#### **4.7 Pentecostalism, ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the Trinity**

‘Oneness’ or ‘non-Trinitarian’ Pentecostals are also known as ‘Jesus-only’ Pentecostals and, more latterly, by academics and the educated laity, as ‘Apostolic Pentecostals’.<sup>445</sup> At the turn of the twenty-first century, about one quarter of all Pentecostals in the United States of America were ‘Apostolic’ but, relying on Faupel, Macchia estimates that they now represent about a fifth of the total number of Pentecostals and that this proportion is growing.<sup>446</sup> More recently,

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resulted in a tendency to avoid much consideration of the doctrine of the Trinity but *sola scriptura* is not to be confused with Biblical literalism.

<sup>441</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp163-4. See also Macchia, “Perspectives on Koinonia”.

<sup>442</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p163; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p13 and 293-312.

<sup>443</sup> Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp86-7 and 92.

<sup>444</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp20-22, 114, 229-30 and 251; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p87 and 92; and Macchia, F. 2010. “The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue: Exploring the Diversity of Apostolic Faith”, *Harvard Theological Review*, 103: 3 (2010), pp329-49.

<sup>445</sup> Macchia, “The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue”, p329. Yong, A. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(s): a Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, p59.

<sup>446</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125; Barrett, D. 1988. “Statistics, Global” in Burgess, S., McGee, G. and Alexander, P. Eds. *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regency Reference Library, p824;

relying on research by David Reed, Macchia has estimated that they have from 14 to 17 million followers globally.<sup>447</sup> Inasmuch as there are about 525 million Pentecostal adherents worldwide, Macchia's assessment of the extent of the 'Oneness' following reveals a discrepancy.<sup>448</sup>

Whatever the true position as to the size of the Oneness following may be, the 'Oneness' Pentecostals are significant. The significance goes beyond mere numbers. As Macchia points out, the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed which expounded Christianity's enduring Trinitarian formulation is widely regarded as essential to the apostolic faith of the Church but the Oneness Pentecostals call themselves apostolic while rejecting this Trinitarian belief.<sup>449</sup> This, in itself, has sparked interest in the 'Oneness' Pentecostals.<sup>450</sup>

Macchia also records that the origins of the 'Oneness' Pentecostal movement can be traced back to remarks made during a baptismal service by a certain Reverend McAlister at Arroyo Seco, near Los Angeles in 1913, at which McAlister said that the Apostles baptized in the name of Jesus rather than according to the baptismal formula

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Faupel, W. 2008. *The Everlasting Gospel: the Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press; See, also: Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p154.

<sup>447</sup> Reed, D. 2002. "Oneness Pentecostalism", in Burgess, S. and Van der Maas, E. Eds. *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, p940. Macchia, "The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue", p329.

<sup>448</sup> Gallup, G. 1985. *Religion in America, 50 Years: 1935-1985*. Gallup Report No. 236. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Research Center Inc; Cox, H. 1995. *Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley; Brierly, P. and Wraight, H. 1998. *Atlas of World Christianity; 2000 Years*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson p4 and 13; Shaull, R. and Cesar, W. 2000. *Pentecostalism and the Future of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p9; Barratt, D and Johnson, T. 2001. "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2001" in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, (January 2001), 25; Wacker, G. 2001. *Heaven Below, Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, p.8; Poloma, M. 2003. *Main Street Mystics*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, p19. See, also, chapter one, section 1.1 of this dissertation.

<sup>449</sup> Macchia, "The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue", p329.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, pp329-49.

which includes the words “in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.<sup>451</sup> Macchia contends that the ‘Oneness’ doctrine of God can be summarized as a belief as follows: (1) There is one God with no distinction of persons; and (2) Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead incarnate.<sup>452</sup>

Macchia has been actively engaged in a six-year study sponsored by the Society for Pentecostal Studies which has sought to consider key doctrinal differences between the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the other, more conventionally ‘Trinitarian’ Pentecostals.<sup>453</sup> This study published a Final Report in 2008.<sup>454</sup> Macchia has tended to make light of the schism between ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the others within the Pentecostal fold, even to the extent that he has confessed to a degree of ambivalence about it.<sup>455</sup> There has been some development in his thinking since *Baptized in the Spirit* was published in 2006: in 2010 he quotes with approval Walter Hollenweger’s observations that what unites Pentecostal churches is not a doctrine but a religious experience.<sup>456</sup>

Macchia sides with the classical *homoousios* doctrine of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed but acknowledges that those on the ‘Oneness’ side of the divide intuitively understood more clearly than the rest that there is something distinctive to Christianity in the belief that Christ bestows the Spirit.<sup>457</sup> This distinctiveness is intimately related to the concept of Spirit baptism which, he argues, is not only consonant with Christianity but also helps to bring it to eschatological

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<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, p329; and Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp250-253.

<sup>452</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp114-115. See also chapter five of this research.

<sup>453</sup> Macchia, “The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue”, p340.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, p329; Macchia, F. 2008. “Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Final Report”, *PNEUMA: the Journal for Pentecostal Studies* 30 (2008), pp203-224.

<sup>455</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp115-116.

<sup>456</sup> Macchia, “The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue”, p331; Hollenweger, H. 1996. “From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon” in Moltmann, J. and Kuschel, K-J. Eds. *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge*. Concilium 3. London: SCM Press, p7.

<sup>457</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp115-116.



ripeness, especially once it is understood that eschatology is an aspect of Spirit baptism and not the other way round.<sup>458</sup>

There is, in Macchia's assessment of Faupel's position, a convincing, scriptural foundation for the conviction that there is more to come with Spirit baptism than an experience of the Spirit's indwelling in our time.<sup>459</sup> Macchia contends that Faupel's sympathies with 'Oneness' Pentecostalism deserve more respect than is generally the case.<sup>460</sup> More recently, Macchia has contended that both in worship and in praxis 'Oneness' Pentecostals affirm Jesus Christ as the Son of the heavenly Father not only as the incarnation of God but also as the person who "imparts the reality of the Spirit" among human beings.<sup>461</sup>

Macchia has recently argued that the 'Oneness' and Trinitarian grammars of faith differ, even though their language is similar: both would agree that 'Father, Son and Spirit' are adverbs describing God's action in the world but Trinitarians use these triadic titles adjectivally as well.<sup>462</sup> Here too there has been some development in his thinking. In 2002, some eight years before the publication of "The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue", Macchia engaged in a debate with Irvin, Del Colle and Yong in which he endorsed Rahner's perspective that Oneness Pentecostals understand Christ's 'Sonship' to 'God, the Father' as a reference to Christ's humanity only.<sup>463</sup> The more recent position accepts that, for 'Oneness' Pentecostals, Christ's 'Sonship' refers to more than incarnation of Jesus as a human manifestation of God.

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<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, pp89-154; and Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp86-92.

<sup>458</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, pp89-154; and Macchia *Justified in the Spirit*, pp86-92.

<sup>459</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, pp89-154; and Macchia *Justified in the Spirit*, pp86-92.

<sup>460</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125.

<sup>461</sup> Macchia, "The Oneness-Trinitarian Pentecostal Dialogue", p347.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, p349.

<sup>463</sup> Macchia, in Macchia, F., Del Colle, R., Irvin, D. and Yong, A. 2003. "Christ and Spirit: Dogma, Discernment and Dialogical Theology in a Religiously Plural World", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. Vol. 12, No. 1 (October 2003), pp15-83 at p46.

In his discussion on the Trinitarian doctrine, Macchia is especially drawn to Moltmann's interpretation that God allows God's own vulnerability to the world.<sup>464</sup> This vulnerability of God to the world can only be understood through a Trinitarian lens: the crucifixion of Christ, the relationship of Christ with God and the reasons why it happened tell an unbelievable story. Moltmann reasons that, in truth, it is not God's power that is almighty but God's love.<sup>465</sup>

Macchia also suggests that we can develop this understanding with the help of Michael Welker's view of the relationship between God and humans as one between mutually empathetic persons.<sup>466</sup> Macchia commends Welker's criticism of the historical goal of consciousness in the Western world as being directed at self-knowledge and self-reference, whereas a pneumatological understanding is that self-fulfilment derives not from self-reference but empathy with others.<sup>467</sup> Empathy requires relationship. The relationship among the persons of

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<sup>464</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125.

<sup>465</sup> Moltmann, J. 2003. *Science and Wisdom*. Translated by Kohl, M. London: SCM Press, p65. There is a view that, in light of the importance of the Trinitarian Godhead in Christian doctrine, the absence of any overt assertion of the Trinity in scripture is striking. (See, for example, Schowalter, D. 1993. "Trinity" in Coogan, M. and Metzger, B. Eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press). There may be a mundane explanation. Jesus, the first Apostles and Paul were Jews (See, for example, Fuller, R. 1993. "Jesus Christ" in Coogan and Metzger. Eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p356; Betz, O. 1993. "Apostle" in Coogan, and Metzger. Eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, pp41-42; Drane, J. 1993. "Paul" in Coogan and Metzger. Eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p577.) Judaism, the religion of the Jews, is monotheistic (See, for example, Halpern, B. 1993. "Monotheism" in Coogan and Metzger. Eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, pp524-7; and Tanzer, S. 1993. "Judaisms of the First Century CE" in Coogan and Metzger. Eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, pp391-395). The authors of scripture as found in the New Testament may have wished to avoid accusations of di- or tritheism. (See, for example, Congar, Y. 1999. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. (In Three Parts). New York: Crossroads, Part 3, p74; and Schowalter, "Trinity", p782.)

<sup>466</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125. Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power", p125. Welker, M. 2006. "The Introduction" and "The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives" in Welker, M. 2006. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p.xvii and pp228-9, respectively.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*

the Trinity is considered by Christians to be the supreme example of empathy.<sup>468</sup>

Macchia contends that the Spirit has been theologically neglected mainly because of a past focus on the 'logic' of faith rather than its power and the way in which it works: observe the workings of the Spirit rather than trying to understand them.<sup>469</sup>

Macchia goes further than to argue that there are no obstacles to Pentecostal relationships with other Christian denominations when it comes to Trinitarian doctrine.<sup>470</sup> He goes further than to claim that a rediscovery of the meaning of Pentecostal notions of Spirit baptism can make a theological contribution to an understanding of the Trinity. Aligning himself with Moltmann on the Trinitarian doctrine, Macchia brings Pentecostal theology abreast of the most intellectually advanced to be found in Christianity today. In doing so, he opens doors for ecumenical conversations to take place between Pentecostalism and other Christian denominations.

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<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.* See also Welker, M. 2004 "The Spirit in Philosophical and Theological Perspectives", lecture given at the International Consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit (November 1-14, 2004). New York: Yale University Club.

<sup>469</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p55; and Macchia, *The Trinity, Practically Speaking*, pp87-106.

<sup>470</sup> In any event, monotheism is not as simple a concept as its literal translation – belief in one God – would suggest (See, for example, Halpern, "Monotheism", pp524-7). Part of the reason is that when one refers to God as 'one', this 'one-ness' does not refer simply to 'one' as distinct from 'two' or 'three' or 'many', but rather to an integrated totality or wholeness that defies adequate description. (See, for example, Sharon, M. 1989. *Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Interaction and Conflict*, Johannesburg: South Africa: Sacks Publishing House, p31). Moshe Sharon, Professor of Islamic History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, aptly points out that the 'Oneness' in the monotheistic concept of God is not a numerical or a counted "oneness", a 'one' after which other numbers can appear, and it is not a one which is made up of parts. It is a unique Oneness over and above any notion of measure or quantity (*Ibid.*). Words are symbols for the expressions of our thoughts. If this were not so we would also not face the difficulties of translating satisfactorily concepts, expressions, and ideas from one language into another. Theology is necessarily fraught with symbolic imagery used to describe complex thoughts. Inevitably, this effect is compounded when symbolism is used within what is itself already symbolism – when metaphor (one form of symbol) is used within language (another form of symbol).

## **4.8 The Essence Underlying Macchia's Promotion of Ecumenical Conversations between Pentecostals and Others**

Provided there is a rediscovery of the metaphor of Spirit baptism, Macchia believes the distinctiveness of Spirit baptism in Pentecostal theology may help other churches to increase the depth of their understanding of the implications of a core tenet of Christianity: that Jesus Christ was sent by and from God, the Father, to transform all things through the Spirit.<sup>471</sup>

Macchia recognizes that, in an examination of Pentecostalism's distinctiveness, a balance has to be struck between an extreme that isolates the movement from ecumenical engagement and recognition of the fact that, without having anything distinctive, it cannot contribute much of any value to ecumenical developments.<sup>472</sup> It is upon the success of striking a balance on the question of the distinctiveness of Spirit baptism that Pentecostalism's contribution to an unfolding world theology will, in Macchia's view, depend.<sup>473</sup>

In *Baptized in the Spirit* Macchia promotes not only the idea that there is a valuable contribution which Pentecostalism can make to world theology but he also suggests that Pentecostals should open their arms to receive the theological embrace of other Christian denominations and even other faiths as well.<sup>474</sup> In his later work, *Justified in the Spirit*, he has grown more ecumenically confident, stating that he "will show that" Catholic and Protestant understandings of justification "can be blessed by turning to the

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<sup>471</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p107.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, p25.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, p27.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, p34.

distinctively Pentecostal emphasis on Spirit baptism".<sup>475</sup> This increased confidence may also be attributable to the positive response by both Catholic and Protestant theologians to his *Baptized in the Spirit*. As to the extent to which Pentecostalism's ecumenical promise will materialize, this will depend on mutual recognition of a faith that is focused upon the life of the eschatological Spirit, in the process of perfecting creation.<sup>476</sup> In demystifying much of what is understood by Spirit baptism, Macchia may have facilitated not only the possibility that Pentecostals and other Christians may understand each other more clearly but also conversations between Christians and the rest of the world.

Insofar as other religions have difficulties with the Christian notion of the divinity of Christ and, by parity of reasoning, the notion of God as the Father of the Son, any dialogue with other religions that focuses on the Spirit is likely to bear more fruit than that which concentrates on the divinity of Christ – the divinity of Christ generally being considered either blasphemous or absurd by those who are not Christians.

Macchia himself submits that the concept of Spirit baptism in Pentecostal theology can help to build bridges between Protestant and Catholic soteriological theologies.<sup>477</sup> He contends that the reason is to be found in the Spirit baptism's embrace of salvation not only as an individualized experience but also as one that is participatory.<sup>478</sup> Baptism in the Spirit implies, according to Macchia, also a participation in the divine life.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, p13.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, p112.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, p45; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp75-99.

<sup>478</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p45.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, p46.

Macchia directs little attention to the question of the possibilities of dialogue with the non-Christian great world religions. That dialogue with non-Christian religions may lie on the horizon for Pentecostalism is implicit in his stress that the pluralism in the Pentecost account requires that there should be a positive response to discourses with others no matter how ‘different’ they may be. Macchia may have been the first Pentecostal theologian to have striven to explain Spirit baptism in a scholarly manner to those who are not Pentecostals. He has been careful to support his contentions with solid research.

No analysis of Pentecostalism can be considered complete without some discussion about glossolalia or ‘speaking in tongues’. Glossolalia has become so vivid a part of Pentecostalism in the public imagination that it may almost be considered distinctive to it.<sup>480</sup>

## **4.9 Glossolalia or ‘Speaking in Tongues’**

In Macchia’s observation, many Pentecostals, especially in the USA, consider glossolalia to be evidence of Spirit baptism but not all do so.<sup>481</sup> He acknowledges that the experience of glossolalia is widely encountered within the movement.<sup>482</sup> Macchia acknowledges that speaking in tongues has often been understood by Pentecostals to have been a sign or even as initial evidence of Spirit baptism.<sup>483</sup> Macchia reasons that there is a certain theological bankruptcy in losing touch with the ecumenical, Lukan understanding of glossolalia

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<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, p281. Macchia, “The Kingdom and the Power”, p122; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p89 and 317.

<sup>481</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp34-37; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p89 and 317.

<sup>482</sup> Macchia, “The Tongues of Pentecost”, pp2-8; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp34-37; and Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p89 and 317.

<sup>483</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p281; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p89 and 317.

as a sign of eschatological transcendence.<sup>484</sup> This transcendence extends over all human languages, idioms and cultures.<sup>485</sup> His thinking in this regard has undergone development since the 1990s: he has moved away from the doctrine that speaking in tongues is initial evidence of Spirit baptism to regarding it more broadly as indicative of an increasingly diverse and expanding participation in the missions of God around the world.<sup>486</sup>

Macchia emphasizes that Pentecostals also see glossolalia as a sign of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which include, for example, prophecy and divine healing.<sup>487</sup> Macchia holds to the view that there is scriptural support for the concept of speaking in tongues.<sup>488</sup> He considers that the connection between Spirit baptism and glossolalia may have theological implications, especially when it comes to understanding questions that relate to the transcendence of barriers of race, culture and nationality, for example.<sup>489</sup>

Macchia contends that the more traditional, established churches have tended to ignore speaking in tongues, being embarrassed by or insensitive to the fact that there are ‘charismatics’ within such churches who, in recent years, have taken a keen interest in it.<sup>490</sup> Macchia associates speaking in tongues with the enthusiasm and joyousness which are characteristic of Pentecostal worship and which are seen as being among the ‘charismatic’ features of the Pentecostal

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<sup>484</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p36. See also: Macchia, F. 1992. “Sighs Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia”, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (October 1992), pp47-73; and Macchia, F. 1993. “Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal experience”, *PNEUMA* 15:1 (Spring 1993), pp61-76.

<sup>485</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p36. See also: Macchia, “Sighs Too Deep for Words”, pp47-73 and Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign”, pp61-76.

<sup>486</sup> This is apparent when one contrasts his “Sighs Too Deep for Words”, pp47-73 (published in 1992) and “Tongues as a Sign”, pp61-76 (published in 1993), with both *Baptized in the Spirit*, p36 and 281 (published in 2006); and *Justified in the Spirit*, p89 and 317 (published in 2010).

<sup>487</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p36, 83 and 212.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, pp34-37, 8 and 281.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, p83.

experiences.<sup>491</sup> He perceives this ‘charismatic’ character of Pentecostalism to account, at least in part, for its appeal throughout the world.<sup>492</sup>

Referring to scripture, Macchia argues that speaking in tongues is a sign of unity in diversity: the unity of Pentecost is pluralistic, crossing boundaries of rich and poor, young and old, male and female, Jew and Greek and so on, with the gift of tongues refusing to recognize any of the barriers that may arise from these distinctions between human beings.<sup>493</sup> By necessary implication, Macchia suggests that this pluralism must extend both to those who speak in tongues and to those who do not.<sup>494</sup> Insofar as Pentecostals’ interactions with others around the world may be affected by the question of glossolalia, Macchia argues that it should be a non-issue.<sup>495</sup>

In Macchia’s assessment the great value of the Pentecostal emphasis on speaking in tongues is that ‘tongues’ are the language of love and not reason.<sup>496</sup> He notes that some have likened speaking in tongues to the utterances of an infant in response to a loving parent.<sup>497</sup> Macchia submits that glossolalia symbolizes and may provide a foretaste of eschatological transcendence.<sup>498</sup> What might this ‘eschatological transcendence’ mean?

## **4.10 The Question of Eschatological Transcendence**

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<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, pp37-40, 212-18, 271 and 281.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, pp37-40 and 218.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, pp212-18. He has described this unity as a “differentiated unity”.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, pp212-18, 257 and 271.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, p257 and 271

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, p271.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, p281.



The following may serve as a working definition of ‘eschatological transcendence’: ‘The Spirit at work towards the ultimate destiny of all things in the relationship of God, the creator, with creation’.<sup>499</sup> Macchia argues that we may catch glimpses of this transcendence in our flowing out of ourselves to others, of which glossolalia may be an example.<sup>500</sup>

Macchia does not deal with the issue of eschatological transcendence in a wide degree. The explanation may be partly attributable to the fact that the concept of God, the Father, more especially the Father as ‘Creator of heaven and earth’ has not been the focus of attention within the Pentecostal movement.<sup>501</sup> The concept of God, the Father, as being the creator ‘of heaven and earth’ appears in the opening lines of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed.<sup>502</sup> In English, the *ipsissima verba* normally used are: ‘We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen’.<sup>503</sup>

Macchia submits that, in the absence of a ‘creation pneumatology’, Pentecostals will face eschatological limitations that will confine them to ‘social action that is viewed as an extension of divine healing as a miraculous act of redemption in Christ’.<sup>504</sup> Macchia makes an appeal

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<sup>499</sup> ‘Eschatological’ refers to the ultimate destiny of all things. ‘Transcendence’ refers to the relationship of the creator, distinct from that creation, with that creation (See, for example, Polkinghorne, J. 1996. *The Faith of a Physicist*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p80). This creator is commonly referred to by most Christians as “God, the Father Almighty”. There is a growing trend, by reason of the fact that God is considered to be without and beyond gender, and in order to avoid the use of sexist language to adopt the expression “God, the Creator almighty” instead of the expression, “God, the Father almighty”. By reason of the fact that one is here trying to make it clear that, in the traditional Trinitarian idiom, “God, the Father almighty” is the person of the Trinity considered to be the “creator of heaven and earth”, the more familiar formulation has been used without any intention to perpetuate sexist imagery. Christians believe that the Spirit is at work in this transcendent relationship with creation.

<sup>500</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p281.

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, p279.

<sup>502</sup> See, for example, The Provincial Trustees and the Synod of Bishops of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. 1989. *An Anglican Prayer Book*. Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa: Collins, p108.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>504</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p279.

for Pentecostals to acquire a deeper social - even political - awareness.<sup>505</sup>

Macchia considers that eschatological transcendence, God as creator and socio-political awareness are linked together in an integrated totality.<sup>506</sup> A theology which ignores either social realities or the political structures that underpin such realities risks becoming academically and theologically isolated. Macchia perceives that the challenge for Pentecostalism lies on a level deeper even than an awareness of social and/or political realities: it is to be found in the implications of there being a profound awareness that the Spirit is present in creation as a whole.<sup>507</sup>

Moltmann considers that Macchia has contributed to Pentecostal theology “marching into the arena of universal and ecumenical conversation, conscious of itself and ready for critical discussions”.<sup>508</sup> Moltmann contends that Macchia has proceeded “to walk forward into universal horizons”.<sup>509</sup>

The totality of creation to which Macchia refers cannot avoid the realities of science. The realities of science cannot be grasped without some acknowledgement to the rationalist traditions which we have inherited from the Enlightenment. As Pinnock observes, “Pentecostals still have some unfinished business to take care of”.<sup>510</sup> Macchia draws upon Moltmann to suggest that what is required is the full participation in creation of all believers. Macchia does not deal directly with the question of dialogue between science and religion but it is implicit that his theology would lead in that direction: full participation in creation unavoidably requires an engagement with

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<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.*, p280.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, pp279-80.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, p279.

<sup>508</sup> Moltmann, “On the abundance of the Holy Spirit”, p10.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>510</sup> Pinnock, “Review of Frank D. Macchia’s *Baptized in the Spirit*”, p2.

science as well. It does not end there. Macchia's endorsement of Welker's theological positions on several occasions suggests that these two theologians may share even more perspectives.

Welker has reasoned that there may be different ways of access to the Spirit not only for Jews and Gentiles but the pouring out of the Spirit insistently reaches out to all regardless of differences in gender, race, age or class.<sup>511</sup> Dialogue, transcending all these barriers, can be theologically understood as an imperative of the Spirit.<sup>512</sup> Christians are called upon to put their faith in the Spirit, working in different ways to lead human beings into new relationships with one another.<sup>513</sup> There may be emerging ways in which the Spirit will speak as the one voice, rising above our different understandings of religious canon.<sup>514</sup> This aspect will be considered in the chapters that follow.

#### **4.11 Summary of the Theology of Frank Macchia**

Macchia argues that a rediscovery of the metaphor of Spirit baptism, which is so distinctive of Pentecostal theology, may make a vital contribution to world theology.<sup>515</sup> In Macchia's view, a pneumatology conscious of the fact that the Spirit is present in the fullness of creation beckons for Pentecostalism.<sup>516</sup> The work of Amos Yong, another Pentecostal theologian, who has acknowledged the contribution of Macchia upon his thinking, will now be explored in

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<sup>511</sup> Welker, M. 1994. *God the Spirit*. Translated by Hoffmeyer J. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, chapters 1, 3.3-4, 5.1, 5.5 and 6.2; and Welker, "The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives", pp228-9. See, also: Isaiah 11; 42; 61; Joel 3; 1; Mark 12:36; 13:11 Acts 1:16; 4:25; 11:28 and 20:25; Romans 15:16; and Ephesians 2:18.

<sup>512</sup> Welker, *God the Spirit*, chapters 1, 3.3-4, 5.1, 5.5 and 6.2; and Welker, "The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives", pp228-9.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.* See, also: Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 11:28 and 20:25.

<sup>515</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p34 and 107.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, p279-80.

order to determine whether a trajectory of theological development with the Pentecostal movement can be plotted.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE TIMES: THE THEOLOGY OF AMOS YONG

### 5.1 Introduction

Amos Yong is a naturalized American citizen and Pentecostal theologian.<sup>517</sup> A person of Chinese descent, he spent his early life outside the United States of America. His writings have been prolific and widely published. If, as Margaret Poloma submits, Pentecostal theology is “at the crossroads” in terms of its intellectual development, research into Yong’s work may further illuminate the direction which that theology may take. Yong identifies the challenges which await Christian theology collectively, in terms almost identical to those which have thus far been identified as facing the Pentecostal movement, in particular: the transition from modernity and its aftermath to postmodernism, increasing awareness of religious

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<sup>517</sup> It was pointed out in chapter one that 2008, the year in which this research began, has been taken as the benchmark in terms of the published works of the four American scholars to be considered. This focus has been adopted to avoid the research being caught up in a vortex chasing the latest publications of the different scholars. In the case of Yong, in particular, his rate of publication has been prolific, if not exponential. His first major publication, *Discerning the Spirit(s)* was published in 2000. Since then he has authored or edited more than fifteen volumes, with his next publication *God is Spirit, God is Love, Love as the Gift of the Spirit* due to be published by Baylor University Press (Waco, Texas) in 2012. Insofar as Pentecostalism *per se* is concerned, the major trajectories in his work have been identified. A perusal of his work since 2008 does not suggest that any major shift in his thinking has occurred since then, insofar as it touches upon the subject matter of this research. A feature of Yong’s work is that it has been marked by consistency.

pluralism around the globe and scientific progress and discovery.<sup>518</sup> As has been the case with the scholars whose work has been the focus of examination in each of the previous three chapters, the background of Yong will be considered the better to understand the influences which shaped his intellectual convictions as well as the development of his ideas.

## **5.2 The Background of Amos Yong and the Development of his Ideas**

Yong grew up as the son of Pentecostal pastors.<sup>519</sup> He attended a Pentecostal Bible college, Bethany College of the Assemblies of God, in Santa Cruz, California and has been affiliated with a classical Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God.<sup>520</sup> Yong has taught courses on the Spirit at a Pentecostal institution of higher education, the North Central University of the Assemblies of God in Minneapolis.<sup>521</sup> He is J. Rodman Williams Professor of Theology at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia and is director of their Ph.D program in Renewal Studies.<sup>522</sup> He has relied upon the Pentecostal tradition to develop a theology which he considers to be consistent therewith.<sup>523</sup> Yong has a Ph.D from Boston University.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Yong, A. 2005. *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh, Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, p17.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, p9.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>522</sup> Yong, A. 2009. "Poured Out on All Creation? Searching for the Spirit in the Pentecostal Encounter with Science" in Yong, A. Editor. *Spirit, Grace, and Creation: Pentecostal Forays into Science and Theology of Creation*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Press, pp.xi-xxiii.

<sup>523</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p9.

<sup>524</sup> Yong, A. 2002. *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, frontispiece; Yong, A. 2003. *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*, *PNEUMA: the Journal for Pentecostal Studies*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, frontispiece; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, frontispiece.

His ethnicity is Chinese.<sup>525</sup> Born and raised in Malaysia, he acknowledges that his interpretation of Pentecostalism has been influenced by his North American education and the contours of Pentecostal worship which he has encountered in the USA.<sup>526</sup>

Yong describes his parents as having been first generation Christians who consciously rejected their non-Christian roots but unconsciously transmitted to him certain values from these Chinese influences.<sup>527</sup> Referring to the early years of his childhood which he spent in Malaysia where the indigenous Malays have adopted Islam as the religion of state, he mentions that he was unavoidably aware of many of the features and practice of this religion: Islam infused the school system and public life.<sup>528</sup> Yong describes his religious roots as being multiple: brought up in the practice and belief of the Christian religion, he was subtly affected by Confucian and Buddhist influences.<sup>529</sup>

Yong's teenage years were spent in Northern California in the USA.<sup>530</sup> His tertiary education was undertaken completely in the West: he underwent a ministerial training program at an Assemblies of God institution, earned a graduate degree in the history of Christian thought from a Wesleyan Holiness seminary in the Pacific Northwest, a second graduate degree in Western intellectual history from a secular university in the same region and a doctorate in the study of religion from another secular university in New England.<sup>531</sup> In the past he has taught in the Upper Midwest region of the USA amidst a

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<sup>525</sup> Yong, A. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(s): a Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 20. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, p25.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>527</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p303.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*

tradition established by devoutly religious Swedes approximately 100 years ago.<sup>532</sup> The cultural influences upon Yong are diverse.

The intellectual influences upon his thinking, more particularly the genealogy of his ideas, require some examination in order to properly understand his academic contribution.

The following persons influenced Yong's thinking insofar as his understanding of Pentecostal studies is concerned: Walter Hollenweger, Harvey Cox, Donald Dayton, Steven Land and Frank Macchia.<sup>533</sup>

Hollenweger's *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* published in 1972 has influenced all four of the scholars whose work has been scrutinized in this research.<sup>534</sup> Yong's respectful admiration of the South African Pentecostal evangelist, David Du Du Plessis is partly attributable to the influence and legacy of Hollenweger.<sup>535</sup> The ecumenical endeavors of Du Plessis, inspired Yong.<sup>536</sup>

While Yong respects Cox's book on Pentecostalism, *Fire from Heaven*, as "highly acclaimed", he renders criticism of Cox's account of

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<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>533</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp60, 79-85, 98, 109-119, 122-4, 165, 171-5, 244,316-7; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p8, 19, 30-32, 39, 228, 247. Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p134 See also Yong, A. "In Search of Foundations: The Oeuvre of Donald Gelpi, S.J. and Its Significance for Pentecostal Theology and Philosophy", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11:1 (2002), pp3-26.

<sup>534</sup> Hollenweger, W. 1972. *The Pentecostal Movement in the Churches*. Translated by R. A. Wilson. Minneapolis: Augsburg. See chapters two, three and four of this research. See also for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p 18, 19, 27, 128, 148, 152, 158, 162, 171, 175, 181, 207, 208, 211, 215, 219, 289, 293, 296 and 300; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p282; Yong *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p21, 24, 42, 50, 65, 66, 69, 71, 79, 80, 160, 177, 178, 186 and 294.

<sup>535</sup> Hollenweger, W. 1997. *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, pp352-3; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p175.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*



Pentecostalism as a species of primal spirituality.<sup>537</sup> Yong acknowledges the influence of Harvey Cox in shaping his recognition of the accommodative spirit within the Pentecostal movement.<sup>538</sup> Yong has described Dayton's *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, published in 1987, as a "classic".<sup>539</sup>

Land's book, *Pentecostal Spirituality: a Passion for the Kingdom* is much referred to in Yong's first major publication, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*.<sup>540</sup> The pervasive influence of Macchia's thoughts is apparent in Yong's work.<sup>541</sup>

In terms of his overall philosophy and world-view, Yong acknowledges the influence of the philosopher, Robert Cummings Neville, to whom he dedicated his *Spirit-Word-Community* and whom he met at Boston University, and of Donald Gelpi, who led him back to a deeper understanding of the work of Charles Peirce.<sup>542</sup>

Yong is sensitive to the challenges which await Christian theology relating conversations with non-Christian faiths and with those who have no religious faith at all.<sup>543</sup> Neville contributed to Yong's awareness in this regard.<sup>544</sup> Donald Gelpi, a Roman Catholic

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<sup>537</sup> See, for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp 17-20, 31, 135, 158, 210, 222, 223, 227-29, 234, 235, 242, 257 and 319.

<sup>538</sup> Cox, H. 1995. *Fire From Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley; Yong, A. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp17-8.

<sup>539</sup> Dayton, D. 1987. *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. See Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p169.

<sup>540</sup> Land, S. 1993. *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. See also Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p171, 175, 186, 224, 228, and 235.

<sup>541</sup> See for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p22, 26, 153, 167, 168, 174, 176, 189, 237 and 244; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p31; Yong, *The Spirit poured out on All Flesh*, p82, 93, 102, 136, 157, 159, 172, 184, 185, 200 and 254; Yong, *The Spirit, Vocation, and the Life of the Mind*, pp10-11.

<sup>542</sup> Yong, A. "In Search of Foundations: The Oeuvre of Donald Gelpi, S.J. and Its Significance for Pentecostal Theology and Philosophy", pp3-26.

<sup>543</sup> Yong, A and Heltzel, P. 2004. "Robert Cummings Neville and Theology's Global Future" in Yong, A. and Heltzel, P. Eds. *Theology in Global Context: Essays in Honor of Robert Cummings, Neville*. New York: T&T Clark, p34.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*

theologian, helped to shape Yong's commitment to ecumenism.<sup>545</sup> Gelpi directed Yong to the ideas of the mathematician, philosopher and semiotic theorist, Charles Peirce.<sup>546</sup> Peirce, mediated through Gelpi, assisted Yong to understand there to be a dynamic power in pneumatological theology.<sup>547</sup>

It will become apparent as this chapter progresses that Yong is powerfully attracted to the idea of ecumenism.<sup>548</sup> In addition to Gelpi, other Roman Catholic theologians who have helped to shape Yong's ideas are Karl Rahner,<sup>549</sup> Yves Congar<sup>550</sup> and Kilian McDonnell.<sup>551</sup> Yong has also been influenced by Protestant theologians, chief among whom is Paul Tillich.<sup>552</sup> Another is D. Lyle Dabney, a Methodist.<sup>553</sup>

Yong's ecumenical convictions were strengthened by Michael Welker's observations concerning the pluralism that is to be found in the Pentecost account, compelling an outreach to others, no matter how different they may be.<sup>554</sup> This overt ecumenical commitment first

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<sup>545</sup> Yong, A. 2002. "In Search of Foundations: the *Oeuvre* of Donald Gelpi, S.J. and Its Significance for Pentecostal Theology and Philosophy", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11:1, pp3-26.

<sup>546</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, A. 2000. "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth: What Evangelicals Can Learn From C.S. Peirce". *Christian Scholar's Review* 29 (Spring 2000): pp563-88.; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297 and 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>548</sup> Yong makes a distinction between "intra-Christian ecumenism" and "interreligious ecumenism" but considers both to be a species of ecumenism. More conventionally, "ecumenism" refers to that which relates to the holding together of the entire Christian community, in all its diversity (see, for example, Murray, J., Bradley, H., Craigie, W. and Onions, C. Eds. 1989. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Second edition. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press). What Yong refers to as "interreligious ecumenism", I have referred to in this research as "inter-faith dialogue" or "inter-faith conversations".

<sup>549</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p60, 75 and 316-7.

<sup>550</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p134.

<sup>551</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p98, 109-19, 122-4, 165, 171, 173 and 244; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p8, 19, 30-32, 39, 228 and 247; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp98-101.

<sup>552</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp79-85, 95 and 114.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, p98, 109-19, 122-4, 165, 171, 173, and 244; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p8, 19, 30-32, 39, 228 and 247; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp98-101.

<sup>554</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172 and 254.

appears in his *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* which was published in 2005.<sup>555</sup> In his earlier works, *Discerning the Spirit(s)* and *Spirit-Word-Community*, the ecumenical influence upon Yong's thinking is apparent but he does not directly proclaim himself in favour of intra-Christian ecumenism.<sup>556</sup> In *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, Yong recognizes the potential for participation by Pentecostal theologians in ecumenical dialogue.<sup>557</sup>

Philip Clayton affected Yong's ideas on the emergence of the Spirit.<sup>558</sup> Another ecumenical mentor was Cecil Robeck to whom, along with McDonnell, Yong dedicated the book *Toward a Pneumatological Theology*, of which he was the editor.<sup>559</sup>

These influences have shaped Yong's conviction that Pentecostalism, as a worldwide movement, provides an emerging tradition for the positive development of contemporary theology.<sup>560</sup> Yong's theological convictions since he first began publishing have been marked by consistency. An exception is his stance on the issue of the *filioque* which has developed since *Discerning the Spirit (s)* was published in 2000.

In *Discerning the Spirit (s)* he says "(T)here is general theological consensus between East and West today that the *filioque* was inappropriately inserted into the Creed".<sup>561</sup> In *Spirit-Word-Community*

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<sup>555</sup> See, the bibliography to this dissertation.

<sup>556</sup> *Discerning the Spirit(s)* was published in 2000 and *Spirit-Word-Community* in 2002 (See the bibliography to this dissertation); *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p60, 75, and 316-7; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p303.

<sup>557</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p60 and 316-7.

<sup>558</sup> Yong, A. 2006. "Ruach, the Primordial Waters, and the Breath of Life" in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, pp183-204.

<sup>559</sup> In Yong, A. 2002. Ed. *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology and Theology of Mission*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

<sup>560</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp248-51; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p18.

<sup>561</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p66.

Yong expresses the view that “the Eastern emphasis on the perichoretic interrelationality of the divine persons can be seen to complement the Latin doctrine of the *filioque*”.<sup>562</sup> In *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* he concedes that “Although I had previously tended toward the Orthodox answer, I have since come to see the value of the *filioque*”.<sup>563</sup> He records that this “represents an update on my thinking on this important issue”.<sup>564</sup> Yong’s reading of David Coffey’s work, especially Coffey’s *Deus Trinitas: the Doctrine of the Triune God*<sup>565</sup> influenced Yong’s thinking on the issue.<sup>566</sup>

Yong’s theology has become more missiological over time. In *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* Yong contends that “In short, ecumenism is missions and vice versa”.<sup>567</sup> He continues: “My claim here is to give further impetus to the thesis that modern pentecostalism was not only an ecumenical movement from the beginning but was and has been ecumenical precisely in the pneumatological and charismatic sense of valuing the Spirit’s gifts and activities”.<sup>568</sup> In *Spirit-Word-Community* Yong was more cautious. He expressed the view that “Pentecostal theology has experienced the ecumenical potential of the Spirit’s presence and activity, and has begun to theologize within the global Pentecostal context in such a way as to reflect that experience and awareness”.<sup>569</sup> In *Discerning the Spirit(s)* Yong contended, somewhat less confidently, that: “Pentecostal-charismatic missions need to be ecumenical to a larger degree than they currently are. This means, in part, that a Pentecostal missiology will need to emphasize both

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<sup>562</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p72.

<sup>563</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p226.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> Coffey, D. 1999. *Deus Trinitas: the Doctrine of the Triune God*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>566</sup> See, Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp59-72 and also Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p226.

<sup>567</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p176.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>569</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p284.

proclamation *and* dialogue”.<sup>570</sup> The explanation for this shift in focus concerning the issue of Pentecostal mission, may have to do with his growing confidence in his own reputation as a theologian.

As was apparent in the previous chapter, the potential of Pentecostal theology to contribute positively to the unfolding development of theology is a matter which has been endorsed by Macchia. It is apparent from the background of influences which have shaped Yong’s ideas that he shares this belief. Yong’s perspectives on this aspect will now be explored.

### **5.3 Yong’s Perspectives as to the Potential Contribution which Pentecostalism can Bring to Contemporary Theology**

Yong acknowledges that there has been a tendency for Pentecostalism to reject the homogenization associated with globalization.<sup>571</sup> Yong refers approvingly to Harvey Cox’s account of the growth and expansion of Pentecostal worship as part of a worldwide resurgence of interest in religious experience.<sup>572</sup> Even if one accepts this observation as being correct, it does not explain why Pentecostal forms of religious experience have grown more rapidly than other more traditional Christian variations.

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<sup>570</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p214. That Yong’s interest in missiology has gathered momentum since circa 2004 is apparent from a number of published journal articles written by him since that date. See, for example, Yong, A. 2005. “A P(new)matological Paradigm for Christian Mission in a Religiously Plural World”, *Missiology: an International Review* 33:2 (2005), pp175-91. *Christian Approaches to Other Faiths: A Reader*. London: SCM Press; Yong, A. 2007. “The Spirit of Hospitality: Pentecostal Perspectives towards a Performative Theology of the Interreligious Encounter”, *Missiology: An International Review* 35:1, pp55-73.

<sup>571</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p26. See, also Yong, “A P(new)matological Paradigm for Christian Mission in a Religiously Plural World”.

<sup>572</sup> Cox, *Fire From Heaven*; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p17.

In Yong's understanding, Pentecostalism is animated by the conviction that Luke's accounts, especially in the book of Acts, of the Spirit in action, are an invitation to participate in the Spirit's continuing processes.<sup>573</sup> Yong reasons that pneumatology lies at the heart of Pentecostal theology and that the essence of Pentecostal spirituality is "the dynamic experience of the Holy Spirit".<sup>574</sup> This "dynamic experience of the Holy Spirit", to which Yong refers, relates to the record of Pentecostals leading lives changed for the better as a result of their spiritual experiences. We have seen in chapter two that Grant Wacker observed that there has been a general acceptance that, as a result of the commitment that arises from Spirit baptism, persons who claim the experience have often led lives changed for the better. Yong makes the point as well.<sup>575</sup> This, he contends, is the work of the Spirit.<sup>576</sup>

Yong concludes that, whatever may have held back Pentecostalism's inter-religious dialogue in the past, this has now changed to the extent that Pentecostal scholars can become full dialogue partners not only seeking to learn but also able to contribute something fresh.<sup>577</sup>

The question arises: what may account for the change within Pentecostalism in this regard? What has brought about the movement's recognition of its own potential as a full dialogue partner in theological discourses? In previous chapters, the question of whether socio-economic factors played a role in shaping the theological positions of Pentecostals – at least in certain key areas – was explored. The reason for this is that it was a consideration raised by Wacker as one of importance in understanding the Pentecostal movement historically. Poloma, in her earlier work, also thought that

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<sup>573</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p27-8.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, pp27-8, 72, 177.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, pp27-8.

<sup>577</sup> *Ibid.*, p30.

socio-economic factors were relevant in understanding the growth of Pentecostalism around the world.

An evaluation of the role of these socio-economic factors in the growth and appeal of the Pentecostal movement is complex. Socio-economic factors, standing alone, may have proven inadequate to the task of providing an explanation for the appeal of Pentecostalism but they are not necessarily completely irrelevant. In order to maintain thematic consistency in this research, Yong's thoughts on the issue will now be reflected upon.

#### **5.4 Socio-Economic Factors in the Pattern of Pentecostalism's Growth and Development**

Yong notes that upward social mobility and the increasing institutionalization of the classical Pentecostal denominations have also had their effect to the extent that within the Pentecostal movement there is now a much more positive attitude toward education and intellectual endeavors.<sup>578</sup> He accepts that Pentecostalism was originally focused mainly among the lower social strata of society in early twentieth century North America.<sup>579</sup>

In the preface as editor of Velli-Matti Kärkkäinen's *Toward a Pneumatological Theology*, Yong concedes that for much of the twentieth century, Pentecostal theology has been seen by others as fundamentalist, having its interests confined to Spirit baptism and the charismatic gifts. He contends that this perception is no longer valid: Pentecostal theologians are now in the process of developing a systematic theology.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, p32.

<sup>579</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p282.

<sup>580</sup> Kärkkäinen, V-M. 2002. "Grace and Ecumenical Potential of Theosis", chapter 11 in Yong, A. Ed. *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical*

Noting that the Pentecostal movement has drawn upon a variety of different traditions, Yong is emphatic that it would be wrong to imagine that there has been no tradition of scholarship within Pentecostalism.<sup>581</sup> Yong argues that, because of the strength of conviction of the Pentecostal mission that the good news belongs to all persons, presented in their own language, culture and context, it developed principles of indigenization, accommodation, acculturation and assimilation.<sup>582</sup> This, he contends, confers upon the Pentecostal movement benefits as a partner in ecumenical dialogue.<sup>583</sup>

Related to the question of the role which socio-economic factors may have played in attracting adherents to the movement is whether it may have been true that Pentecostalism drew into its fold the socially disadvantaged. This aspect was also considered in previous chapters. Again, in order to maintain thematic consistency, Yong's views on this aspect will now be considered.

Yong contends that Pentecostalism's quality of being able to attract the disadvantaged into its fold has given it a degree of advantage when it comes to understanding the work of the Spirit in the world.<sup>584</sup> God's special favour for the poor, the oppressed – those suffering from disadvantage – is a refrain in the New Testament.<sup>585</sup> Yong also concludes that Pentecostalism's affinity with the disadvantaged and its experience with acculturation confers on it a natural ascendancy in any potential theological dialogue concerned with the experience of the

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*Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology and Theology of Mission.* Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, pp. xiii-iv.

<sup>581</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p. 282; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p. 30. Jacobsen, D. 1999. "Knowing the Doctrines of Pentecostals: the Scholastic Theology of the Assemblies of God, 1930-55" in Blumhofer, E., Spittler, R. and Wacker, G. Eds. *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>582</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p. 145.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60 and 145.



Spirit.<sup>586</sup> In a related vein, Yong refers approvingly to Michael Welker's observations<sup>587</sup> of the radical pluralism inherent in the Pentecost account: God's testimony in the Pentecostal event is world-encompassing, multicultural and multilingual; Pentecost creates a theological imperative that breaks down barriers.<sup>588</sup>

Yong refers to Acts<sup>589</sup> to make the point that, in the first century A.D., the "gift of the Spirit" had been "poured out" to those suffering from severe social disadvantage, including slaves.<sup>590</sup> Extending the analogy, he records that Pentecostalism had to endure a high degree of condescension from the wider society.<sup>591</sup> Ironically, in his view, the reason for this is to be found in its theologically correct emphasis upon the gift of the Spirit being conferred especially upon the disadvantaged.<sup>592</sup> The stress on these values, in turn, attracted the disadvantaged into its following.<sup>593</sup>

In Yong's view, the diverse following within Pentecostalism confers upon the movement a "special richness", an example of which he takes from South Africa where about 40 percent of the mainly black population belongs to the African Independent Churches ("AICs").<sup>594</sup> These churches have been shaped by Pentecostal influences.<sup>595</sup> Among the examples which Yong gives of Pentecostal influence upon the development of interracial relationships is the Assemblies of God church in South Africa, which was begun by white Pentecostal missionaries.<sup>596</sup> It now has the majority of its members drawn from

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<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*, p145.

<sup>587</sup> Welker, M. 1994. *God the Spirit*. Translated by Hoffmeyer, J. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp230-5.

<sup>588</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172.

<sup>589</sup> Acts 2:18-19.

<sup>590</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p60.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, p64.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*

the historically disadvantaged black community.<sup>597</sup> He observes that throughout Africa there has been the emergence of an indigenized Christianity where the independent Churches of the sub-Saharan regions have fused traditional and Pentecostal styles of worship.<sup>598</sup> Yong refers to this as an illustration of the movement's ability to "acculturalize" with forms and beliefs different from the Western norm.<sup>599</sup>

Given the segregationist attitudes prevalent in North America during the first half of the twentieth century, Yong considers it remarkable that the Azusa Street revival was distinguished by its multiracial environment, drawing into its fold persons from different races, ethnic groups, cultures and nationalities, including Hispanics and Asians.<sup>600</sup>

'Sociological' explanations for the following which the Pentecostal movement has received from the socially disadvantaged cannot be overlooked. For example, blacks may have been attracted by the acceptance of themselves as equals. The adaptation to cultural norms with which blacks were more familiar or comfortable may also explain at least part of the appeal of the movement to blacks.

Yong alludes to the fact that in the history of the Pentecostal movement, among its most highly admired figures is the black person, William Seymour.<sup>601</sup> Yong considers that it may have influenced Seymour's theology that he was born to former slaves.<sup>602</sup> Yong argues that Seymour clearly articulated the belief that the reconciliation of

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<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, p18.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, p183.

<sup>601</sup> Seymour, who lived from 1870 to 1922, was active at the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles from 1906 to 1908 - see also chapters two and three.

<sup>602</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p152.

racism was brought into being through the outpouring of the Spirit, made possible by the cross of Christ.<sup>603</sup>

Yong concludes that the experience of divine power liberating black churches and communities has drawn black Pentecostal theologians in North America towards socio-political and liberation theologies.<sup>604</sup> He argues that liberation is the consequence of the presence of the Spirit.<sup>605</sup> He concludes that black Pentecostal theologians have been keenly aware not only that there should be no racial division among believers because God is no respecter of persons but also that spiritual power has sprung from interracial equality.<sup>606</sup>

Yong submits that the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit is one of transformation of lives and communities, especially among the disadvantaged.<sup>607</sup> He contends that Pentecostal theology is not merely charismatic but also soteriological.<sup>608</sup> Yong consistently offers a profoundly spiritual explanation, derived from Pentecostalism's theology, for the movement's appeal.<sup>609</sup>

Referring to the growing contemporary interest in pneumatological theology, Yong submits that pneumatological theology can derive much from the tradition of Pentecostalism.<sup>610</sup> Yong inverts disadvantage so that it can be understood, in certain contexts, as advantage. The Pentecostal experience of accommodation, acculturation and assimilation of the disadvantaged can teach other Christians, especially the complacent among them, new perspectives as to the working of the Spirit in the world. Yong admits to the development of his thinking in this regard: having earlier not fully

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<sup>603</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p72 and 177.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, p78-9.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*, p72, 177.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, p81.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, p72, 78-81 and 179.

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.* p28.

appreciated the significance of Pentecostalism's relationship with the disadvantaged, his work, especially since 2005, has begun to show a heightened awareness of the theology of disability.<sup>611</sup>

Yong deduces that speaking in tongues served to empower the socially marginalized and disenfranchised members of the movement: lacking in education and influence, ordinary persons acquired the facility to transform their individual sense of identity as a result of glossolalia being manifest in them.<sup>612</sup> Yong considers that by reason of what was seen as a sign of giftedness of the Spirit, these otherwise disempowered individuals received recognition and acceptance within the communities in which they were located.<sup>613</sup>

The association of glossolalia with the Pentecostal movement in the public perception is so marked that 'speaking in tongues' could not be ignored in his research. The question of whether glossolalia is one of the *essentialia* of Pentecostalism was considered in the previous three chapters. A related question is whether glossolalia may explain, even partially, the growth of Pentecostalism. In order to proceed consistently through this dissertation, a look at Yong's consideration of this matter will now be taken.

## 5.5 The Issue of Glossolalia

Yong underlines the fact that the scriptural foundation for the concept of 'speaking in tongues' (glossolalia) derives from Luke's account of

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<sup>611</sup> See: Yong, A. 2011 *The Bible, Disability and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans; Yong, A. and Alexander, E. 2011. *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. Religion, Race and Ethnicity Series. New York: New York University Press; and Yong, A. and Clarke, C. 2011. *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism and the Great Commission: Toward a Theology of Mission and Interreligious Encounter*. Ashbury Theological Seminary Series in World Christian Revitalization Movements in Pentecostal/Charismatic Studies 4 Lexington, Kentucky: Emeth Press.

<sup>612</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p283.

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid.*

how, on the day of Pentecost, those gathered in the upper room “were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”.<sup>614</sup> Yong acknowledges that glossolalia or ‘speaking in tongues’ has been regarded by Pentecostals as a gift of the Spirit, together with other charismata (divinely conferred powers), such as prophecy and healing, since at least the Azusa Street revival.<sup>615</sup>

Yong also strikes a cautionary note with the observation that, while glossolalia may have been central in ‘defining’ Pentecostalism, it should be borne in mind that glossolalia is not a *sine qua non* for belonging to the movement and that in North America only a minority would claim to speak in tongues.<sup>616</sup>

Yong contends that Pentecostals have never been mere speakers in ‘tongues’ but also prophets, evangelists, apostles, pastors and preachers, all through the power of the Spirit.<sup>617</sup> Yong believes that attitudes between Pentecostals and other Christian denominations were affected by the fact that glossolalia and other charismata began to spread to the Roman Catholic and more established Protestant churches such as Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians in the 1950s.<sup>618</sup> Yong records that this process gathered momentum in the 1960s.<sup>619</sup> He describes this process as having led, in many instances and in different denominations, to an increase in personal piety, commitment to evangelical witness, deeper Bible study, and a willingness to embrace more intense forms of spirituality.<sup>620</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> Acts 2: 4 (*Revised Standard Version*. 1965. New York: William Collins); Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p238.

<sup>615</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p229; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p248.

<sup>616</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p223.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, p284.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, pp154-5.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.*

The conviction that glossolalia is not an issue which separates Pentecostals from other Christians has been shared by the other scholars whose work has been reviewed in this dissertation.

Factors other than glossolalia must explain the growth and spread of Pentecostalism. Referring to Cox's analysis, Yong concludes that it is Pentecostalism's facility for accommodation, acculturation and assimilation that best explains its following.<sup>621</sup> This has been a stance which he has consistently adopted.<sup>622</sup> This is the same factor, mentioned previously in this chapter, to which Yong attributes the potential which Pentecostalism possesses in ecumenical dialogue.<sup>623</sup>

In this regard a subtle shift in Yong's thinking may be discerned. In *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, published in 2000, Yong attributes the following within the Pentecostal movement to its facility for accommodation, acculturation and assimilation but in *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, published later in 2005, he goes further and, with a gathering confidence, asserts this facility as one which, in addition, holds much potential in ecumenical discussions.<sup>624</sup>

Wacker and Poloma referred to the pragmatism in the Pentecostal movement. Yong takes this a step further, beyond pragmatism. He discerns that, to understand why Pentecostalism attracts the following it does, it must be recognized that the facility of Pentecostalism for accommodation, acculturation and assimilation plays a considerable role.

Yong attributes the strength, power and *raison d'être* of Pentecostalism to the accounts of Pentecost (the action of the Spirit) in

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<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, p18 and 154-5.

<sup>622</sup> See, also, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p145.

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>624</sup> Compare Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p18, 154-5 with Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p145.

the book of Acts, written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke.<sup>625</sup> Pentecostal spirituality is therefore, in his assessment, the spirituality derived from the Spirit. That proposition is, in itself, a ‘theological’ statement.

If, according to Yong, Pentecostal spirituality is the most viable form of Christianity today, how best may Pentecostal theology rise to the challenge of the times, more especially in the academic or intellectual arena? Yong argues that, in this regard, consideration should be given to finding the appropriate emphasis of the Pentecost account in Luke-Acts against the whole of scripture.<sup>626</sup> As the implications of such a focus may impact upon unfolding ecumenical discussions involving Pentecostal theologians in future, the issue will be considered at this juncture.

## **5.6 Yong on the Deeper Implications of the Pentecost Account Given by Luke**

Yong reasons that the theological integrity of the Lukan understanding of the Spirit lies in its awareness of the empowering nature of the Spirit.<sup>627</sup> This, he concludes, requires a reading of the narratives of Luke-Acts theologically and doctrinally alongside other New Testament authors including Paul, in particular, who dominates traditional Protestant theology.<sup>628</sup> When Yong refers to the empowering nature of the Spirit, he has in mind the change, referred to earlier in this chapter, which people make as a result of their religious commitment to lead better lives.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp84-9.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, p84.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid.*, p85.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>629</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp154-5; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp27-8, 72 and 177.

Yong reasons that the transition from the account of the Spirit in Luke's gospel to his account in Acts is one from Spirit Christology to Spirit soteriology and that, for Luke, the gift of the Spirit to the followers of Jesus empowers them to overcome sin, temptation and the devil; authorizes them to cast out demons; and enables them to do the works of the ministry on behalf of the poor, the captives, and the oppressed – all as Jesus did.<sup>630</sup>

According to Yong, the description of Pentecost in Acts<sup>631</sup> is an event in which the Spirit sets people free to go out into the world to bring about change for the better.<sup>632</sup> This, Yong concludes, has the consequence of smashing down barriers that may have arisen from our socio-economic, ethnic and gender differences.<sup>633</sup> This, in his interpretation is how the Spirit guides and identifies the people of God.<sup>634</sup>

Christian salvation, according to Yong, includes both the transformation of human beings into the image of Jesus by the power of the Spirit and the transformation of creation by the triune God.<sup>635</sup> He concludes that the salvation which arises from this transformation is multidimensional, affecting not only personal and familial lives but also touching upon ecclesial, material and social issues, including reconciliation across barriers of race, class and gender.<sup>636</sup>

This transformation, in his reckoning, has cosmic and eschatological implications as well: contrary to fundamentalist notions, creation will not be apocalyptically destroyed but rather transformed.<sup>637</sup> Drawing

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<sup>630</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp88-9.

<sup>631</sup> Acts 2:42-7.

<sup>632</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p255.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>635</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p91-7.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*



on the work of various contemporary theologians,<sup>638</sup> Yong submits that Lukan (and therefore Pentecostal) pneumatological soteriology entails understanding that Jesus pours out the Spirit upon all flesh in order that his followers also may accomplish perhaps greater works than he.<sup>639</sup>

Yong reasons that salvation is to be found in the concrete, ordinary, everyday experiences of the Spirit being poured out on persons as social, political, economic and spiritual beings.<sup>640</sup> Yong deduces that salvation is human participation in the saving work of God through Christ by the Spirit.<sup>641</sup> This understanding of the Spirit is described by him as the “pneumatological imagination”.<sup>642</sup>

Yong contends that the Spirit-emphasis of the Pentecostal movement has considerable potential to lead the way for contemporary world theology: Pentecostal theology draws open the curtains to see a vista in which the power of the Spirit can be seen in ordinary human actions.<sup>643</sup> In the same vein, Yong argues that at least part of the reason for this potential is to be found precisely in the fact that Pentecostalism understands the Spirit to be actively engaged in the ordinary, everyday activities of human beings.<sup>644</sup> In Yong’s perspective, this belief in the power which lurks in the ordinary, daily events in people’s lives is held by Pentecostals to an extent that may be deeper than that generally to be found in traditional forms of Christianity.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> These include Roman Catholics such as Kilian McDonnell, Donald Gelpi, and Lyle Dabney; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p98, 109-19, 122-4, 165, 171, 173 and 244; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p8, 19, 30-32, 39, 228, 247; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp98-101.

<sup>639</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p98, 109-19, 122-4, 165, 171, 173 and 244; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p8, 19, 30-32, 39, 228 and 247; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp98-101.

<sup>640</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p120.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>642</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*

Yong's interest in and commitment to ecumenical dialogue has loomed large in his intellectual discourses. It is trite that ecumenical conversations among Christians are predicated upon two questions that may be seen as different sides of the same coin: (i) what do we have in common and (ii) what are the things that keep us apart? As a general rule, conversations concerned with these questions cannot for long avoid the related question of: 'What is the church?' This question raises the more academic and intellectually challenging issues of ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity, all three of which are intimately bound up with each other.

Pentecostal positions and responses to the issues of apostolicity, catholicity and ecclesiology in theological discourses in which Pentecostals and other Christians may take part are likely to have an impact on the outcomes of such conversations. For this reason, the issues of apostolicity, catholicity and ecclesiology have been considered in every preceding chapter. Yong's views on these issues may be valuable in the drawing of valid conclusions later in this dissertation.

## **5.7 Yong's Insights on the Pneumatological Implications for Apostolicity, Catholicity and Ecclesiology**

As Yong observes, the question "What is the church?" has been a large one for Christian theologians during the twentieth century.<sup>646</sup> Not only Pentecostals, but other Christians as well, would agree with Yong that the church apostolic is the means through which the mission of Christ is carried out by the power of the Spirit.<sup>647</sup> Furthermore, as

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<sup>646</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p122.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p146.

Yong notes, the early twentieth-century Pentecostals were convinced that they were reverting to faith and practice of the original disciples of Jesus.<sup>648</sup>

Noting that the third quinquennium of Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue (1985-1989) had pneumatological ecclesiology as one of its guiding themes, Yong points out that the Catholic theologian, Yves Congar, has emphasized that the Spirit “animates the Church”.<sup>649</sup> In Yong’s view, the fact that Pentecostalism may not, in general, have its own formally developed ecclesiology, does not prevent both the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals from agreeing on the following:

- (i) the Spirit is the source of unity within the church;
- (ii) apostolicity is the continuity with the faith of the apostles and the proclamation of the gospel;
- (iii) apostolicity is a pneumatological concept; and
- (iv) the concept of unity of the church should be affirmed.<sup>650</sup>

The primary disagreement between the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals on the question of the unity of the church is whether any one episcopate, more particularly the Petrine office of the papacy, constitutes that unity.<sup>651</sup> In Yong’s view, this disagreement may not be as large as it first appears because even a Roman Catholic theologian such as Congar acknowledges that the unity as proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church has more to do with the understanding of the interiority of the Spirit’s life and less with the exterior manifestations of the Spirit’s work: what happens is what matters and not appearances.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*, p120.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*, p134.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*, p127-51.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*

Reflecting upon the fact that Karl Rahner and Paul Tillich, as Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians respectively, both adopted a more pneumatological orientation as their theology developed, Yong appears to embrace the theology of them both for three main reasons:

- (i) to show that Pentecostalism can be comfortable with emerging theology in the great theological traditions of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism;
- (ii) to underscore the fact that even these “theological giants”, operating within their well-developed theological traditions, “saw through a glass darkly” on the question of pneumatology; and
- (iii) to underline the contribution which Pentecostal theology can make to the unfolding of a Christian “pneumatological imagination”.<sup>653</sup>

Yong reasons that Pentecostal perspectives have contributed to contemporary ecclesiology.<sup>654</sup> He submits that a pneumatological perspective has reshaped thinking on matters of ecclesiology to the extent that unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity are not seen as finally defined but as unfolding eschatologically.<sup>655</sup> On the issues of apostolicity, catholicity and ecclesiology, Yong contends that it is what is in the hearts and minds of women which matters much more than external appearances.<sup>656</sup> This is a view expressed for the first time in *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*.<sup>657</sup> In *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* he concludes that a “pneumatological ecclesiology” is emerging.<sup>658</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p60, 70-95, 114, 127-51 and 224. Rahner, K. 1988. “Aspects of European Theology”, *Theological Investigations*, XXI, pp78-98. New York: Crossroad, pp97-8; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp316-7. Kärkkäinen, “Grace and Ecumenical Potential of Theosis”, pxvi.

<sup>654</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p151.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*

Yong summarizes his submissions on the issue of the pneumatological implications for apostolicity, catholicity and ecclesiology as being contained in the idea that a pneumatological approach to the church emphasizes that to be the people of God, being saved by God is what really matters.<sup>659</sup> This pneumatological approach, according to Yong, will have varied and unanticipated consequences which will be eschatological in nature.<sup>660</sup>

We have seen that Yong distinguishes between “intra-Christian ecumenism” and “interreligious ecumenism” but considers both to be a species of ecumenism. We may now leave the issues of ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity to consider Yong’s perspectives on ecumenism in more general terms.

## **5.8 Yong on Placing the Right Perspective on the Relationship between Ecumenism and Pentecostalism**

Yong, like Wacker, Poloma, and Macchia, accepts that, among many Pentecostals, there has been little enthusiasm for dialogue with other Christian denominations, let alone other faiths, but contends that, if one explores the mystery of Pentecost correctly, an ecumenical tradition of Pentecostalism is to be uncovered, transcending ethnic, racial, linguistic, social, class, gender and religious differences.<sup>661</sup> He contends that, in this tradition, Pentecostalism will be empowered by the Spirit to bring about the “eschatological day of the Lord”.<sup>662</sup> Yong

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<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, p166.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>661</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p181, 183, 201.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*, p201.

believes that the Spirit will lead Pentecostals to do the work which the Spirit wills which includes work that is ecumenical at its core.<sup>663</sup>

Yong argues that the growth of Pentecostal churches around the world has resulted in an increasing awareness of the ecumenical potential of the Spirit's presence and activity.<sup>664</sup> Yong notes approvingly that, in recent times, there have been formal Pentecostal dialogues with the established churches, including the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.<sup>665</sup>

Related to Yong's attraction to ecumenism is his belief that a pneumatological approach to theology has the potential to bridge the divide between Pentecostals and other Christian denominations.<sup>666</sup> Yong contends that the challenges to theology posed by religious pluralism in the world rank on a par with the challenges posed to theology by science: the former arising from globalization and the latter from the emergence of Darwinism and the exponential growth in scientific knowledge since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>667</sup> He submits that there are three interrelated questions that currently demand special attention for a Christian theology of religions.<sup>668</sup>

The first concerns the question of the role of the world's religions in the providence of God.<sup>669</sup> The second is whether God saves through religions, and if so, how?<sup>670</sup> The third is how Christians should respond to other faiths.<sup>671</sup> Yong proposes that that a "pneumatologically driven theology" is likely to produce the best

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<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, p201-37.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, p285.

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*, p181, 183.

<sup>666</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p60, 316-7.

<sup>667</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp235-7.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, pp235-6.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*

answers to all three of these questions.<sup>672</sup> The reason for this proposition is to be found in dual conviction that the Spirit is insistent that barriers should be broken down and the Spirit may be trusted to show the way.<sup>673</sup>

We have seen that Wacker has raised the issue of discernment of spirits as one of importance in determining the future course of Pentecostal relations with the rest of the world. It is a matter to which Yong has devoted an entire book, bearing the title, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*. He makes the point that from the earliest stages of the Bible, the importance of being able to distinguish between that which may spiritually be derived from God and what could not was made clear.<sup>674</sup>

Yong emphasizes that Christians need to recognize that the Spirit may be present and actively at work in other religious traditions and they also need to remember that the universal presence and activity of the Spirit proclaims the universality of the truth.<sup>675</sup> In this perspective Christians should move forward in faith, confident that they will be able to discern the spirits in their theological dialogue with other religious traditions.<sup>676</sup>

In his discussions about dialogue across religious boundaries, Yong, together with Peter Heltzel, addresses an issue which was raised at the beginning of his dissertation: the dilemma of historical consciousness.<sup>677</sup> Yong does not avoid the issue: he recognizes that one of the large challenges for Christian theology today is that it is impossible to assume a prevailing acceptance that it conveys timeless

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<sup>672</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*, pp201-37.

<sup>674</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p21.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*, p317.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, pp310-24.

<sup>677</sup> They acknowledge their indebtedness to Robert Cummings Neville, erstwhile Professor of Philosophy, Religion and Theology at Boston University School of Theology. Yong and Heltzel, "Robert Cummings Neville and Theology's Global Future", p34.

universal truths.<sup>678</sup> In Heltzel and Yong's view, the global context challenges contemporary Christian theology with myriad complex questions.<sup>679</sup> There can be no doubt that these will be matters for further discussion and research.

In much the same way as one cannot for long avoid the question, 'What is the church?' in ecumenical conversations among differing Christian denominations, one cannot for long avoid the issue of the Trinity when it comes to dialogue between those of differing faith. It may have become apparent in the progress of this dissertation that, when it comes to Pentecostalism and the issue of the Trinity, one cannot for long avoid the question, 'And, what about the "Oneness" Pentecostals?'.<sup>680</sup>

Thematic consistency in this research requires that one should consider Yong's contributions to these two commonly asked but related questions: 'What about the Trinity?' (in the context of dialogue with faiths that are outside of the Christian tradition) and 'What about the "Oneness" Pentecostals?' (when there are conversations between Pentecostals and other Christians on the Trinity).

## **5.9 Pentecostalism and the Trinity: the Question of the 'Oneness' Pentecostals and Some of the Implications of Conversations Transcending Religious Boundaries**

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<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>679</sup> Yong and Heltzel, "Robert Cummings Neville and Theology's Global Future", p34.

<sup>680</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, 'Oneness' or 'non-Trinitarian' Pentecostals are also known as 'Jesus-only' Pentecostals and, more latterly, by academics and the educated laity, as 'Apostolic Pentecostals'. See, for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)* p59.



Yong acknowledges that there exists a polemic within Pentecostalism which can be described as the “Oneness-Trinitarian debate”.<sup>681</sup> Yong contends that while the motivation of Oneness thinkers may have been to rescue their doctrinal position on the Trinity by revisiting history, they have devoted much more attention to the historical Christian tradition relating to the issue than the Trinitarians.<sup>682</sup> Yong argues that the Trinitarian/“Oneness” divisions within the Pentecostal movement help to equip the movement’s pneumatological theology for conversations amidst an increasing awareness of the world’s religious pluralism.<sup>683</sup>

Yong has undertaken a review of certain twentieth century theologians on the question of the Trinity, deriving comfort from the results of the dialogue held in 1978 between Pinchas Lapide, an Orthodox Israeli Jew, and Jürgen Moltmann, the German Lutheran theologian who agreed that the notion of ‘oneness’ in relation to God is not a mathematical oneness and that the ‘three’ in the trinity is not a mathematical quantity.<sup>684</sup>

Yong associates himself with the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Jonathan Sacks, when Sacks argues that there is room for recognizing diversity even among those who have a monotheistic understanding of God.<sup>685</sup> Yong commends the fact that there has been an emergence in recent decades not only of Jewish-Christian dialogue but also a Jewish-Christian-Muslim triologue among the three Abrahamic religious traditions.<sup>686</sup> Yong is supportive of the trend in the academic study of religion in the West in recent years to be less interested in

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<sup>681</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p205.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, p212.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, p234.

<sup>684</sup> These include Vladimir Lossky (Eastern Orthodox), Karl Barth (Swiss Protestant), Leonardo Boff (Brazilian liberation), Jung Young Lee (Korean Methodist-Presbyterian) and Okechukwu Ogbonnaya (Nigerian Methodist). Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp65-6; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p108, 267; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp213-29.

<sup>685</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp229-30.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*

adjudicating doctrinal and theological disagreements between Christianity and Islam, and to focus more upon fostering mutual understanding and toleration.<sup>687</sup>

Yong has noted that the Arabic word *ruh*, used in the Qur'an of Islam, has etymological roots similar to the Hebrew word *ruah*, both of which can be translated as 'Spirit' or 'breath' or 'wind' in English and as *pneuma* in Greek.<sup>688</sup> He reasons that this convergence of concepts raises possibilities for dialogue between Christians and Muslims.<sup>689</sup> Yong concedes that, while there are similarities between the Muslim concept of *ruh* and Christian belief in the Spirit, there are theological disagreements: Christians consider the Spirit as fully divine but Muslims consider the Spirit to be a created, empowered entity, neither coeternal with God nor sharing the divine nature.<sup>690</sup>

Yong also recognizes that an intellectual challenge for theology is how it should respond to scientific progress and discovery if it is to avoid being confined to isolated segments of society.<sup>691</sup>

## **5.10 Pentecostalism and the Challenges of Science**

Yong contends that the increasing pursuit among Pentecostals of graduate education, not only in the humanities but also in the sciences has had an impact.<sup>692</sup> He traces developments over the past generation to support his argument that, for those Pentecostals who take science seriously, literal interpretations of Genesis are no longer

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<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, p258.

<sup>688</sup> From which the theological concept of 'pneumatology' derives.

<sup>689</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p263.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, p26, 276.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, p277.

the norm in understanding how creation came into being.<sup>693</sup> Yong concludes that, within the past generation, Pentecostals have travelled away from what he has described as “scientific illiteracy”.<sup>694</sup> He submits that contemporary dialogue between science and religion will be facilitated if the *ruah* (Spirit) of God moving upon the face of the waters, as described in Genesis 1:2, is understood as an affirmation that the Spirit leads and guides towards the fulfilment of God’s purposes in all things.<sup>695</sup>

Recognizing that evolution has not been a smooth progression (there have been extinctions and other disasters within the cosmos, for example), Yong asks whether the evolutionary struggle is not implicit in formlessness, void and darkness described in Genesis 1:2?<sup>696</sup> He deduces that there is scope for dialogue between science and religion as to why there is a process of evolution, why human beings inhabit the earth, how human beings should respond to the world and how human effort, driven by ideas, may impact upon the globe and beyond.<sup>697</sup>

Drawing, as he often does, upon ideas from an eclectic array of sources,<sup>698</sup> Yong concludes that a pneumatological theology will best assist in the dialogue between science and religion because the Spirit is the *dunamis*, the dynamic power of life, the power of life in creation.<sup>699</sup> He summarizes the essence of a pneumatological theory of

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<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, pp279-80, 290-1.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, pp279-80.

<sup>695</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp43-4; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p282.

<sup>696</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p282.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*, p282-3.

<sup>698</sup> These include Charles Peirce (“mathematician, logician, scientist, and philosopher extraordinaire whose work is gaining appreciation in our time”), Alfred North Whitehead and Donald Gelpi. Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth”, pp563-88; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-4, 116-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297 and 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>699</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p43-8, 115.

creation as being found in the intertwining of spiritual and material realms.<sup>700</sup> This, he concludes, has implications which extend to a theology of the environment.<sup>701</sup> He contends that as human beings are now so well equipped by the power of scientific knowledge, we sin against God if we do not rise to meet the environmental challenges of our time.<sup>702</sup> A *leitmotif* in Yong's work is the potential of a pneumatological theology to contribute constructively to the pressing issues of our being-in-the-world.<sup>703</sup>

## 5.11 Summary

It has been difficult to do justice, in particular, to Yong's theological contributions among the scholars whose work has been reviewed. The reason is that he has published prolifically since this research began and time and space will not permit a comprehensive analysis of all his work. In any event, Yong, like the other three scholars whose work has been under scrutiny, is not so much a 'subject' of this research as a medium through which one may better understand academic and theological developments within the Pentecostal movement. Certain

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<sup>700</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p300.

<sup>701</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth", pp563-88; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-4, 116-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297 and 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>702</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p301. This research may have anticipated an escalating interest in science by Yong. Since this research began in 2008, he has been the author of various publications which have dealt with the topic of conversations between science and religion. See: Yong, A. 2008. "Introduction: Pentecostalism, Science and Creation: New Voices in the Theology-Science Conversation", *Zygon: Journal of Science and Religion* 43: 4, pp475-77; Yong, A. 2009. *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology. The Cadbury Lectures*. 2009. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans; Yong, A. and Smith J.K.A. Eds. 2010. *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press; and Yong, A. 2011 *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

<sup>703</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth" pp563-88; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-4, 116-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297 and 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

trajectories in Pentecostal thinking have been identified. Having been born in 1965, Yong is still young.<sup>704</sup> His bibliography alone is testimony to the fact that he has considerable energy. We are likely to hear more from him theologically in the years that lie ahead.

For the purposes of this research, the significance of Yong's work lies in the fact that he argues that Pentecostal theology, with its pneumatological emphasis, can assist the development of worldwide theological discourses. He summons Pentecostals and all others, regardless of religious conviction, to rise to the challenge. The scope of this potential extends to dialogue with science on the environmental challenges of our time. The implications of a positive dialogue between science and religion are large. Having completed the individual reviews of the work of the four American scholars, it is appropriate to compare and contrast their work in the next chapter.

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<sup>704</sup> Yong, *The Spirit, Vocation, and the Life of the Mind*, p1.

## CHAPTER SIX

# ASTOUNDING RESONANCE AMIDST FOUR PERSPECTIVES: PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL TRAJECTORIES

### 6.1 Introduction

There is agreement among Grant Wacker, Margaret Poloma, Frank Macchia and Amos Yong as to the following:

- (i) ‘Sociological’ or socio-economic explanations do not suffice as an account for the strength of the Pentecostal movement – it is the quality of the spiritual experience of the movement by its adherents, widely referred to as Spirit baptism, that provides the explanation for its large and growing following;<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>705</sup> Wacker, G. 2001. *Heaven Below, Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, pp265-6; Poloma, M. 2003. *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, pp21-7; Macchia, F. 2006. *Baptized in the Spirit, A Global Pentecostal Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, p33; Yong, A. 2005. *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, p26; Yong, A. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 20. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, p17; Irvin, D. 2005. “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity: Rethinking the Question of Origins”, *PNEUMA: the Journal for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol.27, No.1 (Spring 2005), pp35-50; Cox, H. 1995. *Fire From Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley. On the other hand, David Martin, whose *Tongues of Fire* (1990. Oxford: Blackwell) and *Pentecostalism: the World their Parish* (2002. Oxford: Blackwell) has earned him a formidable reputation as an informed scholar of Pentecostalism, has a somewhat different view: he sees Pentecostalism largely as a cultural manifestation, drawing into its fold society’s outsiders. Martin is British. He is honorary Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University in England and Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. By profession a sociologist, he is President of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion. Martin delivered a

- (ii) Pentecostalism's history of adaptability and its pneumatological theology equip it well to make a contribution to world theology through ecumenical conversations, precisely by reason of its distinctive qualities;<sup>706</sup>
- (iii) Pentecostalism has been marked by a certain inward focus, often described as 'fundamentalist', in which the emphasis is upon a literal understanding of the Bible;<sup>707</sup>
- (iv) Pentecostalism is at the crossroads: the key question is how Pentecostalism will respond to the challenges to enter into a worldwide theological discourse with others, across a spectrum of different religious convictions, in the years that lie immediately ahead;<sup>708</sup>

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"keynote" lecture, "Does the Advance of Science Mean Secularisation?" in November, 2005 in the Queen's Theatre at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, England. See Martin, *Pentecostalism: the World their Parish* and, especially, his chapter therein: *A Cultural Revolution: Sources, Character, Niches*, pp1-27 and the chapter *Trying Conclusions: A Global Option?*, pp167-176.

<sup>706</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp177-90 and 253-5; Poloma, M. 1989. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*. Knoxville, Tennessee: Knoxville University Press, pp131-2, 140, 181, 207-12, 236; Wacker, G. 1985. *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, p.xiii; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp159-61, 178; Macchia, F. 2010. *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption and the Triune God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p76; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172, 201, 235-7, 254; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp316-7; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*.

<sup>707</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp177-90, 253-5; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp131-2, 140, 181, 207-12, 236; Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong*, p.xiii; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp159-61 and 178; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172, 201, 235-7, 254; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp316-7; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*.

<sup>708</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp177-90 and 253-5; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp131-2, 140, 181, 207-12, 236; Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong*, p.xiii; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp159-61, 178; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172, 201, 235-7, 254, 283-99; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp316-7; Yong, A. 2000. "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth: What Evangelicals Can Learn From C.S. Peirce", *Christian Scholar's Review* 29: 3 (Spring 2000), pp563-89; Yong, A. 2002. *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*. New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*.

- (v) It is not possible to predict with certainty the direction which Pentecostalism will follow but there are encouraging signs.<sup>709</sup>

The four scholars also agree that while glossolalia or ‘speaking in tongues’ has been a feature of central importance to the movement since the days of the Azusa Street revival, it is not distinctive to it.<sup>710</sup> Furthermore, they agree that even Spirit baptism (with which glossolalia has been closely associated) cannot be described as an exclusively Pentecostal experience.<sup>711</sup>

All four scholars agree that Pentecostalism has had a complex relationship with ‘modernity’.<sup>712</sup> ‘Modernity’ is a term that is not

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<sup>709</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp177-90, 253-5; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp131-2, 140, 181, 207-12, 236; Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong*, p.xiii; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp159-61, 178; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172, 201, 235-7, 254; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp316-7; Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth”; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99. Cox, *Fire From Heaven*.

<sup>710</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp5-7, 37, 39, 49, 71, 77, 79, 86 100, 104, 132, 160, 178, 194, 201, 215, 227-8, 230, 232; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp23-7, 39-41, 67, 88-91, 232; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p67, 88; Poloma, M. (awaiting publication). “The Pentecostal Movement” in Hunt, S. Ed. *Christian Millenarianism: Themes and Perspectives*. New York: New York University Press; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p23, 34-37, 212-8, 238, 281; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp258-92; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p18, 154-5, 223, 229; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p238, 248, 283-4; Dayton, D. 1987. *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, Metuchen, New Jersey and London: Scarecrow Press, p24, 37 and 87-105; Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”.

<sup>711</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp5-7, 37, 39, 49, 71, 77, 79, 86 100, 104, 132, 160, 178, 194, 201, 215, 227-8, 230, 232; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp23-7, 39-41, 67, 88-91, 232; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p67, 88; Poloma, “The Pentecostal Movement”; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp34-37, 212-8, 238, 281; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p18, 154-5, 223, 229; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p238, 248, 283-4; Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, p24, 37; Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”; Bruner, F. 1970. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostal Experience and New Testament Witness*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p75; Maslow, H. 1964. *Religions, Values and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Viking.

<sup>712</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp1-20; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p15, 23; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p33; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p26; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p17. Butler, J., Wacker, G. and Balmer, R. Eds. 2008. *Religion in American Life: A Short History*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, p431; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp1-20; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p15;



amenable to easy definition. Generally, it refers to the period (and the social conditions and processes) consequent upon the Enlightenment.<sup>713</sup> It has been characterized by a belief that the world is capable of transformation through human intervention.<sup>714</sup> The period is marked by the rise of capitalism, increasing complexity of economic institutions, industrial production, the market economy, large-scale social integration, the nation state and mass production.<sup>715</sup> It is also marked by an obsession with ‘evidence’.<sup>716</sup>

There are nuanced variances in the perceptions of these four scholars as to the dynamic between Pentecostalism and ‘modernity’. These differences will be examined, before drawing any conclusions.

## **6.2 Pentecostalism’s Complex Relationship with Modernity**

Wacker has referred to two ‘models’, drawn from the social sciences, which have been used to explain the growth of the Pentecostal movement: (i) that Pentecostalism has responded to modernity by providing a substitute for material comforts and social esteem which converts could not otherwise obtain (the “compensation” model) and

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Hunter, J. 1981. “The New Religions: Demodernization and the Protest Against Modernity” in Wilson, B. Ed. *Impact of New Religious Movements*. New York: Rose of Sharon Press, p5. “Modernity” is a notoriously difficult concept to define. See, for example, Durkheim, E. 1915. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Swain, J. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd; Bellah, R. 1959. “Durkheim & History”, *American Sociology Review*, pp447-61; Miller, W., 1991. *Durkheim, Morals and Modernity*. London UCL Press; Weber, M. 1947. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Translated by Parsons, T. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>713</sup> See, for example, Giddens, A. 1998. *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p94; Leppert, R. 2004. “The Social Discipline of Listening” in Drobnick, J. Ed. *Aural Cultures*. Toronto: YYZ Books, pp19-35; Norris, C. 1995. “Modernity” in Honderick, T. Ed. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p583.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>715</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*

(ii) that it provided a creative resource for dealing with adversity (the “functional” model).<sup>717</sup>

Conceding that there may be some truth in these ‘models’, Wacker argues that they miss one vital point: “the genius of the Pentecostal movement lay in its ability to hold two seemingly incompatible impulses in productive tension”.<sup>718</sup> The tension derives from maintaining religious teachings as if these were both ancient and immutable, while making accommodation with prevailing ways of ‘being and seeing’.<sup>719</sup> The Pentecostal movement combines an ecstatic experience of otherworldly power with this-worldly practicality.<sup>720</sup> What Wacker describes as genius, Dale Irvin refers to as Pentecostalism’s “double consciousness”.<sup>721</sup> Irvin’s work is relevant because, an historical theologian himself, he has contributed scholarly work on Pentecostalism too.<sup>722</sup> His work therefore provides a measuring rod against which one can gauge the accuracy and validity of the propositions and conclusions of the four scholars whose work has been the focus of this research.

Poloma does not pertinently deal with ‘the dilemma of historical consciousness’ but she mirrors Wacker’s views as to the dilemmas and challenges which Pentecostalism faces as a result of its complex

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<sup>717</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.* See, also Wacker, G. 2006. “Early Pentecostals and the Study of Popular Religious Movements” in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit, Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan Eerdmans, pp133-143. See, also, Welker’s observations in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit, Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan Eerdmans, p.xiv.

<sup>719</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10; Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong*, p.xiii.

<sup>720</sup> See Welker’s observations in Welker, *The Work of the Spirit*, p.xiv.

<sup>721</sup> Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”, p48 & 50.

<sup>722</sup> Irvin is President of the New York Theological seminary and Professor of World Christianity there. He is an ordained Baptist minister. He shares an interest in ecumenical dialogue. While he has contributed some scholarly material on the subject, Pentecostalism cannot be described as his “special field”. See, for example, Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”, p49. Goff, J. and Wacker, G. 2002. “Charles Price Jones and the Sufficiency of Jesus” in *Portraits of the First Generation: Essays on the Centennial Celebration of the Pentecostal Movement*. Little Rock, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press.

relationship with modernity.<sup>723</sup> Poloma, in her earlier work, perceived the Pentecostal movement as a protest against modernity.<sup>724</sup> This ‘protest against modernity’ explanation for Pentecostalism’s following is shared by Irvin.<sup>725</sup> Irvin submits that, acting as a protest against modernity, Pentecostalism posed a fundamental challenge to the *Orbis Universalis Christianum* that dominated the world for the previous five centuries.<sup>726</sup> More recently, Poloma has revised this ‘protest’ perspective, arguing that it is the powerful spiritual experience which Pentecostalism offers that draws people towards it.<sup>727</sup>

Macchia agrees that Pentecostals have tended to steer clear of the modernity’s drift towards scientific objectivity and the use of the historical method, focusing rather upon the spiritual quest for the truth and the authority of scripture.<sup>728</sup>

Yong, like Wacker, acknowledges that Pentecostalism has resisted modernity’s homogenizing forces.<sup>729</sup> Yong attributes the spread of

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<sup>723</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p132, 140, 181, 207-12, 236; Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong*, p.xiii.

<sup>724</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp1-20; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p15. Poloma refers to “modernity” as a “mind-set which was forced by the foundational epistemology of the Enlightenment with its emphasis on certain and objective knowledge derived from scientific enquiry and autonomous rationality”. Poloma, M. 2009. “Is Integrating Spirit and Sociology Possible? A Postmodern Research Odyssey” in Smith, J. and Yong, A. Eds. *Science and the Spirit. Questions and Possibilities for a Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, chapter 9. Essentially, Poloma links the concept of “modernity” to a subservience to the dominant or prevailing ideas borne of the Enlightenment. Relying on the insights of James Davison Hunter, Poloma alludes to the dilemma of functioning in contemporary society in which human beings battle to find a well-integrated system of meaning which gives a sense of belonging and purpose to their lives. In consequence, contemporary society is structurally deficient in providing individuals with “concrete and meaningful social confirmation of their sense of reality (including their understanding of social processes, subjective meaning and personal identity)”. See, Hunter “The New Religions: Demodernization and the Protest Against Modernity”, p5.

<sup>725</sup> See, for example, Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity: Rethinking the Question of Origins”, p49; and Goff and Wacker, “Charles Price Jones and the Sufficiency of Jesus”.

<sup>726</sup> Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”, p49.

<sup>727</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, p23.

<sup>728</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p52.

<sup>729</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p26.

Pentecostal worship to a quest by human beings, wherever they may be, for spirituality.<sup>730</sup>

Pentecostalism may have grown around the world by maintaining a productive tension between the ecstatic experience of otherworldly power which it provides its adherents and, by way of contrast, this-worldly practicality. What of the challenges for the future?

### **6.3 Pentecostalism: the Challenges of the Future**

Implicit in the analyses of all four of the experts under scrutiny in this research is the recognition that the challenges for Pentecostalism to participate in conversations across religious boundaries will grow in their intensity.<sup>731</sup> The forces of our times, more especially those of globalization and the progress of science are too powerful to permit any other conclusion.

The world cannot be ignored. Isolation, intellectually, physically and spiritually is not a viable option because these globalizing forces intrude everywhere. Interaction among persons of differing cultures and belief systems will necessarily be a continuing feature of societies around the globe. Religion will not be able to escape from this interactive process. In the years to come, a failure by Pentecostals to embark on ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue could result in isolation, confinement and marginalization. Is this a likely scenario?

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<sup>730</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p26; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p17; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*.

<sup>731</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Augustus H. Strong*, p.xiii; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p132, 140, 181, 207-12, 236. Yong, together with Peter Heltzel, recognizes that one of the large challenges for Christian theology today is that it is impossible to assume a prevailing acceptance that it conveys timeless universal truths. They acknowledge their indebtedness to Robert Cummings Neville, erstwhile Professor of Philosophy, Religion and Theology at Boston University School of Theology. Yong, A. and Heltzel, P. 2004. "Robert Cummings Neville and Theology's Global Future" in Yong, A. and Heltzel, P. Eds. *Theology in Global Context: Essays in Honor of Robert Cummings, Neville*. New York: T & T Clark, p34.

Macchia recognizes that, as an historical pattern, there has been an across-the-board lack of Pentecostal involvement in ecumenical conversations.<sup>732</sup> Macchia attributes part of the explanation for this to Pentecostals' emphasis on an individualistic understanding of Spirit baptism.<sup>733</sup> Macchia contends that this position arises from an inaccurate understanding of Spirit baptism.<sup>734</sup> Spirit baptism may have a personal impact but it occurs within a supportive community.<sup>735</sup>

Yong accepts that, as a general rule, Pentecostals have been 'Biblical literalists'.<sup>736</sup> He also accepts that among Pentecostals there has, historically, been little interest in ecumenical dialogue.<sup>737</sup> Yong contends that the exponential growth in scientific knowledge since the mid-nineteenth century, make it imperative that there should not only be intra-Christian ecumenical discussions but also inter-faith dialogue.<sup>738</sup> For similar reasons, Yong argues in favour of intellectual conversations taking place between science and religion.<sup>739</sup> In Yong's assessment, as Pentecostals have improved their education, so their awareness of science has increased.<sup>740</sup> Correspondingly, Biblical literalism is likely, in his view, to yield to an intellectual encounter with science over time.<sup>741</sup>

In this respect, Poloma strikes a cautionary note: while acknowledging that sections among the Pentecostals now seek recognition and acceptance from other religious affiliations, she perceives that if

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<sup>732</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p61 and 166; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p98.

<sup>733</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p155.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*, p56, 159, 161, 166, 178.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>736</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp191-4, 290-1.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, p201.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*, pp235-7.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid.*, pp277-80 and 290-1.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*

Pentecostal pastors are less assertive in maintaining a separate identity for their churches, the distinctiveness of the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit may be at risk.<sup>742</sup> She predicts that this may result in a falling off of adherence within those particular Pentecostal churches who are thus affected.<sup>743</sup>

Wacker's intellectual development has, in recent years, led to the conviction that rather than an ecstatic experience of spiritual power being incongruous with this-worldly practicality, these two tendencies may have a synergy, a creative tension.<sup>744</sup> This development in his thinking may be attributable to a gathering awareness of the importance of 'discerning the spirits', of evaluating the claims of Spirit experience.<sup>745</sup> Yong has published a whole book called *Discerning the Spirit(s)* and has taken an increasing interest in discerning the spirits.<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> See, for example, Poloma, M. 2006. "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity" in Welker M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, p165.

<sup>743</sup> See, for example, Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity", p165.

<sup>744</sup> Compare Wacker, G. 1984. "The Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism", *Harvard Theological Review* 77: 3-4, pp353-75 with Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10 and Wacker, "Early Pentecostals and the Study of Popular Religious Movements", p133, 143 and 144.

<sup>745</sup> See, for example, Dunn, J. 1999. "Discernment of Spirits – A Neglected Gift" in Harrinton, W. Ed. *Witness to the Spirit: Essays on Revelation, Spirit, Redemption*. Dublin: Irish Biblical Association, pp79-96; Dunn J. 2006. "Towards the Spirit in Christ" in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit, Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan Eerdmans, p24; and Welker M. 2006. "Introduction" in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit, Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan Eerdmans, p.xi.

<sup>746</sup> See, for example, Yong's *Discerning the Spirit(s)* (to which reference has already been made in much of this dissertation) and Yong, A. 2004. "The Holy Spirit and the World Religions: On the Christian Discernment of Spirit(s) 'after' Buddhism". In *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 24 (2004), pp191-207; Yong, A. 2004. "Beyond Beyond the Impasse: Responding to Dale Irvin", *Journal for Pentecostal Theology* 12: 2 (2004), pp281-85; Yong, A. 2004. "The Spirit Bears Witness: Pneumatology, Truth & the Religions", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 57:1 (2004), pp14-38; Yong, A. 2005. "Significant turns in Contemporary Theology of Religions", *Theology and Notes* 52:1 (Winter 2005), pp 4-6 and 22; Yong, A. 2005. "A P(new)matological Paradigm for Christian Mission in a Religiously Plural World", *Missiology: An International Review* 33: 2 (2005), pp175-91; Yong, A. 2006. "Whither Evangelical Theology? The Work of Velli-Matti Kärkkäinen as a Case Study of Contemporary Trajectories", *Evangelical Review of Theology* 30: 1 (2006), pp60-85; Yong, A. 2006. "Performing Global Pentecostal Theology: A Response to Wolfgang Vondey", *PNEUMA: the Journal for Theology* 28: 2 (2006), pp313-21; Yong, A. 2007. "The Spirit of Hospitality: Pentecostal Perspectives towards a Performative Theology of the Interreligious

As only two of the scholars whose work has been the focus of this dissertation have commented on the significance of discerning the Spirits, the views of other theological scholars will be considered in this regard in order to find independent corroboration on this issue.

James Dunn and Michael Welker have concurred in the opinion that a key to Christianity's growth in the wider world and its general revitalization may lie in this: the ability to acknowledge that there may be ecstatic experiences of the power of the Spirit while, at the same time, discerning and evaluating these experiences.<sup>747</sup> These experiences are assessed both as to their source as well as their significance for the benefit of the community.<sup>748</sup>

David Power<sup>749</sup> points out that, parallel with the tendency of the Western church to focus upon the transmission and interpretation of scripture, has been a relative neglect of reflection on the Spirit.<sup>750</sup> Power concludes that the Pentecostal movement has had its part to play in changing this focus.<sup>751</sup> In his opinion this has resulted in an accompanying attention to the need for a discernment of spirits.<sup>752</sup>

The survey of the work of the four American Pentecostal scholars in question indicates that the challenges of the future for Pentecostalism may be summarized as follows: (i) ecumenical dialogue among

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Encounter", *Missiology: An International Review* 35:1 (2007), pp55-73; Yong, A. 2007. "The Spirit, Christian Practices, and the Religions: Theology of Religions in Pentecostal and Pneumatological Perspective", *Ashbury Journal* 62:2 (2007), pp22-37; Yong, A. 2009. "The Light Shines in the Darkness': Johannine Dualism and the Challenge of Christian Theology of Religions Today", *Journal of Religion* 89:1 (2009), pp31-56.

<sup>747</sup> Dunn, "Towards the Spirit in Christ", p24; and Welker, "Introduction", p.xi.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>749</sup> Professor Emeritus of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America.

<sup>750</sup> Power, D. 1989. "The Holy Spirit" in Wainwright G. Ed. *Keeping the Faith*. London: SPCK, p154.

<sup>751</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*

Christians; (ii) inter-faith theological dialogue and (iii) conversations with science in which science and religion need not be understood as intellectually incompatible disciplines. Related to all of the above is likely to be the challenge of discernment of spirits. These issues will be considered in turn.

## **6.4 The Prospects for Pentecostalism's Participation in Conversations across Boundaries**

Wacker and Poloma are cautious about the overall prospects of Pentecostalism entering into ecumenical dialogue with others, including fellow Christians.<sup>753</sup> Wacker's reservations are attributable to the conviction among most Pentecostals that there could not be any truth in theological positions which differ from their own – the truth contained in the Bible.<sup>754</sup> Both Wacker and Poloma consider that the firmness of the conviction with which Pentecostals have held to their beliefs, including an affinity for Biblical literalism, has contributed, historically, to the reluctance of the Pentecostal movement to enter into dialogue with others on theological issues.<sup>755</sup>

Poloma reasons that the values which lie at Pentecostalism's core may have been obscured.<sup>756</sup> In her view, sight should not be lost of the essential spirituality that is to be found in the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit.<sup>757</sup> Poloma perceives that there is potential in the development of an "experiential theology".<sup>758</sup> This "experiential

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<sup>753</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp70-8, 84-6, 177-190, 217-223 and 253-5; Wacker, G. 2008. "Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths" in Butler, J., Wacker, G. and Balmer, R. Eds. *Religion in American Life*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, pp253-5. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p194.

<sup>754</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p10, 70-8, 84-6, 178-190, 217-23.

<sup>755</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p236.

<sup>756</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>758</sup> By "experiential theology" Poloma means a theology concerned with the experience of the Spirit.



theology” stands (in contrast to what she describes as a “fundamentalist theology”) within the Pentecostal movement.<sup>759</sup>

Wacker and Poloma suggest, albeit cautiously, that an “experiential theology” may gain the ascendancy within Pentecostalism by reason of its tradition of pragmatism.<sup>760</sup> Poloma perceives that while, historically, Pentecostals have generally not supported wider ecumenical activities, the rise of the so-called ‘Charismatic Movement’ in various Christian denominations has led to a weakening of the previous wariness which characterized Pentecostalism’s view of external religious dialogue.<sup>761</sup>

Macchia reasons that Spirit baptism entails an indwelling of God’s love, requiring, in turn, that Christians should reach out to one another in a sense of community.<sup>762</sup> Spirit baptism, Macchia contends, is fundamentally participatory and interactive, connected with pluralism and diversity.<sup>763</sup> Macchia argues that there are features in the beliefs of the Pentecostals which require, theologically, that they should be more than amenable to ecumenical conversations with other Christian denominations – Pentecostals should joyously embrace the possibility.<sup>764</sup> Pentecostalism’s focus on pneumatology, in Macchia’s assessment, provides it not only with an ecumenical but also a global significance.<sup>765</sup>

Yong expands on this aspect. He contends that the pluralism inherent in the Pentecost account is God’s testimony that the Pentecost event is world-encompassing, multicultural and multilingual, compelling a theological dialogue with others, no matter how different the others

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<sup>759</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p236.

<sup>760</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, pp265-6; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p66 and 87.

<sup>761</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p183.

<sup>762</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p161.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*, p159, 178.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, p56.

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*, p22, 25 and 56.

may be.<sup>766</sup> Yong contends that Pentecostal theology has begun to sense the ecumenical potential that arises from an orientation that is focused on the action of the Spirit.<sup>767</sup> Within the mystery of Pentecost there lies, in his analysis, a call to an ecumenical tradition that cuts across past divisions, whether these are ethnic, racial, linguistic, social, class, gender and religious.<sup>768</sup> Yong is adamant that a pneumatological theology is best equipped to foster ecumenical conversations.<sup>769</sup> The reason is that the concept of experience of the Spirit (or 'spirit') is one that has a quality to which most people can relate.<sup>770</sup>

Yong is also reproachful of those Pentecostals who confine their dialogue to those subscribing to evangelical and fundamentalist forms of Christianity only.<sup>771</sup> By reason of the universality of spiritual experience, Yong reasons that the potency of the Pentecostal and charismatic experience of the Spirit could lead the way for pneumatological conversations with non-Christian faiths and advance the development of a Christian theology of religions.<sup>772</sup> For similar reasons, Yong also subscribes to the conviction that a theology that is pneumatological in its orientation is best equipped to facilitate conversations between science and religion.<sup>773</sup>

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<sup>766</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p172, 254. Here he acknowledges his indebtedness to Michael Welker. See, Welker, M. 1994. *God the Spirit*. Translated by Hoffmeyer J. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp230-5.

<sup>767</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p20, 60, 235-7, 316-7; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth", pp563-88; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>768</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p201.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*, p60, 235-6, 316-7.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*, p20, 60, 235-7, 316-7; Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth", pp563-88; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>771</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p237.

<sup>772</sup> See, for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p20.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 5; Yong, "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth"; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169,

Both Wacker and Poloma consider that social and cultural ‘distance’ between Pentecostals and other religious adherents may account for some of the past lack of mutual interaction.<sup>774</sup> The blame for the paucity of theological dialogue between Pentecostals and others cannot be placed at the feet of the Pentecostals alone: other Christian denominations have tended to be condescending towards them.<sup>775</sup> For example, Donald Dayton, another scholar who has studied the Pentecostal movement, has noted that much of the critical literature that has evaluated the movement has tended to be dismissive of it.<sup>776</sup>

The caution of both Wacker and Poloma as to the likelihood that Pentecostalism will move forward in theological conversations with other Christians, those of different religions and those who have none, stands juxtaposed against the convictions of the Pentecostal theologians, Macchia and Yong. Conversations of this kind, across a broad front, are imperative, morally, intellectually and theologically, in the view of Macchia and Yong.<sup>777</sup> In order to be more secure in drawing conclusions about the likely direction that will be taken, it is helpful to refer to the opinions of some other scholars who have taken an interest in the matter.

That the outcome is unpredictable is a view held by Irvin.<sup>778</sup> Irvin, in turn, refers approvingly to a similar conclusion reached by Henry Van Dusen, president of the Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1958.<sup>779</sup> Velli-Matti Kärkkäinen, on the other hand, subscribes to the arguments advanced by Macchia and Yong that it is the experience of

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175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>774</sup> Wacker, “Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths”, pp253-5; Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p15, 271.

<sup>775</sup> See for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p15, 271.

<sup>776</sup> Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, pp35-53.

<sup>777</sup> See chapter four, section 4.5 and chapter five, sections 5.5 to 5.10.

<sup>778</sup> Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”, p35.

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid.*

the Spirit which has the potential to build bridges between Pentecostals and others.<sup>780</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, Clark Pinnock, Michael Welker as well as Kärkkäinen share Macchia's contention that it is precisely Pentecostalism's pneumatological focus which gives it a global and not merely an ecumenical significance.<sup>781</sup>

There can be no certainty of outcomes but there is an across-the-board consensus among the four American scholars whose work has been the centre of interest in this research, as well as a range of other scholars, that accounts of spiritual experience and the ensuing results thereof among the followers of the Pentecostal movement can facilitate ecumenical conversations around the world. These could extend to inter-faith conversations. This aspect will now be explored in more detail.

## **6.5 The Potential Contribution of Pentecostalism to Ecumenical and Inter-faith Conversations by way of its Pneumatological Theology**

Wacker records that, in theory at least, Pentecostalism does not subscribe to belief in a hierarchy of authority, either between the laity and the clergy or within the clergy itself.<sup>782</sup> Pentecostalism in this regard stands in contradistinction to the Roman Catholic Church, which has a clear hierarchy of authority, dominated by the institution

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<sup>780</sup> See, for example, Kärkkäinen, V-M. 2002. "The Holy Spirit and Justification: the Ecumenical Significance of Luther's Doctrine of Salvation". In *PNEUMA: the Journal For Pentecostal Studies*, Volume 21. No.1 (Spring 2002) at p37 and 39.

<sup>781</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*; Moltmann, J. 2008. "On the abundance of the Holy Spirit: Friendly Remarks for *Baptized in the Spirit* by Frank D. Macchia", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008), pp9-13; Pinnock, C. 2008. "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit: a Global Pentecostal Theology*", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008), p3; Del Colle, R. 2003. "Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue: Theological Suggestions for Consideration", *PNEUMA: the Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies*, Vol.25, No.1 (Spring 2003) at p94; Welker, M. 1989. "The Holy Spirit", *Theology Today* 46: 1 (April 1989) at p16; Kärkkäinen, "The Holy Spirit and Justification".

<sup>782</sup> Wacker, "Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths", p254.

of the Papacy at its apex.<sup>783</sup> As Wacker has pointed out, these relate to a fundamental question: what is the Church?<sup>784</sup> A consideration of the potential contribution of Pentecostalism to ecumenical conversations through a pneumatological theology cannot avoid consideration of the issues of ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity.

## **6.6 The Issues of Ecclesiology, Apostolicity and Catholicity**

It is the theologians among the four scholars upon whom this research has been focused, but not the historian or the sociologist, who have ventured an opinion on the question of how the differences that exist between Pentecostals and the more traditional Christian denominations may be overcome.

Macchia argues that through Spirit baptism, the ministry of Peter and the other apostles belongs to all.<sup>785</sup> He considers the barriers to reaching agreement as to what, precisely, is meant by ‘apostolicity’, will not stand in the way of the Church being apostolic in the world as a whole.<sup>786</sup> Macchia reasons that encouragement is to be derived from developments such as the Final Report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue that took place in 1989, in which it was recorded that Catholics “stress the God-giveness of the *koinonia* and its Trinitarian character” and that “Pentecostals have been reminded of the importance of the communitarian dimension of the New

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<sup>783</sup> The institution of the Papacy and the issue of catholicity are so closely interlinked in everyday imagination that they are considered to be synonymous. It may be difficult to see how universality, a sense of sharing a common belief across the world, of transcending all barriers (which is inherent in the concept of catholicity) can become concrete when there are such deep divisions between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics on an issue of such prominence as the Papacy. Other churches, like the Orthodox Churches, Lutherans and the Anglicans, for example, are also hierarchical in essence.

<sup>784</sup> Wacker, “Fashioners of Immigrant Faiths”, p254.

<sup>785</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp240-41.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.*

Testament understanding of *koinonia*".<sup>787</sup> While they may place differing emphases on the Trinitarian character of *koinonia* and its communitarian dimension, Pentecostals and Roman Catholics share a commitment to the idea of *koinonia*.

Both Macchia and Yong agree that that a pneumatological focus in theology will facilitate closer understanding on the issue of ecclesiology.<sup>788</sup> Both of them derive encouragement from recent Pentecostal dialogue with Catholics.<sup>789</sup> They refer approvingly to the fact that the third quinquennium of Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue (1985-1989) had pneumatological ecclesiology as one of its guiding themes.<sup>790</sup> Macchia and Yong recognize that formidable obstacles stand in the way of Pentecostal unity not only with other Protestant denominations but also with Roman Catholics by reason of differing positions with regard to the ordained ministry and, in particular, the status and position of the Pope.<sup>791</sup>

Yong shares essentially the same views as Macchia regarding the obstacles which confront unity when it comes to the issues of the ordained ministry and acknowledgement of the Petrine office or Papacy: there are indications of increasingly shared understandings between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics on issues in respect of which there was previously disagreement.<sup>792</sup> Accepting that Pentecostalism does not have a formally developed ecclesiology, Yong argues that both the Roman Catholics and Pentecostals would agree that one must rely on the Spirit to achieve unity within the Church

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<sup>787</sup> *Ibid.*, pp163-4; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, p13 and pp293-312; See also Macchia, F. 1990. "Perspectives on Koinonia: Final report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1985-1989)", 31-33, *PNEUMA* 12:1 (1990), p119.

<sup>788</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp163-4; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p134.

<sup>789</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>792</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp122-51. The Final Report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1985-1989) is cited as an example of this.

and that the concept of unity within the Church requires affirmation that the Church is the one body of Christ.<sup>793</sup> He asserts that Roman Catholics and Pentecostals would also agree that apostolicity is a pneumatological concept: it is the Spirit that guides and leads the proclamation of the gospel, from generation to generation, continuing the faith of the apostles.<sup>794</sup>

Macchia and Yong have suggested that ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity do not give rise to inherently insurmountable obstacles in the way of constructive ecumenical conversations in which Pentecostals are active participants.<sup>795</sup> It may be helpful to investigate whether it is shared by at least one other theologian, who has an established reputation.

Moltmann shares Yong's conviction that apostolicity is a pneumatological concept: Moltmann contends that it is by God's grace that the Spirit is at work and that, in scripture, all divine activity is pneumatic in the manner of achieving God's purposes.<sup>796</sup> Moltmann reminds his readers that Christians believe that it is the Spirit that gives effect to God's purposes.<sup>797</sup> If it is God's will that the faith of the apostles be handed down from generation to generation and spread throughout the world, Christians would agree that the Spirit can be relied upon to guide the process. Macchia and Yong do not adopt idiosyncratic theological positions when they argue that ecumenical conversations in which Pentecostals are partners need not founder on the issues of ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity.

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<sup>793</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp127-51.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>795</sup> See, chapter four, section 4.6 and chapter five, section 5.7.

<sup>796</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, J. 1993. *God in Creation*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, p9.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*

Macchia and Yong have also identified *koinonia* as the key which may unlock the doors of ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity.<sup>798</sup> *Koinonia* has a Trinitarian character.<sup>799</sup> The doctrinal issue of the Trinity cannot, for long, be avoided in any discussion of Christian theology. With the exception of Poloma, all the scholars whose work has been examined in the previous four chapters referred, each with depth, to the so-called ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals who are often held up as being antithetical to the Trinity.<sup>800</sup> It is trite that the issue of the Trinity has absorbed much attention by theologians in different parts of the world for several decades.<sup>801</sup> The issue of the ‘Oneness’ tendency within Pentecostalism requires some examination.

## **6.7 Pentecostalism, the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the Doctrine of the Trinity – Some Ecclesiological Implications**

Wacker, Macchia and Yong recognize that the emergence of the so-called ‘Oneness’ following has resulted in divisions among Pentecostals.<sup>802</sup> Wacker does not consider the difference between the two tendencies within the Pentecostal movement to be as great as may have been imagined because the more Jesus-centeredness of the

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<sup>798</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp163-4; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp122-51.

<sup>799</sup> See, for example, The Final Report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1985-1989).

<sup>800</sup> See chapter two, section 2.11, chapter four, section 4.7 and chapter five, section 5.9.

<sup>801</sup> The Final Report of the International Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue (1985-1989) is but one example of this.

<sup>802</sup> See, for example, Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p28, 79, 85-90, 118, 147; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp118-9; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp205-8. Wacker, Macchia and Yong are not alone in this opinion. The ‘Oneness’ movement arose from a literalistic endeavor by some Pentecostals to harmonize the familiar ‘Trinitarian’ baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 with the pattern more commonly encountered in Acts (especially 2:38) of baptism in the name of the “Lord Jesus” or “Jesus Christ”. The ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals resolved the difficulty by affirming that the pattern in Acts, read with Colossians 2:9, required the belief that Jesus is the full manifestation of the Godhead. (See, for example, Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, pp18-19.)



‘Oneness’ followers obscures the fact that, on both sides of the divide, there has been a focus on the Spirit.<sup>803</sup> In Wacker’s view, this common Spirit-focus overrides even the fact that there developed a debate within Pentecostalism as to whether the Spirit’s character should be understood to be not so much that of a person but as an impersonal power.<sup>804</sup>

Macchia contends that Spirit baptism has a Trinitarian structure.<sup>805</sup> After raising the question of what relation there may be between the Trinity and Spirit baptism in the story of Jesus, he argues that Spirit baptism describes the role of Jesus in pouring out the Spirit.<sup>806</sup> He continues by asserting the claim that the Spirit, in turn, comes from the Father in order to fulfil the kingdom of God.<sup>807</sup> In this way, Macchia reasons that the concept of Spirit baptism – which has always been powerfully, but not exclusively, associated with the Pentecostal movement – is not only consonant with more traditional variations of the Christian religion but also brings Christianity to its full ripeness.<sup>808</sup> Macchia is convinced that the shared experience of Spirit baptism among all Pentecostals will ensure that the Pentecostal movement will not be torn apart by the disagreements between ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the rest: exaggerated importance has been attached to the issue.<sup>809</sup>

In advancing his case, he relies on leading contemporary Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians.<sup>810</sup> In describing Spirit baptism as a metaphor, Macchia brings Pentecostalism closer towards alignment with prevailing doctrines in the older and more established

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<sup>803</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, p28, 79, 85-90, 118, 147.

<sup>804</sup> *Ibid.*, p89.

<sup>805</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p163.

<sup>806</sup> *Ibid.*, pp118-9.

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>808</sup> *Ibid.*, pp89-154; Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, pp86-92.

<sup>809</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p56.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid.*, pp95-96; 100, 104, 109-112, 117-122, 125, 135 and 161. These include Karl Barth, Ralph Del Colle, Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfart Pannenberg.

churches. A metaphorical understanding of Spirit baptism is, for example, shared by both Moltmann and Pinnock and, to some degree, by Del Colle as well.<sup>811</sup>

Macchia is drawn to Moltmann's interpretation that God's vulnerability to the world is part of God's design.<sup>812</sup> This perception of the vulnerability of God to the world can only be understood through a Trinitarian lens: the crucifixion of Christ, the relationship of Christ with God and the reasons why the crucifixion happened inform us that it is not God's power that is almighty but God's love.<sup>813</sup> Macchia argues that we can enhance our understanding of God's self – of God's surrender revealing God's love – when we are assisted by Welker's perspective that the relationship between God and humans is as one between mutually empathetic persons.<sup>814</sup>

Macchia supports Welker's criticism of the historical goal of consciousness in the Western world as being directed at self-knowledge and self-reference.<sup>815</sup> Contrastingly, a pneumatological understanding of self-fulfilment is that it derives not from self-reference but from empathy with others.<sup>816</sup> Empathy requires relationship. The relationship that exists within the triune God may be understood as the supreme example of empathy.<sup>817</sup>

Macchia is ambivalent about the division between the 'Oneness' Pentecostals and the others on the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>818</sup> He

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<sup>811</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, "On the abundance of the Holy Spirit", pp9-13.; Pinnock, "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit*", p3; Del Colle, "Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue", p94.

<sup>812</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125.

<sup>813</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, J. 2003. *Science and Wisdom*. Translated by Kohl, M. London: SCM Press, p65.

<sup>814</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p125.

<sup>815</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>816</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>817</sup> *Ibid.* See also Welker, M. 2004 "The Spirit in Philosophical and Theological Perspectives", lecture given at the International Consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit (November 1-14, 2004). New York: Yale University Club.

<sup>818</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p115-116.

endorses the classical *homoousios* doctrine of the Nicene Creed, but he admits to thinking that the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals have understood, more clearly than the others, the importance in the Christian religion of the belief that Christ bestows the Spirit.<sup>819</sup>

Macchia’s stance on the Trinity, like Wacker’s, is that the theological differences between ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and the others are not as great as may have been supposed.<sup>820</sup> Macchia’s theology regarding the Trinity is in essential harmony with that of the more traditional and established churches.

Yong holds to the view that ‘Oneness’ Pentecostalism arose as a response to the fear that Trinitarian theology could lead to understandings that could be interpreted as tri-theistic.<sup>821</sup> He perceives there to have been the further factor: a concern that there could be challenges to the divinity of Christ.<sup>822</sup> This concern, in his view, explains the intensely ‘Jesus-focused’ character of ‘Oneness’ religious practice.<sup>823</sup> Conceding that the theology of ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals is not, in a conventional sense, Trinitarian, Yong asserts that, in practice, there is not much difference in the religious beliefs of ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals from that of the other Pentecostals.<sup>824</sup> They share the same belief, as do all other Christians, that Jesus is the human person from Nazareth in whom God was incarnate.<sup>825</sup> All Christians (including ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals) also share the belief that the Incarnation is the work of the Spirit.<sup>826</sup>

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<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>820</sup> See chapter two, section 2.11

<sup>821</sup> See Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p110.

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.* Yong says of the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals that “their theological (read God in Godself) Unitarianism translates into an economic Trinitarianism. Jesus – savior – is the proper revealed name of God” (*Ibid.*).

<sup>825</sup> See, for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p110.

<sup>826</sup> *Ibid.*

Yong believes that exchanges among certain Pentecostal theologians such as David Bernard and the Roman Catholic theologian, Ralph Del Colle, have brought about closer agreement on the issue of the Godhead.<sup>827</sup> Yong concludes that the history of ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals within the overall Pentecostal movement has compelled a deeper understanding of the issue of the Trinity.<sup>828</sup> He contends that the history of Pentecostalism’s wrangles with itself over the issue of the Trinity has equipped the pneumatological Pentecostal theology for dialogue in a religiously plural world.<sup>829</sup> Yong also refers, approvingly, to the growing evidence not only of Jewish-Christian dialogue but also of a Jewish-Christian-Muslim ‘trialogue’.<sup>830</sup>

It is apparent, from the review of Pentecostalism’s position on the question of the Trinity, that Pentecostals (including the ‘Oneness’ following among them) and other Christians are not as far apart as may commonly have been supposed.<sup>831</sup> The emergence of the ‘Oneness’ elements within Pentecostalism may, paradoxically, have facilitated not only a deeper understanding of the Trinity but also dialogue with other religions, more especially those which share a monotheistic tradition. What may the wider implications of Pentecostalism’s pneumatological theology be?

## **6.8 The Wider Implications of Pentecostalism’s Pneumatological Theology**

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<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*, p123, 203-5; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp208-9.

<sup>828</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p212.

<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*, p234.

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*, pp229-34.

<sup>831</sup> This contrasts with the view of a scholar like Dale Irvin who has approved William Faupel’s argument that ‘Jesus only’ or ‘Oneness’ teaching brought Pentecostalism to “full eschatological identity”, an identity that is discontinuous with “orthodox Christianity, east or west at least since the Council of Nicaea in 325” (See Irvin, “Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity”, p38). Macchia and Yong present weighty support from a variety of other theological scholars to justify their arguments. They are supported in their assessment by Wacker.

Macchia is theologically uncontroversial when he contends that the Spirit has been neglected in Christian theology precisely because the Spirit, as the ‘hidden’ person of the Trinity, is the most difficult of the three to understand.<sup>832</sup> Macchia argues that it has been a mistake to focus on trying to find logic in faith rather than on the power of faith and the way in which it works.<sup>833</sup> If pneumatological theology is an abstruse subject, it follows, almost axiomatically, that conversations about the Spirit will be difficult no matter whether they are conducted among persons who profess the same belief or whether they take place across the boundaries of religious conviction.<sup>834</sup>

Macchia welcomes the possibilities of the Pentecostal movement having dialogue with other faiths as to differing theological perspectives, especially the exploration of similarities and the recognition of differences.<sup>835</sup> In his view, there are limitless opportunities in a faith that is focused upon the life of the Spirit, eschatologically in the process of perfecting creation.<sup>836</sup> Macchia does not address the potentialities of inter-faith conversations. Yong, alone among the four scholars in question, gives a detailed rationale in favour of this kind of dialogue with other faiths.<sup>837</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p55. The Spirit is the *deus absconditus*, the hidden God, the divine presence always active and engaged in the unfolding of the world, at least to some extent, and always working from within the processes of the world. See, for example, Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p9; Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom*, pp66-7; Polkinghorne J. 1994 *Science and Christian Belief: Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker*. London: SPCK, p147; Polkinghorne J. 1996. *The Faith of A Physicist*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p151; Welker, M. 2006. “The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives” in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, the Preface; Kim, K. 2007. *The Holy Spirit in the World: a Global Conversation*. New York: SPCK, pp1-8. Welker, “The Holy Spirit”.

<sup>833</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p55.

<sup>834</sup> David Power points out that, parallel with the tendency of the Western church to focus upon the transmission and interpretation of scripture, has been a relative neglect of reflection on the Spirit (Power, “The Holy Spirit”, p154).

<sup>835</sup> See, for example, Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p34.

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.*, p112.

<sup>837</sup> See chapter five, sections 5.9 and 5.10.

Yong associates himself, theologically, with Karl Rahner and Paul Tillich to show that there is compatibility between Pentecostalism and an emerging theology within both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>838</sup> Yong also reasons that the fact that Rahner and Tillich did not find it easy to embrace a pneumatological perspective illustrates the power of what Pentecostals could add to the formation of a Christian pneumatological ‘imagination’.<sup>839</sup>

Yong holds the view that Pentecostal perspectives have contributed to a contemporary ecclesiology which is increasingly pneumatological in its orientation.<sup>840</sup> He contends that a pneumatological approach to the Church assists people, on all sorts of different levels, to understand what it means to be the people being saved by God.<sup>841</sup>

Yong is not being idiosyncratic when he makes this observation about the power of a pneumatological theology. For example, Ralph Del Colle, a contemporary Roman Catholic theologian, avers that Catholics and Pentecostals share this in common: the Church exists in the outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>842</sup> In this perspective believers are incorporated into the Spirit through the rite of Christian initiation – in the case of Catholics by baptism and confirmation and, in the case of Pentecostals, by conversion or Spirit baptism.<sup>843</sup>

Yong reasons that there is a logical consistency, even an imperative, in Christians exploring similarities, acknowledging differences and exchanging narratives about their respective religious experiences

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<sup>838</sup> See, for example, Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, pp71-9.

<sup>839</sup> *Ibid.*, p224.

<sup>840</sup> See, for example, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p151.

<sup>841</sup> *Ibid.*, p166. He refers to “the holistic (multidimensional), transformative, dynamic and eschatological dimensions”.

<sup>842</sup> Del Colle, “Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue”. Del Cole refers with approval to the Pentecostal-Catholic Report of 1976 which affirms that “Our Lord is present in the members of his body, manifesting Himself in worship by means of a variety of charismatic expressions”. Roman Catholics and Pentecostals may have differences over the concept of Spirit baptism but both agree that the Church, as the community of Christian believers, is sustained by the outpouring of the Spirit.

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid.*

with those who believe in other religions and even with those who profess no religion.<sup>844</sup> Furthermore, he argues that unquestionably Christian ideals such as working for international peace and justice require it.<sup>845</sup>

Yong contends that, through sustained interaction with scholars from other religious traditions and academic disciplines, Christian theology will become truly global.<sup>846</sup> He is optimistic that emerging inter-religious conversations hold new possibilities for theology.<sup>847</sup> Yong argues that, in the light of Christianity's universal claims, it has no morally consistent option other than to enter into this kind of exploratory dialogue with the other religions of the world.<sup>848</sup> He calls upon the way to trust that the Spirit will lead everyone in all truth.<sup>849</sup> It is, as Yong recognizes, unavoidable that any venture of this kind will encounter the risks of translation, contextualization and acculturation but he is confident that trust in the Spirit will relieve the fears associated therewith.<sup>850</sup>

A common thread which runs through the work of all who have made a study of Pentecostalism is the power of the experience of the Spirit among its adherents.<sup>851</sup> Macchia and Yong are encouraged by the generally ongoing ecumenical dialogue and provide evidence that the key to unlocking the door that blocks the way may be found in a pneumatological approach to these issues. They both argue that Pentecostals can contribute positively to theological dialogue by reason of their deeply pneumatological 'imagination' or orientation,

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<sup>844</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p259.

<sup>845</sup> Neville, R. 1991. *A Theology Primer*. Albany: State of New York Press, p134; Yong and Heltzel, "Robert Cummings Neville and Theology's Global Future", p36.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>848</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p215; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p304.

<sup>849</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p215; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp264-5.

<sup>850</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, p215; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, p304.

<sup>851</sup> See chapter two, sections 2.6 to 2.11, chapter three, sections 3.4 to 3.9, chapter four, section 4.3 and chapter five, sections 5.4 to 5.9.

focus and emphasis.<sup>852</sup> A brief theological excursus to examine the issue, more particularly from the perspective of other contemporary theological scholars, may assist to shed some light on the cogency of this claim.

## **6.9 Testing the Claims for a Pentecostal Pneumatological Theology**

In Acts there is a Biblical paradigm for the possibilities that may arise from encounters between Christians and those of other faiths. It is to be found in the story of the conversion of Cornelius.<sup>853</sup> The account in question tells more than that Cornelius and his household were converted by the action of the Spirit. It also informs those who listen to the story that this event, in which the Spirit was active, assisted the early church to arrive at a fuller understanding of the nature of the truth and of its mission. The result was not a synthesis between the religious experience and convictions of the different parties.

Discourse with others is not aimed at conversion so much as it is at deepening not only mutual understanding but self-understanding as well. The story of Cornelius supports Yong's contention that Christians should put their faith in the Spirit rather than fear syncretism when it comes to theological conversations across boundaries.

As Moltmann has reminded his readers, in scripture it is the Spirit that gives effect to God's purposes in all things.<sup>854</sup> Moltmann summonses the world's thoughts to an awareness that it is by God's grace that the Spirit may be at work and that, according to Biblical traditions, all divine activity is pneumatic in its efficacy and that

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<sup>852</sup> See chapter four, section 4.3 and chapter five, sections 5.4 to 5.9.

<sup>853</sup> Acts 10.1-11.18.

<sup>854</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p9.



everything that is, lives and exists in the unceasing inflow of the “potentialities” of the Spirit.<sup>855</sup> “Potentialities” may be understood as the positive possibilities for making progress.

Macchia and Yong’s argument that spiritual experience should be the foundation for reaching out to others in a quest not only for increased mutual understanding but also self-understanding is supported by other scholars. Power, for example, records approvingly the fact that Yves Congar, at the beginning of his three-volume work on the Spirit, describes the experience of the Spirit as “the perception of the reality of God coming to us, active in us and through us, drawing us into a divine communion, a friendship, an existence of one for the other” and how the action of the Spirit in liturgy, in mystical experience and in the gifts that build up communities has been made manifest in the Pentecostal movement.<sup>856</sup>

Rahner has described spiritual experience as God’s “self-communication”.<sup>857</sup> *Par excellence*, if spiritual experience is God’s self-communication with human beings, that experience may be discerned as being ‘of the Spirit’. The discernment of spirits could be facilitated by an increased awareness of what the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit may entail.

Discernment of spirits, irrespective of religious affiliation, may provide a more effective means of communication across boundaries of religious belief than a more narrow focus on the transmission and interpretation of scripture. The pneumatological focus of

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<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>856</sup> Power, “The Holy Spirit”, p154. Power’s views have been included here because, as Professor Emeritus of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the catholic University of America, he provides independent corroboration for Macchia and Yong’s submissions that Pentecostalism has the potential to contribute much in inter-religious dialogue.

<sup>857</sup> Rahner K. 1974. “Experience of the Spirit and Existential Decision” in Huizing P. and Bassett W. *Experience of the Spirit*. Volume 99 of *Concilium*. New York: Seabury Press, P41.

Pentecostalism, centred on intense, personal, religious experience (of which Spirit baptism is a prime example) may assist in discerning the spirits.<sup>858</sup>

In their everyday language it is common for persons to describe their experiences of being uplifted, inspired or empowered by the beauty of nature, music, art or scientific discovery as ‘spiritual’. The examples given may be illustrative of the fact that some kind of spiritual experience is universal among all human beings. ‘Spiritual’ is used here in the sense employed by Poloma of being outside of rational comprehension alone.<sup>859</sup>

While not capable of proof that ‘spiritual experiences’ are God’s self-communication with us, the perception that this is so is also not amenable to refutation. ‘Spirit’ is not to be conflated with ‘the Spirit’ but all human beings have some sense of ‘spirit’. There is commonality between the concept of ‘spirit’ and ‘the Spirit’, inasmuch as both refer to a force that is unseen and intangible. Both are experienced as having real consequences and manifestations. Discerning of spirits has the potential to be productive in dialogues transcending religious affiliation. The discerning of spirits has a scriptural foundation, also to be found in Acts.<sup>860</sup>

‘Discerning the spirits’ refers to the ability given to human beings to perceive whether or not the source of a spiritual manifestation is of God or not.<sup>861</sup> It entails the belief that believers will be enabled, through the love of God, to learn to interpret reality in a transformed way and that they will be able to develop creative solutions to the

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<sup>858</sup> The meaning of the expression “discernment of spirits” may be understood as “recognizing that which has a spiritual character”.

<sup>859</sup> Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, pp21-3.

<sup>860</sup> See, for example, Acts 8:18-23; 10:30-35; 16:16-18; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians.12.

<sup>861</sup> See, for example, Munzinger, A. 2007. *Discerning the Spirits: Theological & Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p142; Linzey, J. 2004. *The Holy Spirit*. Fairfax, Virginia: Xulon Press, p129-132.

questions with which they are confronted.<sup>862</sup> In Galatians 5:22, scripture enumerates the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control.<sup>863</sup> Whether or not spiritual experiences are God's self-communication with human beings, the rewards of debate with other human beings about the nature of their spiritual experience could be these fruits of the Spirit.

A Christian will believe that the Spirit will show the way to what is of God and what is not. Love, joy and peace, for example, are often observed among those who have had spiritual experiences about which they feel positive. There may be those who have had spiritual experiences that may be described as demonic. It may be that there is sufficient universality of spiritual experiences which may be described as 'joyous' for conversations relating to these experiences to be productive.

Theological conversations across religious boundaries require not only participation in an exchange of ideas with other Christians and the adherents of other faiths but also with those who have no faith at all. In this context, the relevance of the discernment of spirits hardly needs to be stated. Without discernment, falsehood is less likely to be uncovered. Closely connected with the reality that there are those who have no faith at all, is the power and influence of science: science makes no religious claims.

Conflict is inherent in any encounter between scientific materialism and Biblical literalism.<sup>864</sup> Scientific materialism rests on the assumptions that the scientific method is the only reliable path to

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<sup>862</sup> See, for example, and in general terms, Munzinger, A. 2007. *Discerning the Spirits: Theological & Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Linzey, J. 2004. *The Holy Spirit*. Fairfax, Virginia: Xulon Press, pp129-132.

<sup>863</sup> *The Revised English Bible, with the Apocrypha*. 1989. Oxford and Cambridge, England: Oxford and Cambridge University Press.

<sup>864</sup> See, for example, Balfour, I. Ed. 1968. *Science and Religion, New Perspectives on the Dialogue*. London: SCM Press.

knowledge and that all reality can ultimately be described by the workings of the laws of physics.<sup>865</sup> Biblical literalism does not necessarily always manifest itself in the same way.<sup>866</sup> In connection with issues of science, this literalism refers to an inclination to deal with the creation story in the Bible as though it were a factual truth.<sup>867</sup> Creationism which is a trenchant manifestation of Biblical literalism, rejects even a theistic evolutionary perspective. This rejection of evolution as part of the explanation for life on Earth raises the moral dilemma of having to choose between science and religion.<sup>868</sup>

Mindful of the fact that there are those who believe that the paradigms of science and religion are so disparate that no conversation is possible between them, the relationship between science and religion in the perception of the four scholars whose work has been the centre of attention in this research will now be considered.<sup>869</sup>

## **6.10 The Relationship between Pentecostalism and Science in the Perspectives of Wacker, Poloma, Macchia and Yong**

While making no direct allusion thereto, Wacker's perspective on historical consciousness implicitly recognizes the impact of science

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<sup>865</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>867</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>868</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>869</sup> Barth, K. 1927. *Die christliche Theologie in Entwurf*. Munich: Kaiser Verlag, p115. Translated by McGrath A. 2002. *Scientific Theology: Reality*. New York: T & T Clark Ltd, p286. See also Barth, K. 1982. *Die christliche Dogmatik in Entwurf*. Erster Band: *Die Lehre vom Vort Gottes. Prolegomena zur christlichen Dogmatik*, new edition, edited by Sauter, G. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, p8 et seq. Barth said: "The choice of the means of establishment of the objective truth, the type of epistemic connection, the critical norm, and the possibility of proof in any discipline) must be determined by the distinctiveness of the relevant object not the inverse, in which the object is forced to conform to predetermined concepts of method and science)". von Balthasar, H. 1971. *The Theology of Karl Barth*. Translated by Drury, J. New York: Holt Rhinehart and Winston, pp25-31.

upon the thinking of the world since the Enlightenment. Poloma is guarded about the prospects of Pentecostalism's exchanges with science because she is wary of Pentecostalism being too attached to Biblical literalism for such conversations to take place.<sup>870</sup>

Macchia accepts that, without a "creation pneumatology", Pentecostals will face eschatological limitations.<sup>871</sup> Macchia does not argue directly for a quest for some mutual understanding between science and religion. That there should be such a search by religion in general and Pentecostals, in particular, is implicit in his theology.<sup>872</sup> Macchia stresses the importance of there being awareness that the Spirit is present in the totality of creation.<sup>873</sup> The fullness of creation necessarily must include the realities of science. Macchia draws upon Moltmann to suggest that what is required is the full participation in creation of all believers.<sup>874</sup> Full participation in creation cannot escape intellectual accommodation with the discoveries of science.

Yong addresses the issue of exploring the possibilities of science and religion being able to hold a fruitful dialogue.<sup>875</sup> He refers approvingly to the fact that while John Wesley cleaved to the theological conviction that creation revealed the glory of God, Wesley accepted the idea that there has been evolution within creation.<sup>876</sup> Yong's invocation of Wesley may have been of more than accidental or incidental significance because, as Dayton points out, Pentecostalism has deep Methodist roots.<sup>877</sup>

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<sup>870</sup> See, for example, Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p236.

<sup>871</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p112, 279-81.

<sup>872</sup> See chapter four, section 4.8.

<sup>873</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp279-81.

<sup>874</sup> *Ibid.*, p271-9.

<sup>875</sup> See chapter five, section 5.10.

<sup>876</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p275.

<sup>877</sup> Yong considers the Wesleyan or Methodist denomination of Christianity to be a precursor to Pentecostalism (Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, p103). See, also, Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, pp35-53.

Yong is convinced that Christians, especially the Pentecostals among them, should rise to the challenge of the ideas introduced by scientific progress.<sup>878</sup> He considers that the presence and activity of the *ruah* of God may be helpful in at least some of the topics much debated in the dialogue between science and religion.<sup>879</sup> Yong has drawn on the ideas of a wide variety of scholars – in particular those of Charles Pierce, Alfred North Whitehead and Donald Gelpi – to propose that a pneumatological theology, lying at the heart of Pentecostalism, will best assist in productive conversations between science and religion because life in the Spirit is, in the final analysis, about the world in its entirety, including science.<sup>880</sup> This, in his view, has vital implications for a number of contemporary issues, extending to a theology of the environment.<sup>881</sup>

## 6.11 Summary

The pneumatological theology of Pentecostalism has the potential to feature more actively in ecumenical dialogue among Christians. This potential extends to participation in dialogue between different religious faiths as well as conversations between science and religion in the years that lie ahead.

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<sup>878</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp43-8, 88-96, 101-4, 112-4, 116-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp273-7, 283-99.

<sup>879</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp282-3.

<sup>880</sup> Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, chapter 5; Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of the Truth”, pp563-88; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, pp88-96, 101-4, 112-4, 116-7, 123-4, 151-165, 169, 175-8, 181-3, 185, 188, 191, 199, 202-8, 212, 222, 215, 246, 263, 265, 297, 305; Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp283-99.

<sup>881</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

# **CONCLUSIONS: THE POURING OUT OF THE SPIRIT**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This dissertation should be considered as a step in a larger project. Further research on the questions raised in this study will need to be undertaken. The conclusions which may be drawn as a result of this research are provisional and tentative. The reasons for the growing appeal of Pentecostalism around the world have confounded a spectrum of academic and theological observers.<sup>882</sup> The complex metaphor of Spirit baptism may provide an answer to the question.

### **7.2 Spirit Baptism as the Key to Understanding the Pentecostal Movement**

Intense, personal, religious experiences (which some commentators have described as 'ecstatic') are claimed by Pentecostals. These religious experiences consistently rise above all other factors in the search for the reasons for the growth which has occurred in the Pentecostal movement around the world for more than a century.<sup>883</sup> These experiences have empowered the individuals affected thereby to lead transformed lives.<sup>884</sup> These ecstatic religious experiences have

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<sup>882</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.1 and 6.2.

<sup>883</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>884</sup> *Ibid.*

made manifest the fruits of the Spirit described by Paul.<sup>885</sup> Evident among those who have had these experiences have been love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and gentleness.<sup>886</sup> In the process of individual lives being changed, communities have been built up.<sup>887</sup>

The presence of the fruits of the Spirit among Pentecostals has, in turn, attracted others to the movement.<sup>888</sup> Attracting others to the movement has generated virtuous cycles of charity, mission and mutual support which have been established around the world.<sup>889</sup> Spirit baptism is the metaphor which has been used to describe the religious experience in question.<sup>890</sup> Spirit baptism may be definitive of, but it is not exclusive to, the Pentecostal movement.<sup>891</sup>

Speaking in tongues has been associated in the public imagination with the Pentecostal movement.<sup>892</sup> Glossolalia is seen by Pentecostals as a gift of the Spirit.<sup>893</sup> Among some Pentecostals 'tongues' has been regarded as a sign of or even initial evidence of Spirit baptism.<sup>894</sup> It is not encountered only among those who may be considered to be 'Pentecostal'.<sup>895</sup> Even among Pentecostal adherents themselves, speaking in tongues is not considered to be a necessary precondition for the experience of Spirit baptism.<sup>896</sup> 'Tongues' is one of the *incidentalialia* rather than one of the *essentialia* of Pentecostalism.<sup>897</sup>

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<sup>885</sup> The fruits of the Spirit appear in Galatians 5:22. See, more generally, chapter six, sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4.

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>887</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4.

<sup>888</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>890</sup> See chapter six, section 6.1.

<sup>891</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>892</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>893</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>895</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>896</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>897</sup> *Ibid.*



Socio-economic factors by reference to criteria such as race, gender, levels of education or income have failed as an analytical tool in uncovering the reasons for the growth of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>898</sup> Sociological theories that Pentecostalism is a 'protest against modernity' have, similarly, been deficient in providing satisfactory answers to the enquiry as to what may account for this worldwide unfolding growth of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>899</sup>

Historically, there may have been some truth in the fact that Pentecostalism appealed to the socially disadvantaged.<sup>900</sup> Statistics do not justify the validity of deductions such as this today.<sup>901</sup> The Pentecostal movement now has adherents among all social classes in different countries.<sup>902</sup> Social and cultural diversity among Pentecostal adherents is a feature of the movement.<sup>903</sup>

There is no facile explanation for the growth of Pentecostalism around the world.<sup>904</sup> The experience of the Spirit may afford an answer, albeit a provisional one, to this question. There are other questions that have stimulated academic interest in the Pentecostal movement.<sup>905</sup> As a metaphor for profound, personal religious experiences, Spirit baptism may, additionally, be the key in the search for an answer to these questions. Among these further questions is the extent to which Pentecostalism will continue broadly to be separated from the rest of the world, theologically and academically.<sup>906</sup>

### **7.3 Pentecostals as 'Separated Brothers and Sisters'**

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<sup>898</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>899</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.1 and 6.2.

<sup>900</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>901</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>903</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>904</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>905</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.

<sup>906</sup> *Ibid.*

As a general rule, Pentecostals have, in the past, seen themselves as a 'breed apart', separate not only from 'the world' but also from other Christians as well.<sup>907</sup> That attitude has, in turn, largely been reciprocated by those outside the Pentecostal fold.<sup>908</sup> There are two main reasons for this separation: (i) the adherence to Biblical literalism among Pentecostals and (ii) the reinforcing sense of identity which separation has given them.<sup>909</sup>

Biblical literalism arises from the endeavor to establish truth-claims derived from literalist understandings of Biblical texts.<sup>910</sup> In the result, there is no recognition of the possibility that alternative interpretations of scripture may be true.<sup>911</sup> In this literalist worldview there is 'nothing to discuss' when it comes to the question of ecumenical exchanges with others.<sup>912</sup>

Pentecostals and the rest of the world have maintained their distance from each other in the matter of mutual theological conversations.<sup>913</sup> In the result, Pentecostals have been 'separated brothers and sisters', even in their relations with other Christians.<sup>914</sup> Is this separation likely to soften, perhaps even to dissipate?<sup>915</sup> If it is probable that the movement will remain 'separated', what are likely to be the consequences that will follow? Will Pentecostalism, as a result, become increasingly isolated, intellectually, from theological developments in the wider world? Conversely, may the future of the Pentecostal movement be more 'open-ended'?<sup>916</sup>

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<sup>907</sup> See chapter six, section 6.3.

<sup>908</sup> See chapter six, section 6.4.

<sup>909</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.3 and 6.4.

<sup>910</sup> See chapter six, section 6.4.

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>913</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.2, 6.3. and 6.4

<sup>914</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>915</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>916</sup> *Ibid.*

The theological direction which Pentecostalism, as a whole, will take is uncertain.<sup>917</sup> There are signs that the barriers promoting theological isolation and separation are being pushed down.<sup>918</sup> Conventional wisdom has regarded the obstacles that have kept Pentecostals apart as being almost insuperable.<sup>919</sup> This view may no longer hold good.<sup>920</sup>

There is a gathering consensus among theological scholars on both sides of the Atlantic that an 'experiential' pneumatological theology, arising from within the Pentecostal movement, has the potential to assist in the development of an unfolding world theology.<sup>921</sup> The impact that the Pentecostal experience has had on hundreds of millions of lives around the world is one of the reasons for the convergence of academic opinion as to the potential of the movement's pneumatological theology.<sup>922</sup> There may be lessons for others in the outcomes of Pentecostal ministry.

Spiritual experience, in some form or other, is universal among human beings, regardless of religious affiliation or commitment.<sup>923</sup> 'Spiritual experiences' may provide a point of reference in inter-religious dialogue and even in conversations between those who affirm no religious affiliation and those who do.<sup>924</sup> It has been contended that spiritual experiences are God's self-communication with human beings.<sup>925</sup> It is not necessary to believe that God communicates through spiritual experience to envisage that what Paul described as the fruits of the Spirit may be among the rewards that could emanate

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<sup>917</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>918</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>919</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>920</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>923</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.9.

<sup>924</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>925</sup> Rahner K. 1974. "Experience of the Spirit and Existential Decision" in Huizing, P. and Bassett W. *Experience of the Spirit*. Volume 99 of Concilium. New York: Seabury Press, P41.

from general discussions among different human beings about spiritual issues.

Quite apart from any other consideration, lessons in cultural accommodation are apparent in Pentecostalism's history of adaptability.<sup>926</sup> In a rapidly globalizing world that is searching for effective ways to respect pluralism, these lessons could have value. For others to learn from the Pentecostal spiritual experience, dialogue across religious boundaries will be necessary.<sup>927</sup> What is the likelihood that Pentecostals will, to an increasing extent, exchange ideas with others on religious experience and perspectives?

#### **7.4 The Likelihood of a Deepening Conversation between Pentecostals and 'Others'**

There are scholars who have been skeptical, even in recent times, of the likelihood of increased dialogue taking place between Pentecostals and others on questions of religious belief and experience.<sup>928</sup> The reason for this skepticism is that the Pentecostal movement has been perceived to be wedded to 'fundamentalist' tenets or Biblical literalism.<sup>929</sup> In this perception, an attitude that there is 'nothing to discuss' will prevail among Pentecostals.<sup>930</sup>

The picture is not as simple as that Pentecostalism is synonymous with Biblical literalism. There is doctrinal diversity within the Pentecostal movement.<sup>931</sup> 'Fundamentalism' is not a uniform feature in its religious landscape.<sup>932</sup> The pattern may be incomplete, but there are signs within the Pentecostal movement that it may be preparing to

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<sup>926</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.1 to 6.4.

<sup>927</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>928</sup> See chapter six, section 6.3.

<sup>929</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.3 and 6.4.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>931</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6.

<sup>932</sup> *Ibid.*

enter, more comfortably and more confidently, into theological conversations with those, around the world, that have different religious convictions.<sup>933</sup> There are Pentecostal theologians who have contributed to the movement now being poised to move in what may broadly be described as an ‘ecumenical’ direction.<sup>934</sup>

That Pentecostalism’s pneumatological focus provides it with an ecumenical and global significance is a view shared by a number of contemporary theologians.<sup>935</sup> Both within and without the Pentecostal movement there is a growing body of theologians who recognize that the pluralism which is inherent in the Pentecost account has the potential to promote positive relationships across religious divides.<sup>936</sup>

Fresh insights into the narrative of Pentecost have provided the impetus for an argument that Pentecostals should enter into in theological conversations with ‘others’, no matter how different those ‘others’ may be.<sup>937</sup> ‘Others’ would include not only Christians belonging to different denominations but also those who have a different faith and those who have no faith at all. Among the ‘others’ are agnostics and those, influenced by the march of scientific discovery, who doubt that there can be any intellectual accommodation with concepts such as ‘God’ or ‘Spirit’.

Insights into what is claimed as being the experience of the Spirit could illuminate the paradox that, in defiance of the widely perceived absence of God, there are those who believe that God is everywhere present. ‘The Spirit’ could be the starting point in all dialogue which involves those who wish to share ideas with those who have different

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<sup>933</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>935</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>936</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9.

<sup>937</sup> See chapter six, section 6.4.

beliefs in matters of religion. What of the potential, in inter-religious dialogue, of a theology that focuses upon the experience of the Spirit?

## **7.5 The Potential of a Theology Focusing Upon the Experience of the Spirit**

In examining the potential of a theology which focuses upon the Spirit, the prospects among fellow Christians will be considered first. Pentecostals and other Christians have at least this in common: the conviction that the narrative of the gospels and of Pentecost has a life-changing, truth-revealing power. A deeper, more respectful understanding of the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit may enable the more traditional, established churches to benefit from learning how better to harvest the fruits of the Spirit. Emerging theological understandings among Pentecostals could, in turn, be assisted by the contribution of the older churches. The developed theological tradition among these long established churches has its own richness to share.

Ecumenical conversations soon encounter the question, 'What is the Church?'<sup>938</sup> That question raises the issues of ecclesiology, apostolicity and catholicity.

### **7.5.1 Ecumenical Conversations, Pentecostalism and the Issues of Ecclesiology, Apostolicity and Catholicity**

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<sup>938</sup> There is a division of opinion as to what Jesus meant by 'Church' when referring to Peter as the rock upon which the Church would be built. Some will dispute that these were the *ipsissima verba* used by Jesus. Does 'the Church' refer to a single institutional entity, a community of believers, a broad movement of discipleship or perhaps something else?

Pentecostalism may not have a formally developed ecclesiology but sufficient common denominators exist among all Christians in their conceptualisation of what is meant by ‘the Church’ for them to find commonalities in ecclesiological conversations.<sup>939</sup> Christians agree, for example, that unity within the Church depends, ultimately, upon the Spirit.<sup>940</sup> For this reason a pneumatological orientation in theology may have the potential to make common understandings in the matter of ecclesiology more accessible.

Christians share the conviction that apostolicity is a pneumatological concept.<sup>941</sup> There is across-the-board agreement among them that the continuity of the faith of the apostles and the proclamation of the gospel are matters in which the Spirit will guide and lead.<sup>942</sup> Christians also share a common belief that it is by God’s grace that the Spirit is at work in the world.<sup>943</sup>

In scripture, divine activity is pneumatic in its operation: it is the Spirit that gives effect to God’s purposes.<sup>944</sup> In the New Testament tradition, the spread of the gospel will unfold according to God’s will.<sup>945</sup> For this reason, Pentecostals and other Christians believe that the Spirit should be trusted to provide direction in the process of the handing down of the faith of the apostles from generation to generation.<sup>946</sup> There may be a gulf separating Pentecostals from the more traditional churches when the issues of authority and hierarchy are considered within the context of apostolicity but, insofar as the pneumatology of the Church’s mission is concerned, they share common understandings.<sup>947</sup> Mission is a field in which the more

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<sup>939</sup> See chapter six, section 6.6.

<sup>940</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>941</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>942</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>943</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>944</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>945</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>946</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>947</sup> *Ibid.*

traditional churches could benefit from the example given by the Pentecostals.<sup>948</sup>

All Christians share the understanding that ‘the Church’ is informed by the concept of *koinonia*.<sup>949</sup> Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, for example, may have respectively different emphases on the ‘communitarian’ and ‘Trinitarian’ character of *koinonia*, but they share a commitment to the idea described in New Testament as *koinonia*.<sup>950</sup>

The issue of the so-called ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals not infrequently surfaces whenever Pentecostal understandings of the Trinity are considered.

### **7.5.2 ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals and Deeper Trinitarian Understandings**

The divisions between ‘Oneness’ and the more conventionally Trinitarian Pentecostals should not detract from the fact that both are Spirit-focused religious denominations.<sup>951</sup> By drawing attention to what a pneumatological theology may mean, the tensions within the Pentecostal movement over the ‘Oneness’ following may, ironically, have deepened understandings about the nature of the Trinity both within and outside of the movement itself.<sup>952</sup>

Exchanges in recent decades between Pentecostal and other theologians have developed closer agreement on the issue of the Godhead.<sup>953</sup> The history of Pentecostalism’s divisions over the issue of

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<sup>948</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>949</sup> See, for example, Acts 2: 42-47; 1 Corinthians 10.16. *Koinonia* appears about 19 times in the New Testament. Thayer, J. 1889. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. New York: Harper & Brothers, p357.

<sup>950</sup> See chapter six, section 6.6.

<sup>951</sup> See chapter six, section 6.7.

<sup>952</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>953</sup> *Ibid.*



the Trinity may also have prepared the movement for theological dialogue in a religiously plural world.<sup>954</sup> The divisions related to the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostals may also have honed understandings of what is meant by ‘God’ and what is meant by ‘the Spirit’.<sup>955</sup>

For example, there are contemporary Pentecostal theologians who interpret the narrative of Christ’s crucifixion as informing humankind not only that God is vulnerable in the world but also that this vulnerability derives from God’s will and work.<sup>956</sup> This may be evidence of a deepening Trinitarian consciousness within Pentecostal theology.<sup>957</sup> The reason is that the concept of God’s vulnerability is difficult to imagine outside of a Trinitarian perspective.<sup>958</sup> That perspective is related to the insight, derived from a pneumatological theology, that the relationship between God and human beings is one between mutually empathetic persons.<sup>959</sup> Empathy requires relationship.

In Christian theology, the relationship which exists within the triune God is the apex of all relationships, an example of sublime empathy.<sup>960</sup> Pneumatological theology has the potential to shift Western consciousness from being directed at self-knowledge and self-

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<sup>954</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>955</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>956</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, J. 2003. *Science and Wisdom*. Translated by Kohl, M. London: SCM Press, p65 and 119-120.

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>958</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>959</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>960</sup> Augustine elaborated the argument that the Spirit is the outpouring of love (*amicitia* or *caritas*) of Father and Son; the Spirit must be something ‘belonging’ both to Father and Son, and yet is not simply a quality of the whole Godhead, but is to be thought of in connection with their mutual love in creation. Neither Father nor Son alone gives effect to the union; this is a union different from the union of nature between the two. Since God is *substantia* (concrete reality), and God is *caritas* (love), this mutual love is a substantial reality alongside Father and Son. This provides an argument for there being no more than three divine persons: there are two loving subjects and the love between them. This is the essential logic of divine life (See Augustine, *De Trinitate* Books V & VI, especially 5.11.12; 5.13.14 - 5.14.15; 6.5.7. These passages from *De Trinitate* were referred to in Williams, R. 1999. “De Trinitate” in Fitzgerald, A. Ed. *Augustine Through the Ages, an Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p848. See also Congar, Y. 1999. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Part III. New York: Crossroads Publishing, pp847-8.)

reference towards an understanding that self-fulfilment derives not from self-reference but from empathy with others.<sup>961</sup> The reason is to be found in the emphasis which pneumatological theology places on relationship and the interrelatedness of all things. The story of the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit is one of relationship not only with God but also between human beings.

Scientific progress may provide further impetus for a deepening of the need to move away from self-reference. The photographs of the Earth, taken from outer space, are reminders of our 'oneness' as human beings. In the result, there is little scope for doubt that human beings will survive or perish together on our planet which, on the available evidence, is solitary in its life-giving splendor.

The Spirit has not infrequently been described as the 'hidden' person of the Trinity.<sup>962</sup> This 'hidden' quality may explain why the Spirit has been regarded among a variety of theological scholars as being the most difficult person of the Trinity to understand.<sup>963</sup>

There may be genius in Pentecostalism's pneumatological contribution to the world's religious imagination inasmuch as the Spirit has, until recent decades, been the most theologically neglected of the three persons of the Trinity. Pentecostal theologians have, at least to some extent, brought the Spirit out of 'hiding'. Pentecostal experience of the

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<sup>961</sup> Macchia, F. 2006. *Baptized in the Spirit, A Global Pentecostal Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, p125. See also Welker, M. 2004 "The Spirit in Philosophical and Theological Perspectives". Lecture given at the International Consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit (November 1-14, 2004). New York: Yale University Club.

<sup>962</sup> Moltmann, J. 1993. *God in Creation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p9; Moltmann, J 2003. *Science and Wisdom*. Translated by Kohl, M. London: SCM Press, pp66-7; Polkinghorne J. 1994. *Science and Christian Belief, Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker*. London: SPCK, p147; Polkinghorne J. 1996. *The Faith of A Physicist*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p151; Welker, M. 2006. "The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives" in Welker, M. Ed. *The Work of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, the Preface; Kim, K. 2007. *The Holy Spirit in the World, a Global Conversation*. New York: Orbis Books, pp1-8.

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid.*

Spirit may provide reference points in conversations with others about both ‘experience’ and ‘the Spirit’.

When Paul describes the Spirit as ‘poured out’ to other human beings, it is implicit in this imagery that human beings should trust that, when they work together in a spirit of unity, God’s will shall prevail.<sup>964</sup> It is also implicit in this imagery that, as a result of co-operative relationships, human beings will arrive at new perspectives which would be otherwise impossible to achieve. The concept of the Spirit requires of those who believe therein that they should have faith that, by disciplined endeavor, men and women shall be led to do what is right.<sup>965</sup> Virtuous cycles in which empathy with others and a heightened consciousness of a shared humanity are unfolding may have wide theological implications.

### **7.5.3 The Theological Implications of a Heightened Awareness of Our Shared Humanity**

Conventionally, ecumenism has been understood as a process that takes place only among Christians themselves.<sup>966</sup> A deepening awareness of our shared humanity may promote a theological dialogue which extends beyond the internal confines of the Christian religion itself. Consciousness of a shared humanity among all persons in the world is inconsistent with indifferent ignorance about the varied religious beliefs among the people of the Earth.

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<sup>964</sup> The eschatological prophecy of Joel that God will pour out the Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28) is recalled and quoted in Acts as having begun its fulfillment at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). *Revised Standard Version 1965*. New York: William Collins; and *Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha*. 1989. Oxford and Cambridge, England: Oxford and Cambridge University Press.

<sup>965</sup> See, for example, Galatians 5:25. *Revised Standard Version*.

<sup>966</sup> See, for example, the definition of ‘ecumenism’ in Murray, J., Bradley, H., Craigie, W. and Onions, C. Eds. 1989. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Second Edition. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have a shared belief in monotheism. The similarities among these monotheistic religions are being explored by a growing number of theologians, including some Pentecostals among them.<sup>967</sup> Conversations in which there is a search for areas of agreement and joint action between Christians and those who are without religious conviction may also be productive. There are various different levels on which Christians may fruitfully share concerns with those who are committed to causes driven by a secular humanism. An example of possible arenas for this kind of cooperation between Christians and secular humanists is racial and gender reconciliation.

Science is too pervasively influential in the world for theology to ignore it. There are truth-seeking communities in which the issue of the appropriate relationship between science and religion is recognized as being in need of deeper examination.<sup>968</sup> Cooperation between science and religion may be found in the issues, broadly defined as 'ecological', that relate to the role of human beings in the future survival of the Earth.

These different theatres of dialogue, extending beyond ecumenism as a focus of Christian unity, have their own challenges, each requiring separate consideration.

#### **7.5.4 Conversations across Religious Divides**

China and India's growth in economic and political prominence will increase the need for an exploration of shared understandings between 'Western' and 'Eastern' theology. Trade and investment bring about a traffic in ideas which takes place on levels beyond the immediacy of economic exchange. As West and East interact with one

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<sup>967</sup> See chapter five, section 5.9.

<sup>968</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom*, p 7, 10-12, 37-8, 46-7, and 103; Moltmann, *God in Creation*, pp97-8, 103 and 199-200; Polkinghorne, *The faith of a Physicist*, p76.

another as equals, they will become more conscious of the influence of each other. 'Western' Christianity will not be able to ignore the values and belief systems of the East. Conversations between Christians and other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism are likely to be regarded, across an increasingly broader front, as morally imperative.

The problems of the Middle East have been intractable for decades. The resolution of the tensions related to Israel and Palestine are likely to command more focused global attention as the accessibility of weapons of mass destruction becomes less and less the exclusive preserve of the large political powers. Inter-faith conversations that include the Jews may provide insights that could improve the probability of an equitable solution to the tensions in the Middle East.

'Spirit-focused' theology, rather than a 'Christo-centric' theology may facilitate theological conversations between Christians and other religions, especially the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam.

The Trinitarian concept of the divinity of Christ has given rise to obstacles in there being religious conversations between Christians and Jews and also between Christians and Muslims. Jews and Muslims consider that the notion of Christ's divinity not only strays from a strict monotheism but is also blasphemous.<sup>969</sup> In Jewish and Islamic theology no human being can be divine.<sup>970</sup> There may be disagreement as to the particularities thereof but 'spirit' is a concept that prevails in all three of the monotheistic religions.<sup>971</sup> The exploration of similarities may build bridges across the divides within monotheistic belief systems. There is evidence not only of increasing dialogue between Jews and Christians but also of an unfolding Jewish-Christian-Muslim 'trialogue'.<sup>972</sup>

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<sup>969</sup> See, in general terms, chapter five, section 5.9.

<sup>970</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>971</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>972</sup> *Ibid.*

### **7.5.5 The Possibilities of a Spirit-focused ‘Triologue’ Among Christians, Muslims and Jews in Particular**

The association of God with the concept of ‘spirit’ resonates in the Old Testament, as well as the New. For example, in the opening verses of Genesis, the spirit of God is described as “moving over the face of the waters”.<sup>973</sup> There are scriptural indications that ways of access to the working of the Spirit may differ between Jews and Christians.<sup>974</sup> Jews and Christians may have divergent views on whether the Spirit has a messianic character but there is coherence in the Biblical tradition of God as spirit.<sup>975</sup> This coherence spans both the Old and the New Testament.<sup>976</sup> Christians may be separated by their Trinitarian beliefs from the Jews but the spirit of God is a concept with which both Jews and Christians are familiar.

There are signs that swathes of Islam have found the rapidly globalizing forces at work in the world to be alienating. Theological conversations between Islam and other religions may help to ease that sense of alienation. The reasons for this feeling of alienation from the globalizing world among Muslims needs to be understood before it can be addressed. Conversations between Islam and other religions are imperative. These conversations should be undertaken not with a view to conversion but reciprocal understanding and respect. In the result, it is likely that there will be a heightened awareness that human beings have more in common than they have differences. The more human beings are aware of what they share, the more likely they are to care about one another.

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<sup>973</sup> *Revised Standard Version*

<sup>974</sup> See Isaiah 1:42 & 61; Romans 15:16; Ephesians 2:18.

<sup>975</sup> See Isaiah 1:42 & 61; Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 11:28 and 20:25; Romans 15:16; Ephesians 2:18.

<sup>976</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslims consider the Spirit to be a created, empowered entity, neither coeternal with God nor sharing the divine nature.<sup>977</sup> There remain similarities between the Islamic concept of *ruh* and the Spirit.<sup>978</sup> Not only is a pneumatological focus in theology likely to be more fertile in Christian conversations with Jews and Muslims than the Christocentric orientation that predominated in the past but there are also wider implications for Pentecostalism's pneumatological theology.

The pluralism in the Pentecost account is unconfined.<sup>979</sup> The story of Pentecost makes it clear that shared experiences of the Spirit are not restricted to those with whom the persons affected by these encounters have a natural affinity.<sup>980</sup> The account of Pentecost, by implication, entails the belief that the Spirit may be entrusted to provide direction also in relations between Christians and secular communities. For example, an awakened consciousness of a shared humanity is likely to have, as its corollary, the promotion of world peace.

### **7.5.6 The Promotion of World Peace Including Racial and Gender Reconciliation.**

Pentecostalism has not been hide-bound by tradition. It has not been part of the *Orbis Universalis Christianum*. Free from 'baggage', the Pentecostal movement will have advantages in addressing the problems of wars, aggression and the denial of human rights around the world. 'Baggage', in this context, refers to the memory or 'image' that people may have of 'the Church' as an institution.

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<sup>977</sup> See chapter five, section 5.9.

<sup>978</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>979</sup> See, for example, Acts 2:1-4 & 16-21.

<sup>980</sup> *Ibid.*

Pentecostalism's history of pragmatic accommodation and acculturation may also confer on it advantages in discussions that are concerned with the question of how to build relationships across social boundaries. More culturally accessible to diverse communities than traditional variants of Christianity, the Pentecostal movement is likely to be more believable when it proclaims to the world: 'we are all brothers and sisters'.

Globalization has been accompanied by homogenizing forces. There is an escalating awareness that 'things are done the same' all over the world. The spreading sameness in the manner in which the world operates has led to resentments located in a sense of loss of identity, heritage and tradition.<sup>981</sup> This sense of loss has been acute among the less powerful communities around the globe.<sup>982</sup>

Our shared humanity makes imperative all endeavors in the promotion of world peace. Among these endeavors are issues such as racial reconciliation and gender equality. The role of women in society has not only changed over the past two generations but is also likely to continue to do so in ways as yet unforeseen.

Pentecostalism has had a distinctly 'non-racial' character.<sup>983</sup> It has been empowering of women and blacks through its recognition of the fact that God is no respecter of persons.<sup>984</sup> Pentecostalism's record in drawing blacks and women into its fold may inspire imitation.<sup>985</sup> In the context of reconciliation among races and redefinition of the relationship between genders, Pentecostalism has a 'gospel to proclaim' that could benefit the world. There are implications for human rights in the claim that human beings are 'brothers and

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<sup>981</sup> See, in general terms, chapter six, section 6.2.

<sup>982</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>983</sup> See, in general terms, chapter two, section 2.8, chapter three, section 3.8, chapter four, section 4.8 and chapter five, section 5.8.

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>985</sup> *Ibid.*



sisters'. Fraternal messages deserve repetition: equality among human beings requires continuing reflection and evaluation, demanding recognition in our relationships with one another.

What of conversations that do not touch directly upon relationships between human beings but which seek, in a more general way, to make sense of our being-in-the-world? These include conversations that relate to the understanding by human beings of the material world. The struggle to understand the material world cannot avoid encounters with science. The reason lies in the fact that our being-in-the-world is affected by the processes at work in the cosmos. It is science that assists human beings to understand and master many of these processes.

There is a rationalist insistence at large in the world that religion cannot coexist with the exponential growth of scientific knowledge.<sup>986</sup> The reason for this skepticism as to the possibility of harmonious co-existence between science and religion is that the truth-claims of these two distinct fields of human endeavor have been perceived to be irreconcilable.<sup>987</sup> Axiomatically, two competing narratives of the same object of scrutiny cannot, at the same time, each be true.

There are signs that the tensions between science and religion are being addressed in Pentecostal theology.<sup>988</sup> There are also emergent insights that may transform our understanding of why the cosmos is unfolding as it is.<sup>989</sup> These insights may have an impact on the ability of human beings to rise to their full potential.<sup>990</sup> The new understandings in question explore why there is freedom in the world and how best human beings can respond to that freedom. These

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<sup>986</sup> See chapter six, section 6.10.

<sup>987</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>988</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>989</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>990</sup> See, for example, Welker's preface to *The Work of the Spirit*.

emergent processes could provide the world with directions along the road to how best human beings should relate one another and to their environment. This road could be the highway to the truth.

### **7.5.7 The Possibilities of a Positive Interface between Science and Religion**

The recognition that the Spirit is present in all of creation has the potential to open the door to conversations that can accommodate science. 'All of creation' necessarily includes the realities of science. Science is part of creation. It is possible to reflect upon the role of the Spirit in creation without adopting a stance that denies the truths of science. A factor such as 'spirit' is not necessarily absent even in the dynamics of matter.<sup>991</sup>

Explanations for creation *ex nihilo* and *creatio continua* that are inconsistent with science are unlikely to prevail in the years to come.<sup>992</sup> Science has both a method and a logic which makes it convincing.<sup>993</sup> Both science and religion may be able to accept that the explanation for creation is to be found in the concept of transcendence.<sup>994</sup> In this explanation, God and creation may interact and God may be immanent but God and creation are separate.<sup>995</sup> Transcendence may be the predicate for understanding the reason for our being-in-the-world.<sup>996</sup> Without a Creator, the coming-into-being of creation is difficult to conceptualize.<sup>997</sup>

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<sup>991</sup> Polkinghorne, J. 1986. *One World, The Interaction of Science and Theology*. London: SPCK, p46; Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief, Theological Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker*, pp147-151.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>993</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>994</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>996</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>997</sup> *Ibid.*

Science cannot adequately explain either creation *ex nihilo* or *creatio continua*.<sup>998</sup> When scientists are persuaded that religion embraces truths beyond those which have been explained by science, the conviction that the future depends on human accomplishments alone may dissipate. Human progress and scientific discovery are not always necessarily synonymous.

The concept of God, as Creator, may be intellectually unsatisfactory if God is understood to have existed and to continue to exist in solitary splendor.<sup>999</sup> If God exists, why, for example, would God have decided, from a remoteness of being, to create the world?<sup>1000</sup> The answer to the question of why the world may have come into being may lie in the concept of 'relationship' or 'relativity'.<sup>1001</sup>

Albert Einstein's theories of relativity have made possible a shift in how we understand the world to work.<sup>1002</sup> Time and mass, even energy itself, are relative concepts.<sup>1003</sup> The universe depends on movement and the relationship which exists between objects and energy at particular moments in time.<sup>1004</sup> Among these relations is gravity.<sup>1005</sup> Prevailing scientific understanding is that it is

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<sup>998</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>999</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1000</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1001</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1002</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom*, p2; Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46; Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151; Popper, K. 2002. *Conjectures and Refutations, the Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. Routledge Classics: New York, pp164-5, 244-5, 250, 258-263, 270-1 402; Popper, K. 1972. *Objective Knowledge, an Evolutionary Approach*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, pp123-4, 219-229; Popper, K. 1982. *The Open Universe, An Argument for Indeterminism*. London: Hutchinson, pp46-79, 118-130; and Popper, K. 1984. *The Self and Its Brian: An Argument for Interaction*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp43-4.

<sup>1003</sup> Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151; Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46.

<sup>1004</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1005</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, *Science and Wisdom*, p2; Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46; Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151; Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp164-5, 244-5, 250, 258-263, 270-1 402; Popper, *Objective Knowledge*, pp123-4, 219-229; Popper, *The Open Universe*, pp46-79, 118-130; and Popper, *The Self and Its Brian*, pp43-4.

‘relationship’ or ‘relativity’ which accounts for the world as it is.<sup>1006</sup> In both science and theology, relationship may be everything.<sup>1007</sup> Isolation and solitary splendor produce nothing.<sup>1008</sup>

## **7.6 Relationship is Everything in Both Science and Religion**

The notion, in science, that time is relative and has no independent existence, outside of matter, may have theological implications. Without the orbit of the earth around the sun there would be no seconds, hours, minutes, days or years. The relativity of time has wider implications than that time has no independent existence or that, without motion and matter, there is no time.<sup>1009</sup> The theological implication is that time was not ‘ticking away’ while God was waiting for a suitable moment to bring about the ‘big bang’.<sup>1010</sup> There was no time before the world began.<sup>1011</sup>

The Trinitarian theological tradition has features which could help to explain the coming into being of the world and its unfolding as it does.<sup>1012</sup> The Trinitarian idea of God presupposes relationship.<sup>1013</sup> Conceptually, it is this relationship which yields fertility, even in the coming into being of the cosmos itself.<sup>1014</sup> Augustine suggested that it is love, which is at the core of relationship, which explains both the

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<sup>1006</sup> See, for example, Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46; Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; and Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151.

<sup>1007</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1008</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1009</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1010</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1011</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1012</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate* Books V & VI, especially 5.11.12; 5.13.14 - 5.14.15; 6.5.7, referred to in Williams, “De Trinitate”, p848. See also Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Part III, pp847-8.

<sup>1013</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1014</sup> See, for example, Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151; and Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46.

coming into being of creation and its continuing, unfolding processes.<sup>1015</sup>

The world may have come into being and continued its existence as a result of God's love.<sup>1016</sup> There may be a relationship in existence which is beyond time and space. That relationship may have established the field through which creation came into being.<sup>1017</sup> Augustinian ideas about relatedness, relationships and relativity may have consequences which extend beyond the question of time.<sup>1018</sup>

In the theology of the Trinity, the Spirit is relationship and exists in relationship.<sup>1019</sup> Love may be the highest form of relationship. Might it be reasonable to imagine that God's relationship with creation is one of love? Pentecostal pneumatological theology could assist in our understanding of what God's relationship with the world as one of love might mean.

## **7.7 The Relationship of the Spirit with the World as a Relationship of Love**

It may not be inconsistent with scientific understanding to suppose that God, as Spirit, was responsible for creation *ex nihilo* or to imagine that God, as Spirit, is present in the *creatio continua*.<sup>1020</sup> God's creative energy may be present in the world as Spirit.<sup>1021</sup> In pneumatological theology there is a focus upon God relating to the

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<sup>1015</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate* Books V & VI, especially 5.11.12; 5.13.14 - 5.14.15; 6.5.7, referred to in Williams, "De Trinitate", p848. See also Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Part III, pp847-8.

<sup>1016</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, *Science and Creation*, pp65-7, 119-122, 168-170.

<sup>1017</sup> See, for example, Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46; Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151.

<sup>1018</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1019</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate* Books V & VI, especially 5.11.12; 5.13.14 - 5.14.15; 6.5.7, referred to in Williams, "De Trinitate", p848. See also Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Part III, pp847-8.

<sup>1020</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1021</sup> *Ibid.*

world through the action of the Spirit. Pentecostal theology, being pneumatological at its core, has the potential to assist in the unfolding of understandings as to how and why God may be in relationship with the world.

Christians believe that the Spirit, by God's grace and as a result of the outpouring of God's love, is at work in the world.<sup>1022</sup> It is a sign of love that the lover wants and respects freedom for the beloved. Freedom in creation may be the result of God's grace, a manifestation of God's love for the world. In the perspective that it is a consequence of God's love that God wants freedom for the world, the Spirit may be understood to be continuously at work in an open system. Openness to potential is the corollary of freedom. The world is and always has been open to new possibilities. These new possibilities may include theological developments within the Pentecostal movement.

In Paul's paean to love in his first letter to the Corinthians the reader is reminded that love endures, love hopes, love is patient, love bears all things, love is not "puffed up".<sup>1023</sup> An awareness of the patient, suffering, enduring Spirit of God may bring about a corresponding insight into God's love. The appropriate response to emerging 'experiential' theological developments within the Pentecostal movement may be patience.

Those watching emerging trends within the Pentecostal movement with interest may recall that, in Christian theology, the Spirit has a comforting, guiding, teaching and truth-revealing power.<sup>1024</sup>

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<sup>1022</sup> Titus 3:4-7. Grace is the divine presence and power working and thereby present in the world. (See Burns, J.P. 1999, "Grace" in Fitzgerald, A. Ed. *Augustine Through the Ages, An Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans p393.) Augustine understood grace to be, in effect, the presence of the Spirit. (See Kelly, J. 1968. *Early Christian Doctrines*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, reprinted 1975. London: Adam & Charles Black, p366.)

<sup>1023</sup> 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13.

<sup>1024</sup> Welker's preface to *The Work of the Spirit*.

Correspondingly, as emergent processes within both science and Pentecostal theology are better understood, the greater may be the insights into the nature and working of the Spirit.

These emergent processes may assist in understanding, from both a scientific and theological perspective, the reasons for our being in the world. A theology of creation in which the concept of God, as both the Creator and Spirit of the universe, is differentiated in a Trinitarian sense, may assist human beings to rise to their full potential. The fullness of that potential includes their being responsive, as empathetic creatures, to the needs of others. The reason is that the idea of *relationship* is rooted in Trinitarian theology. This concept of God as both Creator and Spirit, may need continuing development. If human beings are to rise to their full potential they may need to deepen their understanding of love: why love exists, how it works and what love may have the potential to achieve.

By reason of the fact that science assumes the intelligibility of the cosmos, it cannot provide reasons for why it should be so.<sup>1025</sup> It also cannot explain why creation came into being.<sup>1026</sup> Love as the reason for creation *ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*, for our being in the world, is not an explanation which science could provide.<sup>1027</sup> Only theology can do that.<sup>1028</sup> That love may be the reason for both creation *ex nihilo* and *creatio continua* may be inherent in the emergent processes in theology. These emergent processes may assist scientists to derive a sense of meaning in our existence, as animate beings, functioning within an unfolding cosmos.

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<sup>1025</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, *Science and Creation*, pp65-7, 119-122, 168-170; Polkinghorne, *One World*, p46; Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, pp73-81; Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, pp147-151.

<sup>1026</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1027</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1028</sup> *Ibid.*

Respect by science for religion is likely to enhance the regard in which theology is held by those who are other than theologians. The 'others' include politicians, academics, business and trade union leaders and all who hold positions of authority and influence in society. Enhanced esteem for theology from these quarters is likely to increase the confidence of those who take religious matters seriously. In the result, theologians may speak out more often on issues of contemporary relevance. Correspondingly, human beings could increasingly be encouraged to live in harmony with each other and their environment.

The unfolding theological understanding of the relationship of love being at work in the world may impact upon the practical outcomes of discourses between scientists and theologians. Recognition that the Spirit is present in a relationship with all of creation could have eschatological implications. The concept of God as the Creator, the 'Father Almighty', necessarily entails that notion that the Earth which human beings inhabit is God's Earth. In this paradigm human beings should exercise humility in their relationship with creation. Humility, rather than arrogance about the role of human beings in creation, may lead to a greater reverence for the Earth. This reverence for the Earth is likely to deepen ecological consciousness.

Inherent in the Trinitarian imagery of God is that God, as Creator, is not remote from creation: God acts in the world through the Spirit. In the Trinitarian conceptualization of God this action of the Spirit is made possible by the relationship of the Spirit with all of creation, including us as human beings. Pneumatological theology, by developing a consciousness of the action of God as Spirit, may increase human responsiveness to worldwide ecological concerns.

## **7.8 Ecological Awareness Harnessed with an Awareness of the Action of the Spirit**



Addressing the challenges that arise from the cohabitation of human beings on the Earth is formidable. Uncoupled from spiritual development, scientific and economic progress is likely to prove inadequate to the task which arises from the finite resources of the Earth and the multiplicity of human needs. Science and economics are faced with unlimited demands that are generated by human beings living in an environment in which resources are limited. These demands are unlikely to be deflected through ever-increasing affluence. The plunder of the finite resources of the Earth has ecological consequences which threaten the environment.

A theology of reverence for our planet could have ecological implications. In this theology, human beings may be understood to be trustees, acting on behalf of God, caring for the future of the Earth. A heightened awareness of spirituality in human beings' relationship with the Earth could result in a change away from patterns of human consumption that are destructive of the future of the planet.

The core meaning of 'wealth' is a state or condition of well being.<sup>1029</sup> In conventional wisdom, wealth has become synonymous with material comfort and affluence. At the apex of well being, are to be found at least some of Paul's fruits of the Spirit: love, joy and peace, in particular.<sup>1030</sup> Love, joy and peace are within the grasp of every human being. These fruits are not conditional upon affluence for their existence. The harvest of these fruits of the Spirit may produce treasures greater than material affluence.

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<sup>1029</sup> See, for example, the definition of 'wealth' in *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>1030</sup> See Galatians 5:22.

The Trinitarian doctrine requires of Christian believers that they should have balance in their responsiveness to God's demands.<sup>1031</sup> The pursuit of a standard of living, consistent with human dignity, for all people need not be abandoned.

A deepening consciousness of our having a shared future on this planet is likely to have a 'multiplier effect', promoting virtuous cycles. Among the benefits that could flow from a deepening theological dialogue, across religious boundaries, is increased 'ecological awareness'.

The quest for the spiritual experiences of love, joy and peace rather than a self-referring materialism, may assist human beings to 'save our planet'. Love, joy and peace require empathy with others. They require relationship. An emerging 'ecological theology' within the Pentecostal movement is therefore not without potential to address the relationship of human beings with their environment. The Pentecostal experience of the Spirit could guide, teach and lead the world towards an awareness of the rewards that may follow when material aspirations are substituted with the pursuit of harvesting scripture's promise of the fruits of the Spirit.

The pursuit of spiritual experience may be more challenging than economic progress but the rewards could be rich. For example, the recompense could be that patterns of consumption which threaten the survival of the Earth could be changed.

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<sup>1031</sup> For example, Louis Berkhof reasons that the Augustine's *De Trinitate* contained the final formulation of the Trinity in Western theology. See Berkhof, L. 1975. *The History of Christian Doctrines*. Grand Rapids, Michigan; Baker Book House, p92. Eugene Teselle interprets Augustine as having brought the concept of the Trinity to maturity with his understanding that the Trinitarian relationship is the supreme example of wisdom and balance. See Teselle, E. "Holy Spirit" in Fitzgerald, A. Ed. *Augustine Through the Ages*. Grand Rapids, Michigan; Eerdmans, p436.

Progress in addressing the problems of ecology will be uneven. The history of the world and, more especially, our troubled past century, makes it plain that moving forward, collectively, as human beings, will be a process that is neither linear nor inevitable. If false turns in the quest for progress are to be avoided, ‘discerning the spirits’ may be a weapon in the armour of those who are in pursuit of the truth.

## 7.9 Discerning the Spirits

‘Discerning the spirits’ in the New Testament refers to the admonition that human beings should seek to distinguish between whether the source of a spiritual manifestation comes from God or does not.<sup>1032</sup> Scripture also provides the comfort that those who have faith shall have the ability to make the necessary discernment.<sup>1033</sup>

In the prologue to John’s gospel, both Word and Spirit are related to Wisdom. In ‘Sapiential’ literature, Wisdom is brought so close to the Spirit that the two are almost identical, more particularly when it comes to their action.<sup>1034</sup> In the Old Testament, Wisdom is so often identified with the Spirit that, before the adoption of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, several of the early theological scholars in the Church thought of Wisdom as coextensive with the Spirit.<sup>1035</sup> Wisdom and Spirit might be identical were it not for the fact that Wisdom does not have the Spirit’s character of a force or transformative inner energy.<sup>1036</sup> In the Biblical tradition, the work of

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<sup>1032</sup> See, for example, Acts 8:18-23; 10:30-35; 16:16-18.

<sup>1033</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1034</sup> The ‘Wisdom’ literature in the Old Testament includes the apocryphal literature. During the four centuries that preceded the Incarnation, a body of literature became known as the Wisdom literature. It included Job and Proverbs, a number of the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus and the Book of Wisdom (the Wisdom of Solomon). In other words, the Wisdom literature included certain apocryphal literature as well as literature which may be described as coming from the ‘Hebrew Bible’. See, Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Part I, p9.

<sup>1035</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Part III, pp155-56.

<sup>1036</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, p10.

the Spirit and Wisdom accompany one another.<sup>1037</sup> Wisdom may, in this tradition, be relied upon to assist in the process of discernment and the growth of knowledge.

In the New Testament, the affinity between the Spirit and the truth is made clear on several occasions.<sup>1038</sup> So too, in the New Testament, the enlightening, revelatory power of the Spirit is proclaimed.<sup>1039</sup> Scripture provides the assurance to the faithful that they will not be without guidance in the discernment of spirits.<sup>1040</sup>

Christians have been reassured that they may be confident that, through the love of God, they will be transformed so that they will be able to interpret the world in a manner that is different from that which went before. Those who have faith are comforted that they will be empowered to develop solutions to all manner of questions with which they are confronted. Discernment of spirits, irrespective of religious affiliation, may provide a more effective means of communication across boundaries of religious belief than a narrower focus on the transmission and interpretation of scripture.

That the world is beset with social, economic and political problems is a banal reality. A rapidly globalizing world is accompanied by difficulties in accommodating pluralism.<sup>1041</sup> Additionally, the world is replete with broken dreams.<sup>1042</sup> There is much of Emilé Durkheim's *anomie*.<sup>1043</sup> Human beings are confronted with emptiness, a lack of

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<sup>1037</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1038</sup> See, for example, 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

<sup>1039</sup> See, for example, 1 Corinthians 2:10-15.

<sup>1040</sup> See, for example, Matthew 7:15-20; John 14:17 & 4:23-24; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:14.

<sup>1041</sup> See chapter six, section 6.2.

<sup>1042</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1043</sup> *Ibid.*

meaning, in their everyday lives.<sup>1044</sup> Perhaps ironically, this sense of alienation is acute in the well-educated, 'developed' world.<sup>1045</sup>

The experience of the Spirit, which is at the heart of the pneumatological theology of Pentecostalism, may assist in addressing these existential issues. The experience of the Spirit may build communities, relieving the sense of alienation and *anomie* which beset the world. The Pentecostal movement has much to share with others, no matter how different these 'others' may appear to be. In scripture, the Spirit has a 'gifted' character.<sup>1046</sup> An unfolding pneumatological theology may therefore be amenable to the interpretation that it is a gift of the Spirit.

The experience of the Spirit may give human beings reason to believe that they are neither the irrelevant products of chance nor other haphazard events. The experience of the Spirit may foster an unfolding understanding of the world as having been created by God in a manner that is permeated with respect for our freedom. In this concept of freedom the development of human potential, individually and collectively, is made possible. This idea of freedom includes the assurance that human beings will neither be alone nor abandoned as they make efforts to make progress in their development. In this paradigm they will receive signs and encouragement from the Spirit.

A deeper understanding of the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit may assist the further transmission and interpretation of scripture. In this process of understanding, human beings could grow in their awareness that the presence of the Spirit is poly-contextual and polyphonic and that the Spirit does not act in a uniform manner in

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<sup>1044</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1045</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1046</sup> See, for example, John 7:37-39; 14:25-6; 15:26-7; Galatians 3:2-5; 3:18; 4:6; 1 Corinthians 2:7-16.

every situation.<sup>1047</sup> In John's gospel, Jesus is recorded as saying "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth".<sup>1048</sup> Paul said that, if the Spirit is the source of our life, the faithful should trust the Spirit to direct its course.<sup>1049</sup> While the Spirit may not be entirely predictable within the limits of human comprehension, the New Testament tradition insists that to have faith that the Spirit will lead the way in addressing the difficulties which may lie ahead is the appropriate response to the challenges before us.

New perspectives in theology, derived from a pneumatological focus, may enable the world to address the problems of our being in it. *Par excellence*, the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit has this pneumatological focus. Therein may lie the potential of the Pentecostal movement to participate in the emerging processes of theology around the world.

## **7.10 Regeneration and the Potential of Pentecostal Theology**

A note of caution may be appropriate. The theological perspective that experience of the Spirit lies at the heart of all graced human activity does not mean that the experience of the Spirit will, in itself, bring about an integrated awareness of the personal, social, cultural, economic, ecological and political issues that confront the world.<sup>1050</sup> This kind of integration will require that theology, both within and outside of the Pentecostal movement, becomes more self-critical, and

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<sup>1047</sup> See also Welker, "The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives", p226.

<sup>1048</sup> John 16:13, *Revised Standard Version* and *Revised English Bible*.

<sup>1049</sup> Galatians 5:25.

<sup>1050</sup> See chapter six, section 6.10. See also, for example, Power, D. 1989. "The Holy Spirit" in Wainwright G. Ed. *Keeping the Faith*. London: SPCK, p154. Power is referring to Karl Rahner. See Rahner, "Experience of the Spirit and Existential decision", p41.

revises its horizons.<sup>1051</sup> There are signs that there may be an emerging theology within the Pentecostal movement in which such a process of revision is under way.<sup>1052</sup> Shifts away from Biblical literalism are an example of this revision.

The review of the academic scholarship with which this dissertation has been concerned suggests that there is the potential to experience a regeneration within the Pentecostal movement, in which a number of its theological positions undergo re-examination. The Biblical tradition teaches that this regeneration will be God-given.<sup>1053</sup>

This regeneration in theology may require that the world revise its confidence that the hope for the future will lie in humanity's own achievements. The pneumatological theology of the Pentecostal movement may promote the revision of this confidence in humanity's own accomplishments. The reason is that this theology is rooted precisely in the conviction that human beings should rely on the experience of the Spirit, rather than their own abilities alone, to shape the future.

The regeneration of a theology of the Spirit could lead to an increased perception that God, as Spirit, comes to human beings, is active in them and works through them, drawing them closer to one another. Through this process of regeneration, human beings, all over the world, may be drawn into communion, having friendship with one another. The people of the world could be brought into closer union with one another, experiencing their being in lives that are not self-centred but focused on the needs of others. Among the signs of the

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<sup>1051</sup> See chapter six, section 6.10; Moltmann, J. 2008. "On the abundance of the Holy Spirit: Friendly Remarks for *Baptized in the Spirit* by Frank D. Macchia", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008), pp9-13.

<sup>1052</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1053</sup> See, for example, Titus 3:4-7.

presence of God, in and through the Spirit, may be the fruits of the Spirit.

There may be an increasing respect for the Pentecostal movement among those who stand outside of its fold. More Pentecostals may be arriving at the realization that much of the interest by others in them is driven by respect rather than ulterior motives. As Pentecostals grow in confidence, so too may their willingness to share their experience of the Spirit with others. As Pentecostals tell their story to more people, the potential for these accounts of their experiences to help to shape the future will be increased.

Increased awareness within the Church, in different congregations and among various scholars of theology, that there are developments within Pentecostalism, away from a 'fundamentalist' towards an 'experiential' theology, could produce diverse benefits. Pentecostal 'experiential' theology has the potential to contribute positively to current theological discourse on different fronts, some of which have been suggested in this dissertation.

New ground is being broken among Pentecostal scholars whose work is abreast of gathering theological perspectives across the world.<sup>1054</sup> It is not certain that this emerging theology will prevail within the movement as a whole but it is not doomed to fail.<sup>1055</sup> In order to succeed, support from the academic community in different countries around the world could play a role. Further research and academic debate in colloquia, parish seminars and other such *fora* would accelerate this process.

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<sup>1054</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.5 and 6.6.

<sup>1055</sup> See chapter six, sections 6.5 and 6.6.



In the Old Testament there is the prophecy that the Spirit will bring universal knowledge and acknowledgement of God.<sup>1056</sup> The 'pouring out of the Spirit' in the New Testament's invocation of the Old Testament prophecy bears the promise of the renewal of spiritual insight.<sup>1057</sup> The pouring out of the Spirit may be at work in emergent Pentecostal theology and in the relationships which are being built between Pentecostals and the rest of the world.

***-Finis-***

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<sup>1056</sup> See Isaiah 11:2, 9; 42:6-7; 61:6.

<sup>1057</sup> See Ezekiel 39:28-29; Joel 3:1; Zechariah 12:10; Acts 10.45, *Revised Standard Version*.

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