

# **Pentecostal Spirit Baptism: An Analysis of Meaning and Function**

**Submitted by**

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## Statement of Sources

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that is difficult to decipher but appears to be a personal name.

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## Abstract

This thesis engages with the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and seeks to contribute to the discussion through the application of a new methodology. The premise is that the experience itself is meaningful and important to the Pentecostal community, but the meaning inherent in the experience has not always been adequately understood. To address this, this thesis utilizes the functions of meaning, a set of categories proposed by Bernard Lonergan, as a framework to explicate the Pentecostal experience in terms of its cognitive, effective, constitutive and communicative dimensions.

Concerning the cognitive function, I argue that the key assertion Pentecostals make about their experience of Spirit baptism is that it is an experience of the Holy Spirit. This assertion is then demonstrated as reasonable through phenomenological analysis, and explained in theological and Trinitarian terms as the procession of love, the Holy Spirit, poured into our hearts from the Father and the Son. Concerning the effective function of meaning, I suggest that this divine love poured into our hearts through Spirit baptism can function as a motivating force for evangelism and missions. Concerning the constitutive function, I recognize that Spirit baptism constituted the Pentecostal community for many years, but the value of the experience as an integrator within the contemporary Pentecostal context has yet to be determined. More work is needed in this area. Finally, concerning the communicative function, I propose that the relationship between Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues may be understood theologically as the communication of elemental meaning. The doctrine of Spirit baptism, however, needs to be revised in order to capture the essence and richness of the experience itself.

The end result of this thesis, then, is a suggested restatement of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism that incorporates the cognitive, effective, constitutive and communicative meanings discussed throughout.

## Chapter 1: Purpose and Context

### 1.1 Introduction:

Anyone wishing to understand the heightened interest in Pentecostalism over the last few decades need only consider that the movement, including its Charismatic counterparts, has grown from zero to almost 500 million constituents in less than a century.<sup>1</sup> In fact, recent statistics suggest that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements represent approximately a quarter of all Christians in the world,<sup>2</sup> and closer to two-thirds of all Christians in the Majority World.<sup>3</sup> Such staggering growth and the resulting global presence inevitably creates curiosity from without, and should encourage ecumenical engagement and responsibility from within. While these drives have compelled both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals to engage historically, sociologically, and theologically with the movement and its varied doctrinal distinctives, the final word has not yet been said. There is still a pressing need for Pentecostal scholars to critically reflect upon their unique doctrines so that Pentecostals can mature in their own self-understanding and contribute meaningfully to broader discussions. Recent theological offerings from various scholars are a great contribution to this cause, but there is still more work to be done. After claiming that Pentecostalism is currently at a crossroads, Walter J. Hollenweger identifies a challenge, arising from within the ranks, “for a critical historiography, for social and political analysis, for a more differentiated treatment of the work of the Spirit, for a spirituality which does not blend out critical thinking ... for ecumenical openness and dialogue”.<sup>4</sup> It is with this challenge in mind that we revisit afresh one of the most distinctive Pentecostal experiences and doctrines: Spirit baptism.

Spirit baptism as an experience and as a doctrine has been, for many years, crucial to the constitution and self-identity of the Pentecostal community. Indeed, it has been aptly described as the “crown jewel” of Pentecostal theology,<sup>5</sup> and millions of Pentecostals worldwide can identify with the experience of Spirit baptism. Despite this place of prominence, it is still a doctrine in need of attention. There has been a recent trend, evident in both Pentecostal scholarship and Pentecostal praxis, towards the displacement of Spirit baptism as the central Pentecostal distinctive and a lessening of

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<sup>1</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Henry I. Lederle, *Theology with Spirit, The Future of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in the 21st Century* (Tulsa: Word & Spirit Press, 2010), 161.

<sup>4</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "The Kingdom and the Power: Spirit Baptism in Ecumenical and Pentecostal Perspective," in *The Work of the Spirit*, ed. Michael Welker (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2006), 110.



the emphasis given to this experience.<sup>6</sup> At a scholarly level, several writers have attempted to find an alternative to Spirit baptism as the unifying center of Pentecostalism using themes like eschatology<sup>7</sup> and encounter<sup>8</sup>. While these will be discussed in more detail at a later stage, it is enough for now to note that such a trend exists. At a practical level, Keith Warrington has noted a decrease in the number of Pentecostals who claim to have experienced Spirit baptism, especially in the West, and asserts that the experience itself is only encouraged to a limited extent by Pentecostal leaders.<sup>9</sup> Speaking of the Assemblies of God in Australia,<sup>10</sup> the country's largest Pentecostal denomination, Shane Clifton highlights similar trends towards a deemphasizing of the importance of Spirit baptism.<sup>11</sup>

The reasons for this shift are no doubt many and varied, academic and practical as well as conscious and unconscious. Whatever the reason, Clifton believes that changes to the focus on Spirit baptism have often occurred "for pragmatic reasons without the requisite theological reflection and debate".<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, with Pentecostal identity at a crossroads, there is a very real possibility that Spirit baptism will be marginalized to the point that it becomes practically insignificant. If this were to happen the Pentecostal movement would lose something that, historically at least, has been central to its identity.<sup>13</sup> The time is right for a reexamination of Spirit baptism with a view to critically reflecting on the meaning of the experience and its relevance to Pentecostalism today.

For this to happen, as Steven Land rightly observes, "more is needed than an apologetic for Spirit baptism".<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the majority of publications on Spirit baptism from the last few decades have been concerned with a biblical assessment or apologetic of particular Pentecostal claims like subsequence<sup>15</sup> and initial evidence<sup>16</sup> rather than theological reflection on the Pentecostal *experience* of Spirit baptism. The classical Pentecostal construct of Spirit baptism as an experience subsequent to conversion and evidenced by speaking in tongues has traditionally been criticized or defended based on various interpretations of biblical texts, particularly from Luke-Acts. But after decades of debate we seem no closer to a consensus on the issue, and it has become increasingly apparent that

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<sup>6</sup> ———, *Baptized in the Spirit* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2006), 20.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, JPTS (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), Also, D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 20-27.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>10</sup> Recently incorporated into the ACC (Australian Christian Churches).

<sup>11</sup> Shane Clifton, "An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia" (Australian Catholic University, 2005), 265.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>14</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> The idea that Spirit baptism is an event subsequent to conversion.

<sup>16</sup> The idea that Spirit baptism is always accompanied by the "initial evidence" of glossolalia (tongues).

an understanding of Spirit baptism that relies solely on an exegetical defense of subsequence and initial evidence is far too narrow. Frank D. Macchia suggests that such a discussion has “exhausted its usefulness”, and urges that the boundaries of the discussion on Spirit baptism be expanded.<sup>17</sup> Similar efforts can also be observed in the work of Amos Yong,<sup>18</sup> Simon Chan,<sup>19</sup> and Shane Clifton,<sup>20</sup> among others.

While these authors have, to some extent, anticipated the thrust of this present work, this thesis will propose that there is a trajectory that is yet to be comprehensively explored. Notwithstanding the considerable attention given to exegetical analysis of Spirit baptism, there has been relatively little theological reflection on the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and its significance for the Pentecostal community. Furthermore, the theological reflection that has taken place has rarely been guided by a clearly defined system or methodology and is, consequently, somewhat disjointed. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to undertake a critical analysis of Pentecostal Spirit baptism based on a methodology that will allow us to focus particularly on the meaning embodied in the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. More specifically, we will explore how Spirit baptism functions cognitively, effectively, constitutively, and communicatively within Pentecostalism. The overall aim is to gain a clearer understanding of the function of Spirit baptism within the Pentecostal community and to suggest ways in which Spirit baptism may still have value for Pentecostal identity. Starting from the premise that Spirit baptism still has an important role to play at the heart of Pentecostalism, it is my hope that some contribution may be made to a more coherent Pentecostal doctrine so that confidence in Spirit baptism as a vital experience may be restored before it disappears altogether.

## 1.2 Towards a Working Definition of Spirit Baptism:

Given that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a biblical category<sup>21</sup> which is at least accepted by most Christian traditions, it is to be expected that anyone approaching this topic inevitably brings a range of pre-existing views and suppositions. Notwithstanding the diverse interpretations from biblical times to

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<sup>17</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 62.

<sup>18</sup> Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, JPTS (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Shane Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development: A Functional Analysis of the Traditional Pentecostal Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.," *Pneuma* 29, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>21</sup> John 1:33; Acts 1:5.

the present,<sup>22</sup> even within Pentecostalism there exists what Donald R. Wheelock has called “different theological colorations” in relation to the doctrine.<sup>23</sup> This diversity of views means that one’s definition of Spirit baptism will usually be drawn from their own ecclesiological and theological context.<sup>24</sup> Koo Dong Yun, for example, has categorized the various constructs of Spirit baptism as Classical Pentecostal, Charismatic, or Dispensational,<sup>25</sup> while Henry I. Lederle has classified them as integrative, neo-Pentecostal, or sacramental.<sup>26</sup> The very fact that these writers feel the need to invent systems to classify these constructs is a testimony to the diversity and complexity of the category. Although a comprehensive definition at this point would be somewhat premature, we must begin with a preliminary explanation of Spirit baptism for the sake of clarity as we move forward in this paper. To justify this working definition some brief comments are warranted.

Firstly, it is important to note that this paper is primarily concerned with Spirit baptism as it has been experienced, described, explained, and doctrinalized by the Pentecostal movement. While at times reference may be made to other denominational constructs of Spirit baptism, unless otherwise indicated by context the reader should assume a Pentecostal setting.

Secondly, a classical Pentecostal definition of Spirit baptism would usually contain reference to an event that is “distinct from and subsequent to” conversion, with tongues or glossolalia providing the initial evidence that this baptism has been received.<sup>27</sup> But modern Pentecostal scholars have called into question such classical definitions, particularly their references to subsequence and initial evidence, and I will do the same in chapter 3. Gordon Fee argues that there is very little biblical support for a subsequent Spirit baptism, although he does concede that this lack of biblical support should not render the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism invalid.<sup>28</sup> Other scholars have sought to downplay the importance of subsequence to Pentecostals in general, suggesting that the focus for early Pentecostals was a logical subsequence rather than a chronological subsequence. In other words, as J. Rodman Williams explains, Pentecostals simply viewed salvation as a prerequisite for Spirit baptism, so that “even if salvation and Spirit baptism are at the same moment, salvation precedes

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<sup>22</sup> For early interpretations of Spirit baptism refer to Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991). For nineteenth century precursors to the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism refer to Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Hendrickson, 1987), 87-108.

<sup>23</sup> Donald R. Wheelock, "Spirit Baptism in American Pentecostal Thought" (Emory University, 1983), 86.

<sup>24</sup> Koo Dong Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2003), 131.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*.

<sup>27</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 24-25.

<sup>28</sup> Gordon Fee, *Gospel and Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 106-107.

Spirit baptism".<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Wheelock argues that subsequence is "a practical recognition and not an ontologized soteriological specification".<sup>30</sup> Finally, Russell P. Spittler has called subsequence a "non-issue", suggesting that "Pentecostals did not intend to frame a new *ordo salutis*", rather they wanted to emphasize that "it's possible for tired Christians to be renewed".<sup>31</sup> Therefore, while Pentecostal scholars may still affirm that Spirit baptism *can* be an experience subsequent to conversion, it seems that the general trend is to minimize the doctrinal necessity of subsequence.

The same could also be said of the doctrine of initial evidence. Some argue that the verifiability of Spirit baptism through evidential tongues is the most distinctive feature of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>32</sup> While this may have been true in the early days of the movement, one may be hard pressed to demonstrate that this is still the case. Clifton draws attention to the move away from a link between Spirit baptism and glossolalia in Australian Pentecostalism, a move which has occurred for the most part without "debate or discussion".<sup>33</sup> As a result of his research, Hollenweger concludes that "many Pentecostal churches have a great proportion of members (and sometimes even some pastors) who have never spoken in tongues".<sup>34</sup> There have also been those who have been critical of the "initial evidence" concept itself. Macchia, for example, is concerned with the scientific connotations associated with the word "evidence" arising from a "modernistic preoccupation with empirical proof".<sup>35</sup> He prefers to view tongues as a sacramental sign of the presence of the Spirit. Larry Hurtado observes that the question of what constitutes the initial evidence of Spirit baptism is a question not raised anywhere in the New Testament.<sup>36</sup> Such practical trends and theological arguments suggest that "initial evidence" may no longer be entirely necessary for a doctrine of Spirit baptism that resonates with contemporary Pentecostalism. We will take up this issue in more detail at a later stage, but for now will affirm Spittler's observation that "the belief [initial evidence] that

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<sup>29</sup> J. Rodman Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 43.

<sup>30</sup> Wheelock, "Spirit Baptism in American Pentecostal Thought", 237.

<sup>31</sup> Russell P. Spittler, "Suggested Areas for Further Research in Pentecostal Studies," *Pneuma* 5 (1983): 43.

<sup>32</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 145.

<sup>33</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 265. In fact, the section entitled "Our Beliefs" on the website of Hillsong church, almost certainly the most influential Pentecostal church in Australia, now reads: "We believe that in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us, we need to be baptized in water and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues" (<http://myhillsong.com/what-we-believe>, Accessed 18/04/2014). This is surely a long way from the classical Pentecostal doctrine of initial evidence.

<sup>34</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 224.

<sup>35</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1 (1998).

<sup>36</sup> Larry Hurtado, "'Initial Evidence' and the New Testament," in *Initial Evidence*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 191.

distinguishes the movement can only wrongly be thought of as describing the essence of Pentecostalism".<sup>37</sup>

With these doctrinal developments in mind we come to a more recent definition of Spirit baptism from Frank D. Macchia. He writes: "Whatever else it is, Spirit baptism is a powerful experience received with or at a moment distinct from Christian initiation".<sup>38</sup> Because of its simplicity, the emphasis on the experiential nature of Spirit baptism, and Macchia's downplaying of the issue of subsequence which, as we have already suggested, is for many Pentecostals a non-issue, we will adopt this as our working definition of Spirit baptism. Although it does raise the obvious question "an experience of what?", there is also an implicit recognition that Spirit baptism cannot and should not be reduced to this definition alone. While this is certainly not a firm and final statement on Spirit baptism, it does furnish us with a starting point from which we can launch our more thorough analysis. Having laid this foundation, it is now possible to proceed to an analysis of existing literature on Spirit baptism.

### 1.3 Survey of Literature on Spirit Baptism:

Whether attempting to refute, defend, or enrich the Pentecostal position, most approaches to Spirit baptism can be loosely categorized as exegetical or theological. For the purpose of this survey, exegetical approaches are those that use the Bible as their primary reference or starting point for an evaluation of the Pentecostal doctrine and experience. Notable exponents of this approach include James Dunn, Frederick Dale Bruner, Robert P. Menzies, and Roger Stronstad. The theological approaches are those that use the Pentecostal doctrine or experience as a starting point for theological reflection (which may include exegetical elements). This theological reflection on Spirit baptism, more prominent in recent years, focuses on the significance of Spirit baptism as a theological theme within the Pentecostal tradition, and often seeks to reinterpret or revise this theme for apologetic, ecumenical, or ecclesiological reasons. Theologians who have employed this approach include Simon Chan, Frank D. Macchia, Shane Clifton, and Amos Yong, to name just a few. Because of the sheer volume it is neither possible nor necessary to review all of the literature on Spirit baptism, much of which would not be considered "scholarly". For the purpose of this brief overview we will focus primarily on the more sustained exegetical or theological treatments.

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<sup>37</sup> Russell P. Spittler, "Glossolalia," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 340.

<sup>38</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 152.

### 1.3.1 Exegetical Literature:

Before we proceed, it is necessary to highlight the way in which early Pentecostals used Scripture to describe their experience of Spirit baptism. Stronstad has suggested that early Pentecostals brought a “valid experiential presupposition” to their reading and interpretation of Acts.<sup>39</sup> This resulted in a “pragmatic hermeneutic” which looked to Scripture as a pattern for contemporary experience.<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Archer calls this the “Bible Reading Method” as a label for this pre-critical, commonsense method of reading Scripture.<sup>41</sup>

*Pentecostals found biblical parallels with their life experiences and would incorporate these into their testimonies. This reinforced the Pentecostal story. Hence, Pentecostals did not see a difference between how God worked in biblical times and how God worked in the present...Thus, they saw their experiences as similar to those of Bible times. This outlook reiterated the easy accessibility and immediacy of the meaning of Scripture for their Pentecostal community.*<sup>42</sup>

Thus early Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture was not usually supported by careful exegesis or consideration of historical context, nor could that be expected from a fledgling revivalist movement. Rather, the use of Scripture as a descriptor was highly literalistic as early Pentecostals saw in their experiences a continuation of the experiences of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. However, as this descriptive use of Scripture developed over time into doctrinal statements justified through Scripture, exegetical critiques of the Pentecostal interpretation of Spirit baptism appeared. It is at this point that we pick up our summary of exegetical literature.

To identify the exegetical criticisms of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism one need look no further than the work of Frederick Dale Bruner<sup>43</sup> and James Dunn<sup>44</sup>. While various other authors have also attempted to explain Spirit baptism in purely biblical terms, Wheelock recognizes that these men represent more than simply their own ideas, but rather “embody both the perspective and some of the specific criticisms that numerous others have leveled at Pentecostal theology”.<sup>45</sup> In other words,

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<sup>39</sup> Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture & Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio City: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 1995), 57.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2005), 101.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167.

<sup>43</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1970).

<sup>44</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1970).

<sup>45</sup> Wheelock, "Spirit Baptism in American Pentecostal Thought", 304.

these two authors can provide a useful overview of the main exegetical critiques of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

Firstly, James Dunn threw down the gauntlet to Pentecostal scholars and exegetes in 1970 with his publication of *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, beginning a serious debate that would last decades.<sup>46</sup> Even 40 years on, it is difficult to find a credible history of the doctrine of Spirit baptism that doesn't reference his book. Moreover, to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original publication, a recent edition of the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* contained four critiques of his book and a response from Dunn.<sup>47</sup> Suffice to say this work has had a significant impact on the study of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

After highlighting the need for "a close study of the distinctive Pentecostal doctrines",<sup>48</sup> Dunn's approach is to carefully examine Spirit baptism as it is expounded by Luke, Paul and John respectively. Few would question the thoroughness of Dunn's exegesis, despite disagreements with the content, and he has recently been applauded for his scope, depth and energy.<sup>49</sup> His basic question is: does the New Testament mean by baptism in the Holy Spirit what the Pentecostals understand the phrase to mean?<sup>50</sup> In particular, he calls into question the Pentecostal assertion that baptism in the Holy Spirit is an event separate to Christian initiation. To summarize his detailed and complex argument, Dunn concludes from a study of the biblical texts that, while the Pentecostal attempt to restore the New Testament emphasis on the experience of the Spirit is to be praised, the separation of Spirit baptism from the event of conversion is, in his mind, quite contrary to the New Testament.<sup>51</sup> He also accuses Pentecostalism of a strong Lukan bias, so that on the doctrine of Spirit baptism "Paul need not have written anything".<sup>52</sup> Spirit baptism's primary function, in his view, is to initiate the individual into the

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<sup>46</sup> To avoid the accusation that their doctrines were based purely on a subjective experience, Pentecostal Christians sought biblical justification for their doctrines from a very early stage. Until recently, however, these biblical arguments have usually lacked a sound hermeneutical foundation and therefore have failed to convince most evangelicals. See, for example, L. Thomas Holdcroft, "Spirit Baptism: Its Nature and Chronology," *Paraclete* 1, no. 1 (1967) or Frank B. Rice, Jr., "Terms Describing the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Paraclete* 3, no. 1 (1969).

<sup>47</sup> *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>48</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Max Turner, "James Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*: Appreciation and Response," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010): 25.

<sup>50</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

new age and covenant and to equip the individual for service as part of that new age and covenant.<sup>53</sup> In other words, one cannot be identified as a Christian without having the Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

Despite his contrary position on the issue of subsequence, Dunn is certainly not opposed to all that Pentecostalism represents. Rather, there are many points on which he applauds the Pentecostal position. He congratulates Pentecostal Christians for shifting the focus of attention to the experience of the Spirit, a shift which according to the New Testament evidence is “wholly justified”.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, Dunn asserts that Pentecostal teaching on spiritual gifts, including glossolalia, although unbalanced, is much more soundly based on the New Testament than is generally recognized. Max Turner<sup>56</sup> claims that Dunn “had at least one foot in the Pentecostal camp” with his view of spiritual gifts as dynamically experiential rather than purely sacramental or confirmationist. In Dunn’s own words:

*It is a sad commentary on the poverty of our own immediate experience of the Spirit that when we come across language in which the NT writers refer directly to the gift of the Spirit and to their experience of it, either we automatically refer it to the sacraments and can only give it meaning when we do so, or else we discount the experience described as too subjective and mystical in favour of a faith which is essentially an affirmation of biblical propositions, or else we in effect psychologise the Spirit out of existence.*<sup>57</sup>

Finally, though, he argues that the subsequent empowering of the Spirit, purportedly experienced by Pentecostals, should not be called “baptism in the Spirit”.<sup>58</sup>

A similar position emerges from Frederick Dale Bruner’s *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness*.<sup>59</sup> Like Dunn, Bruner exhibits an appreciation for the refocusing of theology on the Holy Spirit as a result of the Pentecostal movement. Yet, he urges that anything calling itself Christian must still be tested against “the truth”, which is, first of all, the New Testament witness.<sup>60</sup> Bruner explains, firstly, that the roots of Pentecostalism all stressed a personal experience subsequent to justification or conversion.<sup>61</sup> It was this experience that came to be called

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>54</sup> Despite his Pentecostal background, Gordon Fee essentially agrees with this position: Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 863-864. It should be noted that Fee’s position is based exclusively on the Pauline literature, and he still makes room for ongoing appropriations of the Spirit’s empowering after conversion.

<sup>55</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 225.

<sup>56</sup> Turner, “James Dunn’s *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*,” 25.

<sup>57</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 225-226.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>59</sup> Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 47.



in the Pentecostal movement the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This doctrine is the distinctive doctrine of Pentecostal theology, and is concerned primarily “with the critical experience, reception, or filling of the Spirit as described, especially, by Luke in Acts”.<sup>62</sup> Focusing again on the issues of subsequence and glossolalia, Bruner moves from an analysis of the Pentecostal teaching and exegesis to his own examination of the New Testament texts. His hermeneutical approach focuses on historical-critical exegesis and “the discovery of the proper text and of the meaning of the text in the setting in which it was written”.<sup>63</sup>

Ultimately, his conclusions are similar to Dunn’s: that the reception of the Spirit occurs at conversion; that Spirit baptism and water baptism should not be separated; and “when the Pentecostal definition therefore concludes, ‘this wonderful experience [of the baptism in the Holy Spirit] is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth,’ we must attribute this conviction to an insufficient acquaintance with the content with which the New Testament invests its one baptism”.<sup>64</sup> Although Bruner does spend significant time analyzing the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts, his pneumatology eventually takes on a distinctively Pauline flavour. His concluding section on “The Way of the Holy Spirit According to the New Testament” draws heavily from the Pauline epistles and secondarily from the Johannine literature. In fact, Bruner does not seem willing to concede even the possibility of Spirit baptism apart from conversion in any instance, and works very hard (perhaps too hard) hermeneutically to deny the existence of any such occurrence in the Acts narrative. He is less sympathetic towards Pentecostalism than Dunn, to the point that Turner calls his account “hostile” and “distorting”.<sup>65</sup> In the end, his critique of Pentecostalism concludes that, through their doctrine of Spirit baptism, Pentecostals are seeking the fullness of the Spirit in the wrong place.

While various other evangelicals have also offered critiques of Pentecostal Spirit baptism from an exegetical standpoint,<sup>66</sup> Dunn and Bruner provide an adequate representation of such positions. Dunn’s work, in particular, stimulated a burst of Pentecostal exegetical reflection and responsive criticism. These criticisms of Dunn usually come from one of two angles. Firstly, there are those who argue that Dunn stretches his exegetical conclusions too far in order to maintain his central thesis. Mark Lee, for example, is critical of Dunn for a “contrived” exegesis in his attempts to demonstrate that people who received the baptism in the Spirit in the book of Acts were not already Christians (e.g.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>65</sup> Turner, “James Dunn’s *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*,” 26.

<sup>66</sup> See Merrill F. Unger, *The Baptism & Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974); Allan Norling, *Jesus: The Baptizer with the Holy Spirit* (Australia: Alken Press, 1994); Victor Budgen, *The Charismatics and the Word of God* (England: Evangelical Press, 1989).

Acts 8:1-25).<sup>67</sup> Janet Everts, while conceding that Pentecostals are too often involved in strained exegesis that forces the Pauline texts to conform to Pentecostal doctrine, also observes that “Dunn is determined to find conversion-initiation in every verse he examines”.<sup>68</sup>

One of the most comprehensive responses to Dunn along these lines comes from Pentecostal theologian Howard M. Ervin.<sup>69</sup> He addresses each section of Dunn’s book in detail and is highly critical of Dunn’s exegesis and theological assumptions. Because Ervin’s approach is to respond to each point that Dunn raises in his exegesis, his argument often seems disjointed and is difficult to synthesize. Nevertheless, William Atkinson believes that “Ervin’s interesting points do cast some doubt on Dunn’s arguments”.<sup>70</sup> In particular, regarding the conversion of the Samaritans in Acts 8, Atkinson believes that “Ervin’s overall exegesis of this passage is more convincing than Dunn’s”.<sup>71</sup> Ervin follows most Pentecostal exegetes in distinguishing between an ontological role of the Spirit at conversion and a phenomenological role of the Spirit in empowerment for ministry. Indeed, his continuous criticism of Dunn is for conflating and confusing the two. He also suggests that Dunn’s conversion-initiation paradigm serves as something of a procrustean bed, forcing his exegesis to conform to this paradigm.<sup>72</sup> At the very least, Ervin successfully demonstrates that Dunn’s conversion-initiation paradigm, as a logical and theological construct, is not based on an unassailable exegetical position.<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, although most of his criticisms are directed specifically at Dunn’s exegesis, Ervin is also critical of Dunn’s implicit methodology. Discerning in Dunn’s methodology “metaphysical assumptions about the nature of spiritual reality”,<sup>74</sup> Ervin argues that these assumptions compel Dunn to reject both the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism and other sacramental understandings.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, because Dunn and Pentecostal advocates both appeal to Scripture and to logic, the “real question at issue here is a methodological one ... both make certain hermeneutical assumptions and employ theological and exegetical criteria within the context of those

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<sup>67</sup> Mark Lee, "An Evangelical Dialogue on Luke, Salvation, and Spirit Baptism," *Pneuma* 26, no. 1 (2004): 88.

<sup>68</sup> Janet Meyer Everts, "The Pauline Letters in James D.G. Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010): 16-17.

<sup>69</sup> Howard M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).

<sup>70</sup> William Atkinson, "Pentecostal Responses to Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Luke-Acts*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 6 (1995): 103.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 81.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>74</sup> Ervin accuses Dunn of a Platonic dichotomy between Spirit and matter. While the validity of this accusation is questionable, it is helpful to recognize that underlying philosophical/theological *a priori* assumptions may play a more significant part in the debate than is generally realized.

<sup>75</sup> Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, viii.

assumptions".<sup>76</sup> This recognition, that exegetical differences are not always simply exegetical, is an important point which will be developed later.

The other area for which Dunn is often criticized is his apparent reading of Luke-Acts through the lens of Pauline pneumatology.<sup>77</sup> This leads to the accusation that Dunn in some way actually preferences Pauline pneumatology over Lukan pneumatology.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, he overlooks that "Luke portrays Spirit-reception not as the receiving of new covenant life and forgiveness from sin, but as a powerful enabling".<sup>79</sup> Roger Stronstad in particular argues that Luke develops a uniquely charismatic pneumatology. He begins his book by drawing our attention to the methodological challenges surrounding the interpretation of the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" in the New Testament.<sup>80</sup> More specifically, the diverse literary genres of the New Testament raise fundamental methodological issues about how the Holy Spirit should be interpreted in the narrative or didactic passages. Pentecostals tend to interpret narrative passages in Luke-Acts as theologically significant and normative records of the Spirit's work. Despite significant criticism of this hermeneutical approach,<sup>81</sup> Stronstad proposes that "rather than providing a flimsy foundation upon which to erect a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as is commonly alleged, the historical accounts of the activity of the Spirit in Acts provide a firm foundation for erecting a doctrine of the Spirit which has normative implications for the mission and religious experience of the contemporary church".<sup>82</sup> Stronstad concludes that the activity of the Holy Spirit among the company of God's people is charismatic (at least from Luke's perspective), and "does not describe what contemporary interpreters term to be initiation or incorporation".<sup>83</sup> In even stronger terms, and in obvious opposition to Dunn, Stronstad declares that "the activity of the Spirit is always charismatic in both purpose and result", so that "only those who resist the evidence can continue to interpret the gift of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts to be an initiation-conversion experience".<sup>84</sup> Such a strong stance, based on careful exegesis of Luke-Acts, has given other Pentecostal exegetes a foundation on which to build.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>77</sup> Larry Hart, "Spirit Baptism: A Dimensional Charismatic Perspective," in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 114.

<sup>78</sup> Atkinson, "Pentecostal Responses to Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*," 97.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 120. Atkinson's article is a useful summary of significant Pentecostal responses to Dunn's work. He focuses on Roger Stronstad, Howard M. Ervin, Robert P. Menzies, David Petts, and James Shelton.

<sup>80</sup> Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984), 2.

<sup>81</sup> See John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1964). In this study of Spirit baptism, Stott deliberately ignores the narrative passages, claiming that truth should be based on didactic passages only.

<sup>82</sup> Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 82.

An example of this building can be seen in the work of William and Robert P. Menzies, who provide a detailed analysis of relevant biblical texts in their book *Spirit and Power*. Their motivation is to “hand on to the next generation [of Pentecostals] a solid rationale for their beliefs and practice”.<sup>85</sup> Central to these beliefs and practices is the Pentecostal concept of Spirit baptism which, as a dynamic experience, “has given cohesion to the movement and ... is rooted in the promise of power associated with the Pentecostal gift (Acts 1:8)”.<sup>86</sup> They commence their book with an analysis of recent hermeneutical developments, including I.H. Marshall’s contribution to the recognition of narrative as a source of both historical and theological data.<sup>87</sup> This obviously has significant implications for their approach to the Luke-Acts narrative, from which Pentecostals derive the majority of their theology. This also calls into question Dunn’s approach to the question of Spirit baptism, which in their view gives pride of place to the Pauline literature. These preliminary statements on hermeneutics pave the way for a discussion of Spirit baptism that engages with biblical narrative as a source of normative theology.

In particular, the authors respond to James Dunn and Max Turner as proponents of a “one-stage conversion-initiation paradigm”.<sup>88</sup> As with Stronstad, their criticism of these authors is that they assume an integrated unity between Pauline and Lukan pneumatology, an assumption which leads to the neglect of Luke’s distinctive pneumatology. On the contrary, Menzies and Menzies perceive differences between Luke’s pneumatology and Paul’s, in that “Luke not only fails to refer to soteriological aspects of the Spirit’s work, his narrative presupposes a pneumatology that does not include this dimension”.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, they see in the texts “Luke’s intent to teach a Spirit-baptism for empowering distinct from conversion”.<sup>90</sup> They conclude with an analysis of the relationship between Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts, and Spirit baptism and fruit of the Spirit. One does wonder if their apologetic for a subsequent experience of Spirit baptism is an overstatement of their case. Even if Luke’s pneumatology is distinct from Paul’s and exclusively charismatic, can we state definitively that Luke advocates Spirit baptism as subsequent to conversion in the same sense as Pentecostalism today?

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<sup>85</sup> William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), 9.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>87</sup> See I. Howard Marshall, *Luke - Historian & Theologian* (Great Britain: Paternoster Press, 1992).

<sup>88</sup> Menzies and Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, 69-106.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. Without going into detail, other Pentecostal theologians who have explained Spirit baptism biblically in much the same way as Menzies and Menzies include: David Petts, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *Pentecostal Perspectives*, ed. Keith Warrington (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998); Stanley Horton, *Systematic Theology* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 423-455; Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van-Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Media, 1983), 308-329.

It is worth noting that not all responses to Dunn have been entirely negative. Frank D. Macchia is more generous, tentatively suggesting that Dunn's book may be more "Pentecostal" than he himself realized.<sup>91</sup> Although he comments that the issue of separability or subsequence relating to conversion and Spirit baptism "is not exactly a burning issue among most Pentecostals scholars", he sees great potential for Pentecostal dialogue with Dunn around his assumption that that the New Testament reception of the Spirit is still a transformative and charismatic experience.<sup>92</sup>

As a side point, several recent attempts at finding middle ground between the Pentecostal and evangelical views identified above have been less than convincing. In dialogue with the Reformed tradition, Robert P. Menzies proposes that the New Testament speaks of two baptisms in the Spirit, one soteriological (Paul) and one missiological (Luke).<sup>93</sup> This is obviously an attempt to concede the soteriological nature of Spirit baptism while still championing the Pentecostal construct. Menzies believes it is reasonable that Pentecostals appropriate "Spirit baptism" to describe their own experience because missiological Spirit baptism is a more prominent theme in Luke than soteriological Spirit baptism is in Paul. This understanding of Spirit baptism as an experience subsequent to conversion has given the modern Pentecostal movement "its identity, its unifying experience, and its missiological focus".<sup>94</sup> Along similar lines, Larry Hart, a charismatic theologian, proposes that believers could claim to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit when born again", in line with 1 Corinthians 12:13, or "baptized in the Spirit when empowered for witness and ministry", in line with Acts, and both would be correct biblically and doctrinally.<sup>95</sup> This approach is also supported by Craig S. Keener, who attempts to reconcile the two sides of the debate by suggesting that both may be interpreting their favoured texts correctly.<sup>96</sup> This, he argues, is because different texts (and different biblical authors) employ the phrase "baptism in the Spirit" in different ways. While these suggestions are unlikely to ultimately satisfy either classical Pentecostals or evangelicals like Dunn and Bruner, they do point to the ambiguity of the biblical texts referring to Spirit baptism. This ambiguity may be part of the reason why there has not been a resolution to this debate – "the New Testament does not support Spirit baptism as strictly and always initiatory or Spirit baptism as strictly and always a subsequent

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<sup>91</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "Salvation and Spirit Baptism: Another Look at James Dunn's Classic," *Pneuma* 24, no. 1 (2002): 2.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Robert P. Menzies, "Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Dialogues with the Reformed Tradition," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008): 100.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>95</sup> Hart, "Spirit Baptism: A Dimensional Charismatic Perspective," 118.

<sup>96</sup> Craig S. Keener, *3 Crucial Questions About the Holy Spirit* (Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 20.

event”.<sup>97</sup> This may well mean it is practically impossible to make an unassailable case one way or the other.

One final example of the exegetical approach to defending Pentecostal Spirit baptism can be found in the work of Stanley Horton. In seeking to preserve the Pentecostal appreciation for experiential spirituality, Horton reminds us that “Spirit baptism is an observable and intensely personal experience, not just a doctrine”.<sup>98</sup> Yet despite this recognition he still bases his defense of Pentecostal Spirit baptism entirely on the biblical data with no reference to the experience itself.<sup>99</sup> He appeals to the classic Pentecostal apologetic for subsequence and initial evidence based on the so called “five cases” in the book of Acts.<sup>100</sup> Horton’s argument is a good example of the sophisticated exegetical rationale that Pentecostal theologians and biblical scholars have developed to defend the notions of subsequence and initial evidence. Even still, while recognizing Horton’s theological contribution, Larry Hart responds by observing that the traditional Pentecostal rationale for Spirit baptism, taken almost solely from the book of Acts, is a theological argument likely to be found lacking by other ecclesial traditions.<sup>101</sup>

Having reviewed the relevant exegetical literature, it is now possible to reinforce the point from a previous paragraph that this exegetical debate seems destined to remain intractable. This suggestion is perfectly supported by the aforementioned collection of essays in the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. To mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication, four Pentecostal theologians responded again to Dunn’s *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* and invited a response from Dunn himself. The fact that the arguments presented had not really changed in forty years is a testament to the lack of meaningful progress in the discussion. For example, twenty-seven years after Stronstad first published his book, his critique of Dunn remains the same. Dunn argues that Spirit baptism in Luke-Acts relates to conversion-initiation, Stronstad argues that this interpretation is incorrect.<sup>102</sup> In fact, Dunn’s response to all of his reviewers in this journal was essentially to remind them of his core thesis – that Paul and Luke both see the Spirit as the characteristic mark of the Christian. There was nothing particularly new here, perhaps because Dunn did not think that the arguments leveled against him required a “new” response. Indeed, he still quotes subsequence and evidential tongues as the two issues within Pentecostalism most troubling to him, and expresses disappointment that more inadequacies in his

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<sup>97</sup> Wheelock, "Spirit Baptism in American Pentecostal Thought", 342.

<sup>98</sup> Stanley Horton, "Spirit Baptism: A Pentecostal Perspective," in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 48.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-78.

<sup>100</sup> Acts 2:1-41; 8:4-25; 9:1-19; 10:1-11:18; 19:1-7.

<sup>101</sup> Hart, "Spirit Baptism: A Dimensional Charismatic Perspective," 95.

<sup>102</sup> Roger Stronstad, "Forty Years On: An Appreciation and Assessment of *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* by James D.G. Dunn," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010): 6.

thesis have not been identified.<sup>103</sup> In Stronstad's own words, "forty years on the clash between Dunn's conversion-initiation paradigm of Spirit baptism and the Pentecostals' commissioning-empowerment paradigm remains unresolved".<sup>104</sup> Perhaps this intractability is not simply the result of differing exegetical interpretations, but rather arises from differences in fundamental assumptions about epistemology and hermeneutics. Therefore, as we move to a critique of this exegetical debate, our concern will not primarily be with the various interpretations of the biblical texts, which have been thoroughly dissected elsewhere, but with the underlying assumptions and methodological approaches which separate the parties involved.

### 1.3.2 Critique of Exegetical Literature:

We have already mentioned that the challenge inherent in the biblical debate about Spirit baptism may not be purely exegetical, but may also involve other issues. These issues, which will be discussed under the headings of language, hermeneutics, and epistemology, make it seem unlikely that a purely exegetical debate will settle very much in regards to Spirit baptism.

#### **Language:**

Firstly, there is an inherent assumption in the exegetical debate that the biblical testimony of Spirit baptism is a standard against which the Pentecostal experience can and should be evaluated. Yet can we be sure, separated as they are by two millennia, that the two experiences are in fact representations of the same phenomena? Is the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism identical to the biblical experience (and should it be), or is "Spirit baptism" simply a label appropriated by Pentecostals to describe their experience? Williams explains the Pentecostal perspective well:

*The person of Pentecostal experience does not begin with a theology about the Holy Spirit, not even a biblical teaching as such, but with something that has happened in his life. Hence the expressions used thus far – "baptism," "filling," "gift," "reception," and others – though biblical, are not primarily understood by exegeting certain texts. Rather, these terms are helpful ways of defining what has occurred. Others may wonder why the Pentecostal witness makes so much use of this kind of language (for example, the psychologist who may look for more human explanations than "Holy Spirit baptism" or the biblical scholar who may question if certain scriptural terminology is being used properly). Nonetheless, the person of*

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<sup>103</sup> James D.G. Dunn, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Yet Once More - Again," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19, no. 1 (2010): 41-43.

<sup>104</sup> Stronstad, "Forty Years On," 7.

*Pentecostal experience finds in such language the biblical way of expressing what has taken place in his life.*<sup>105</sup>

In other words, the Pentecostal construct and usage of Spirit baptism was not adopted after careful study of the biblical descriptions of Spirit baptism. While Pentecostals saw in the biblical texts a basis for their experience, the Pentecostal experience was not a direct attempt to replicate the biblical experience. Rather, for Pentecostals, the interpretive relationship between experience and Scripture was dynamic in that their own experience informed their biblical reflection. The use of the biblical designation, “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, was undoubtedly intended to establish the validity of the Pentecostal experience through biblical witness, but it also had the (perhaps unintended) effect of creating a proverbial rod for the Pentecostals’ back. By identifying their own experience with a biblical one, particularly one as significant as Spirit baptism, Pentecostals were essentially inviting critique and criticism.

In support of the point we have just raised in relation to language, Norbert Baumert calls into question the automatic identification of Pentecostal Spirit baptism with biblical Spirit baptism.<sup>106</sup> After recognizing the biblical arguments of Dunn and Menzies, Baumert argues that “the modern substantive ‘Spirit-baptism’ is not the same as the sacramental sanctification in the bath of immersion, nor is it quite the same as the Lukan ‘gift of the Spirit’ as the endpoint of initiation, but it is an individual experience of the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, given to whomever and however he will”.<sup>107</sup> In other words, his fundamental problem is with the undifferentiated linking of the Lukan “gift of the Spirit” at Pentecost with the contemporary concept of “Spirit baptism”. Baumert argues that the noun-form of Spirit baptism “has come to be used as an experiential term only in modern times”.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, to make the biblical concept of Spirit baptism a particular kind of experience is “to read back into the Scriptures a later pattern of Christian experience and exegesis”.<sup>109</sup> Based on this, he appreciates the strongly experiential character of the modern usage of Spirit baptism, recognizes the historically specific character of the Pentecostal experience as one example of a Spirit-experience called Spirit baptism, and does not attempt to normalize the work of the Spirit.<sup>110</sup> As a historically specific experience, the Pentecostal movement has pinned Spirit baptism down to one kind of infilling by using the term to denote “an infilling with the Spirit, which was generally linked with

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<sup>105</sup> J. Rodman Williams, *The Pentecostal Reality* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1972), 17-18.

<sup>106</sup> Norbert Baumert, "'Charism' and 'Spirit-Baptism': Presentation of an Analysis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12, no. 2 (2004).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>109</sup> Peter D. Hocken, "Baptized in Spirit - an Eschatological Concept: A Response to Norbert Baumert and His Interlocutors," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 2 (2005): 260.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.



praying in tongues and was at the same time a kind of initial ignition for a new way of living in the Spirit that includes other striking charisms".<sup>111</sup> But the fact that this specificity arises from historical context means that two experiences from different points in history may not necessarily be the same, even if they are called the same thing. If Baumert is right, Pentecostalism has in fact invested the designation "Spirit baptism" with new meaning, or at least a meaning somewhat different to the biblical use of the term.

This issue of language is also raised by Larry Hart in his discussion of a Charismatic perspective on Spirit baptism. He begins with the assertion that the New Testament usage of "baptism in the Spirit" is metaphorical, not doctrinal, and its usage "is clearly not univocal within the New Testament".<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, the modern concept of Spirit baptism has taken on "a life of its own theologically".<sup>113</sup> With these comments in mind, it may be time to challenge the linguistic assumption that drives much of the exegetical debate. If the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is not simply a modern replica of biblical Spirit baptism, how can the validity or authenticity of that experience and its parameters be established or refuted based solely on a study of the biblical concept of Spirit baptism? Is it not possible that the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit without a direct biblical counterpart? This is not to say that Pentecostal Spirit baptism should be removed from the control of Scripture, but perhaps it can be evaluated against the broader concept of a biblical "experience of the Spirit" rather than the relatively narrow biblical concept of Spirit baptism.

It would probably be safe to assume that many Pentecostals themselves, committed as they are to the authority of Scripture, may object to this line of reasoning. But the point here is not to completely redefine Pentecostal Spirit baptism, but rather to question whether or not the biblical concept of Spirit baptism, taken on its own, is an appropriate standard for passing judgement on the contemporary Pentecostal experience. Unless both the biblical and Pentecostal experiences can be shown to be representations of the same encounter with God, how can one be used to evaluate the other? As to whether or not they can be shown to be the same, Gordon Fee raises a similar issue with regards to the New Testament and modern concepts of glossolalia. To the question as to whether the tongues speaking in contemporary Pentecostalism is the same as tongues speaking in the Pauline churches, his response is that the question is moot – "there is simply no way to know".<sup>114</sup> Given the historical gap and the lack of a comprehensive biblical phenomenology, it would seem that the same could be said about biblical and contemporary Spirit baptism.

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<sup>111</sup> Baumert, "'Charism' and 'Spirit-Baptism'," 167.

<sup>112</sup> Hart, "Spirit Baptism: A Dimensional Charismatic Perspective," 108.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>114</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 890.

Dunn, therefore, may well be right to claim that the Pentecostal experience should not be called “baptism in the Spirit” in the biblical sense, but such an argument misses the point. Pentecostals have chosen to label their experience “baptism in the Spirit” and are unlikely to change their mind because of semantics. Ellington writes that “doctrines may be challenged and even overturned without striking at the heart of Pentecostal faith because the essential emphasis of Pentecostalism is not a teaching which must be believed or a proof which can be deduced and defended against all challenges, but a God who must be reckoned with in direct encounter”.<sup>115</sup> Thus, even if Dunn’s description of conversion-initiation in relation to Spirit baptism is shown to be incontrovertible, that cannot and should not discredit or invalidate the experience of millions of Pentecostal Christians worldwide. Perhaps it is time to allow the Pentecostal experience to stand on its own as an encounter with the Holy Spirit requiring theological attention and explanation.

### **Hermeneutics:**

Secondly, the majority of the debate on Spirit baptism has been between evangelical and Pentecostal theologians who, in many cases, have different hermeneutical approaches. Differing attitudes towards the theological value of narrative, and differing presuppositions about the role of the Spirit in salvation, mean that opposing scholars analyze the same passages of Scripture and produce different interpretations. After recognizing that mainstream Pentecostalism has, to a large extent, adopted the Evangelical hermeneutic, Menzies argues that the Pentecostal approach to Scripture which gave us cardinal doctrines like Spirit baptism is “not entirely compatible with the new hermeneutic shaped by Evangelicalism”.<sup>116</sup> This concern is also voiced by Mark McLean:

*A strict adherence to traditional evangelical/fundamentalist hermeneutic principles leads to a position which, in its most positive forms, suggests the distinctives of the twentieth century Pentecostal movement are perhaps nice but not necessary; important but not vital to the life of the Church in the twentieth century. In its more negative forms, it leads to a total rejection of Pentecostal phenomena.*<sup>117</sup>

As Kenneth Archer acknowledges, a hermeneutic that focuses solely on the original intention of the biblical author fails to “completely satisfy the requirements of a Pentecostal hermeneutic” because of the experiential nature of Pentecostalism.<sup>118</sup> Thus, while Pentecostals may interpret the Bible in light

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<sup>115</sup> S.A. Ellington, "Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996): 17.

<sup>116</sup> Robert P. Menzies, "Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1, no. 2 (1998): 1.

<sup>117</sup> Mark McLean, "Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic," *Pneuma* 6, no. 2 (1984): 37.

<sup>118</sup> Kenneth Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (1996): 69.

of personal experience (rightly or wrongly), evangelicals are generally committed to the “original intention” of the author as the only valid interpretation of Scripture.

This exclusive preoccupation with the original intention of the author, however, often assumes that the original intention of the author addresses or answers the issue in question. Yet, as Everts recognizes, the Bible does not answer every question in complex theological arguments.<sup>119</sup> Even Menzies, himself a proponent of the historical-critical method, rightly recognizes that the pressing questions of our day may not have been directly addressed by the biblical authors.<sup>120</sup> We are not dealing with Spirit baptism as an abstract concept divorced from any ecclesial context, rather we are dealing with a concrete experience within the Pentecostal context. Is it realistic to expect a precise answer from the biblical authors to this contemporary question, and are we asking questions that the text was never trying to answer?

To counter the evangelical emphasis on a purely rationalistic hermeneutic, Pentecostal scholars have more recently described a hermeneutic that seeks to incorporate the Holy Spirit and personal experience into the interpretative process. As Stronstad notes, “charismatic experience in particular and religious experience in general give the interpreter of relevant biblical texts an experiential presupposition which transcends the rational or cognitive presuppositions of scientific exegesis”.<sup>121</sup> Efforts in this direction include the works of Kenneth Archer,<sup>122</sup> John Christopher Thomas,<sup>123</sup> Roger Stronstad,<sup>124</sup> and Mark McLean,<sup>125</sup> to name just a few. While each has its own unique accents, all of these attempts move beyond the modernistic and rationalistic historical-critical approach, although elements of this approach are usually incorporated, and take seriously the role of the Holy Spirit and the communal experience of God as essential to the interpretive process.

### **Epistemology:**

We will discuss the nature of Pentecostal experience in more detail in the next chapter, but the Pentecostal appeal to experience as a source of doctrine is well documented. James K. A. Smith regards this experiential emphasis as a key element in a narrative Pentecostal epistemology which articulates the “emotional understanding” of experiences.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Smith argues that implicit in

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<sup>119</sup> Everts, "The Pauline Letters in James D.G. Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*," 17.

<sup>120</sup> Menzies, "Evidential Tongues," 4.

<sup>121</sup> Roger Stronstad, "Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics," *Paraclete* 26, no. 1 (1992): 17.

<sup>122</sup> Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect."

<sup>123</sup> John Christopher Thomas, "'Where the Spirit Leads' - the Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 30, no. 3 (2009).

<sup>124</sup> Stronstad, "Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics."

<sup>125</sup> McLean, "Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic."

<sup>126</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 62-67.

Pentecostal spirituality is an appreciation of the role of experience which contrasts “rationalistic evangelical theology”.<sup>127</sup> As Harvey Cox notes, “while the beliefs of the fundamentalists, and of many other religious groups, are enshrined in formal theological systems, those of Pentecostalism are imbedded in testimonies, ecstatic speech, and bodily movement”.<sup>128</sup> But still, Cox argues, this is a theology, an “intricate system of symbols that respond to the perennial questions of human meaning and value”.<sup>129</sup> Warrington observes that Pentecostal Christians “aim to know God experientially, whether it is via an intellectual recognition of his being or an emotional appreciation of his character and it is this that often makes them functionally different within the Christian tradition”.<sup>130</sup>

With regards to the exegetical debate on Spirit baptism, this functional difference poses a challenge for Pentecostal engagement with evangelical theologians. It may be something of a generalization, but it could be argued that evangelicals preference cognitive rationalism and a propositional hermeneutic whereas Pentecostals preference experience and spiritual affections. For example, Dunn and Bruner’s critiques start from a rational engagement with the biblical text and on that basis critique the Pentecostal experience. On the other hand, Pentecostals allow their experience of Spirit baptism to reshape their thinking so that it is compatible with this experience. Thus Shuman can say that the arguments around Spirit baptism and glossolalia can be reduced to “a controversy over the priority of religious experience versus the priority of objective theological truth”.<sup>131</sup> And further, “the discussion thus continues to perpetuate the polarization of positions, at least to the extent that neither side is willing to depart from the principles that shape their basic positions”.<sup>132</sup> Because Pentecostals are usually people who give serious credence to their spiritual experiences, they find little use for theology that does not recognize or engage with their experience.<sup>133</sup>

In *Gospel and Spirit*, Gordon Fee suggests that, although there is very little biblical support for the traditional Pentecostal doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit, this is of little real consequence to the validity of the experience itself or its articulation.<sup>134</sup> For the early Pentecostals, the experience of Spirit baptism was “so empowering, so thoroughly life-changing, both in terms of personal obedience to God and readiness and empowerment for witness, that they instinctively knew that it must be of God

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>128</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 21.

<sup>131</sup> Joel Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account of the Pentecostal Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit," *Pneuma* 19, no. 2 (1997): 211.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>133</sup> Williams, *The Pentecostal Reality*, 60.

<sup>134</sup> Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 106-107.

– and therefore must be biblical”.<sup>135</sup> Unfortunately, according to many, this conviction led to them exegeting their own experience then looking to the Bible to support it. Despite this, Fee is adamant that Pentecostals have correctly recaptured a strong biblical emphasis on the experience of the Spirit which was, for the most part, neglected by the church. The timing of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, as subsequent to conversion, Fee argues is probably irrelevant. The important thing is the experience itself, not the timing of the experience. He is also highly critical of those who would attempt to deny the validity of the Pentecostal experience based on Scripture:

*At the same time, neither should others deny the validity of such experience on biblical grounds, unless, as some do, they wish to deny the reality of such an empowering dimension of life in the Spirit altogether. But such a denial, I would argue, is actually an exegeting not of the biblical texts but of one’s own experience in this later point in church history and a making of that experience normative. I for one like the biblical norm better; at this point the Pentecostals have the New Testament clearly on their side.*<sup>136</sup>

Joel Shuman essentially agrees, arguing that one cannot claim that “the experience of another is not compatible with objective truth as presented in Scripture”.<sup>137</sup> To do so would be to adopt a view of Scripture “based both upon an inadequate epistemology and an understanding of Scripture that fails to take its narrative structure and content seriously as being capable of establishing doctrine”.<sup>138</sup>

In short, Pentecostal theology can usually be seen to move from experience to doctrine to theology rather than the other way around.<sup>139</sup> According to Margaret Poloma, while “the Bible holds an important place in the Pentecostal worldview ... for many it is a litmus test for the authenticity of personal and corporate experience rather than a manual of rigid doctrines and practices”.<sup>140</sup> Yet evangelicals tend to view theology and doctrine as an exercise primarily in research, interpretation and history.<sup>141</sup> Such a view links theology primarily to exegesis and plays into the biases of modernity. For this reason evangelicals are usually not inclined to accept experience as a relevant factor in exegesis or the development of doctrine. But, for Pentecostals, doctrines are of little use if they don’t resonate with or reflect personal experience. Warrington is critical of the view that experiencing God is a less authentic way of encountering God than a cerebral appreciation of Him.<sup>142</sup> Rather, experience

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>137</sup> Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account," 219.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> B.L. Campos cited in Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 46.

<sup>140</sup> Margaret Poloma, "Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God: Revisiting O’Dea’s Five Dilemmas," (2002): 8.

<sup>141</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), 127-128.

<sup>142</sup> Keith Warrington, "The Challenge of the Spirit Facing Pentecostal and Charismatic Believers," in *Pentecostal & Charismatic Bible Colleges of Australasia Annual Conference* (Brisbane, QLD, 2009), 8.

can be a valuable source of doctrine and a powerful transformative influence in the life of a believer. Furthermore, Pentecostals are likely to ignore or reject doctrinal or exegetical arguments, like James Dunn's, that undermine their personal experience or question its validity. It is difficult to see how epistemologies that are so different will ever see eye to eye on the issue of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

For all of these reasons mentioned above, the ongoing exegetical debate over Pentecostal Spirit baptism and the validity of the Pentecostal experience seems doomed to remain unresolved. Lederle observes, somewhat pessimistically, that "the ongoing skirmishes over the meaning of 'being baptized in the Holy Spirit' in its context has been clouded by attempts over many decades to justify preconceived notions, denominational agendas, and even personal experiences".<sup>143</sup> Therefore, I see more potential for a contribution to the discussion of Spirit baptism in the area of theological reflection. In fact, most of the theological reflection on Spirit baptism has been motivated by the recognition that the exegetical debate is at a stalemate and we must therefore seek alternative paths to move the discussion forward. By reflecting theologically on the Pentecostal doctrine and experience of Spirit baptism, this thesis will offer an alternative framework for explicating Pentecostal Spirit baptism and understanding its potential value and importance. Before this can happen, however, it is first necessary to briefly explore and critique other recent efforts at theological reflection.

### 1.3.3 Theological Literature:

As was mentioned in the introduction, Spirit baptism seems to have fallen out of favor with Pentecostal theologians and pastors in the last couple of decades. As a precursor to understanding recent theological treatments of Spirit baptism, it may be helpful to understand the reasons for this trend and the way in which it has worked out in Pentecostal theology.

Macchia identifies several important reasons for this theological shift away from Spirit baptism.<sup>144</sup> Firstly, the traditional Pentecostal separation of Spirit baptism from the moment of conversion is hard to justify from Scripture and may seem elitist to those outside Pentecostalism. Thus there has been a reluctance to promote what may be seen as a divisive or exclusivist doctrine. Secondly, the diversity of global Pentecostalism means that it is difficult, or even impossible, to formulate a statement of belief that incorporates the diversity of global viewpoints on Spirit baptism. This diversity has led scholars elsewhere in their search for a unifying doctrinal theme or a "common thread" that holds the

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<sup>143</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*, 187.

<sup>144</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 26-28.

various expressions of Pentecostalism together. This search has usually ended with eschatology, rather than Spirit baptism, being promoted as the doctrinal center of Pentecostalism. Finally, given the challenge of identifying a single doctrine that distinguishes global Pentecostalism from other denominations, it has also become popular to look for the uniqueness of Pentecostalism in a worldview or epistemological approach rather than a single doctrinal distinctive.

This trend away from Spirit baptism towards other theological themes is more or less evident in some recent theological treatises on Pentecostalism. D. William Faupel, for example, believes the core of Pentecostalism to be eschatological, in particular a “millenarian belief system”.<sup>145</sup> The distinctiveness of Pentecostalism is not pneumatological, therefore, but eschatological. Land agrees, suggesting that to “locate the theological center of Pentecostalism in Spirit baptism” is to “miss the point altogether”.<sup>146</sup> He argues for an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality as “apocalyptic vision” or an affective passion for the Kingdom of God.<sup>147</sup> In his schema the Spirit is primarily the agent of the Kingdom of God, and the passion for this Kingdom functions as the “unifying center of the movement”.<sup>148</sup> Alternatively, Donald W. Dayton structures his theological analysis of Pentecostalism around four themes which he argues are universally present within the movement: salvation, healing, Spirit baptism, and the second coming of Christ.<sup>149</sup> Thus while Dayton includes Spirit baptism as a key theme, he places it amongst other themes which are in his mind equally as significant. Finally, Warrington recognizes “the central Pentecostal expectation of a radical experience of the Spirit” and suggests that this theology of encounter or experience is the core of Pentecostalism.<sup>150</sup> The fact that he does not call this radical experience Spirit baptism is both deliberate and telling. Elsewhere, he acknowledges the distinctive nature of the Pentecostal doctrine relating to Spirit baptism, but argues that the varying interpretations of Spirit baptism within Pentecostalism make it less than useful as an identifying or unifying theme.<sup>151</sup>

On a pastoral or ecclesiological level, the reasons for a move away from Spirit baptism may be somewhat different. One could speculate that the institutionalization of Pentecostalism, and the resulting emphasis on order over freedom, may have contributed to the decline in emphasis on Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts. This topic will receive more attention later, but Poloma confirms that “the fear of falling into the abyss of ‘carnal’ unregulated religious experience has commonly caused

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<sup>145</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 18.

<sup>146</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 62-63.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>149</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 21-22.

<sup>150</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 20.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

established Pentecostalism to quench charisma as it sought to protect its emergent structure".<sup>152</sup> Other contributing factors could include a closer association with evangelicals including their hermeneutical and theological systems,<sup>153</sup> or a general lack of clarity and confidence in the doctrine of Spirit baptism after years of attack and debate. Whatever the reasons, there can be little doubt that many Pentecostal theologians have become pessimistic about the potential of Spirit baptism to capture the essence of Pentecostalism.

In truth, one can well understand their frustration. For decades the debate around Spirit baptism was almost exclusively preoccupied with the issues of subsequence and initial evidence, so that Spirit baptism came to be understood in relation to these issues alone. Furthermore, for many of these scholars the Pentecostal construct of Spirit baptism is simply too distinctive, too divisive, or too difficult to provide a focal point for Pentecostal expression within the context of ecumenical discussion. Yet, as Macchia recognizes, without something distinctive Pentecostals will contribute precious little to ecumenical dialogue.<sup>154</sup> Or, to push the point even further, without something distinctive there may not even be a rationale for the existence of the Pentecostal denomination. Therefore, while all of the aforementioned studies are enormously helpful and rightly emphasize that Spirit baptism does not represent the totality of Pentecostal spirituality, we must be careful not to throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. Whether or not Spirit baptism is *the* central Pentecostal distinctive is not really the key question - even if it is only *a* Pentecostal distinctive it is still worthy of our attention. Unfortunately, for some, the displacement of Spirit baptism as the central distinctive also means its relegation to theological obscurity. Perhaps, in their anxiety to demonstrate that Pentecostalism is more than just Spirit baptism, some scholars have swung the pendulum too far in the other direction. Fortunately, though, this negativity about the significance of Spirit baptism is not universal. *Baptized in the Spirit*, for example, by Frank D. Macchia, is a welcome and timely reminder that this does not have to be the case. In his own words, he has "come to wonder if the relative neglect of the doctrine of Spirit baptism among Pentecostal theologians might not need to be reconsidered".<sup>155</sup> Wholehearted agreement with Macchia on this point has provided the impetus for the present work.

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<sup>152</sup> Poloma, "Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God," 3.

<sup>153</sup> Warrington, "The Challenge of the Spirit Facing Pentecostal and Charismatic Believers," 4.

<sup>154</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 25.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.



### **Review of Theological Literature:**

By moving beyond the impasse of the hermeneutical debate and reflecting theologically on Spirit baptism, recent contributions from Pentecostal theologians, particularly Simon Chan and Frank D. Macchia, have moved the discussion in a new direction. Simon Chan has provided meaningful insight into the place of Spirit baptism (and glossolalia) in Pentecostal tradition, and also attempted to locate the Pentecostal tradition within the broader Christian spiritual tradition. Frank D. Macchia has developed an ecumenical doctrine of Spirit baptism by broadening the Spirit baptism metaphor to include eschatological, soteriological and ecclesiological categories. Other works by Amos Yong, Shane Clifton and Joel Shuman, among others, have also been extremely valuable as catalysts to stimulate thinking on Spirit baptism. Each will now be examined in turn.

### **Simon Chan:**

Firstly, Simon Chan acknowledges that the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit is far richer in Pentecostal experience than in Pentecostal explanation.<sup>156</sup> This poses challenges for explaining and communicating, both now and to future generations, the Pentecostal perspective on Spirit baptism. Nevertheless, a Pentecostal spiritual theology “must not shrink from thinking through the Pentecostal’s basic belief and experience with exactitude and thoroughness”.<sup>157</sup> As Ling notes, there is the need for the Pentecostal community to “integrate the conceptual and the experiential dimensions” of their faith.<sup>158</sup> Chan acknowledges the importance of Pentecostal experience in that Pentecostal Christians will not accept an idea that does not identify with their experience, even if they are unable to explain their reasons theologically.<sup>159</sup> In his own words, “what has happened is that Pentecostals intuitively recognized the uniqueness of their experience of the Spirit but lacked the conceptual tools to express it in a precise manner”.<sup>160</sup> Despite this, Chan urges that “we must not be satisfied with just having an experience of the Spirit without an undergirding theology ... without a theology, experience cannot be sustained for long”.<sup>161</sup> Therefore, concerning Spirit baptism and glossolalia, “the Pentecostal doctrine can and must be reformulated, but any attempt to do so must maintain the integrity of Pentecostal experience”.<sup>162</sup> This recognition of the value and importance of

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<sup>156</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 10.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>158</sup> Tan May Ling, "A Response to Frank Macchia's "Groans Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence", " *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1, no. 2 (1998): 2.

<sup>159</sup> Simon Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia," in *Pentecostalism in Context*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 81.

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

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

Pentecostal experience is a necessary precursor if we wish to adequately explicate both the experience and the doctrine of Spirit baptism.

Based on George A. Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic theory of doctrine,<sup>163</sup> Chan describes the doctrine of Spirit baptism and glossolalia as the Pentecostal community's attempt to make sense of their experience.<sup>164</sup> While the majority of Pentecostals can identify with the experience, the doctrine makes good sense. When, on the other hand, we attempt to teach the doctrine prior to the experience, a poor or narrow explanation of the doctrine can result in a poor or narrow (or non-existent) experience. Furthermore, in the face of questioning, the strength of the doctrine becomes the focus rather than the vitality of the experience.

The challenge is this: "If Pentecostals are to maintain their vitality as a movement and hope for their children to catch the same Pentecostal fire, they must think of how best they could pass on their faith more or less in the way that they themselves have experienced it, and yet in a way that takes account of the new context of a new generation of the faithful".<sup>165</sup> This is certainly an exigent challenge, and one that is particularly relevant to the doctrine and experience of Spirit baptism. Pentecostals have not reflected deeply on their experience but have felt the need to perpetuate their experience and defend it against negative evaluations.<sup>166</sup> One may well ask how we can conceptualize an experience without losing its inner dynamism for the community. The difficulty is that we seem hardly able to think about truth without turning it into an "object" of our thought and so finding ourselves distanced from it.<sup>167</sup> The recognition of this tension, between the richness of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and the challenges associated with conceptualizing this experience in doctrinal form, essentially provides a rationale for this thesis.

Indeed, there is certainly more work to be done towards the development of a doctrinal statement on Spirit baptism that captures the elements of the experience which are truly significant to Pentecostals. Most scholars would now agree that this must include more than an apologetic for subsequence, initial evidence, or empowerment for ministry. As an experience, Chan explains that Pentecostals view Spirit baptism as "the revelation of the Triune God, a theophany of the God of history and the eschaton".<sup>168</sup> Yet something of this broad view is lost when Spirit baptism is narrowly defined as just the enduing of power for life and service. As Hocken observes, based on his reading of

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<sup>163</sup> George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 18-27.

<sup>164</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 10.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

early Pentecostal literature, the testimonies of baptism in the Spirit contained “much more than the emerging Pentecostal doctrine affirmed”.<sup>169</sup> Chan suggests, therefore, that Spirit baptism and glossolalia need to be enlarged if they are to remain an important element of Pentecostalism today. He argues that an “integrated pneumatology”, incorporating both charismatic and soteriological dimensions, presents Spirit baptism as first and foremost an experience of revelation and personal intimacy rather than just empowerment for service.<sup>170</sup> As we will see shortly, this quest to recapture the soteriological dimension of Spirit baptism and integrate this with the charismatic dimension is certainly not unique to Chan.

Secondly, Chan looks specifically at the idea of glossolalia as the “initial evidence” of Spirit baptism. From the outset he notes the challenges, from the larger Christian tradition, associated with supporting glossolalia as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism.<sup>171</sup> Whereas classical Pentecostals tend to maintain its place of importance, theologically it has become something of an embarrassment. Without strong theological underpinning a practice can fall into disuse, and there is already evidence of this in the contemporary Pentecostal church. Yet, far from dismissing the doctrine, Chan attempts to show that “glossolalia which Pentecostals identify as the initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit is a rich theological symbol precisely because it is linked to a reality (Spirit-baptism) which is far bigger than the classical Pentecostal conceptualization of it”.<sup>172</sup> Referring to the idea of initial evidence, Chan argues that perceived problems with the relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism can be traced to the way in which the “nature and purpose of Spirit baptism have been traditionally defined”.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, rather than modifying the initial evidence doctrine to reinforce the relationship between Spirit baptism and glossolalia, what is needed is to enlarge our understanding of the experience of Spirit baptism. Thus, “if there is to be any reinterpretation of Pentecostal theology, it should begin with the issue of the nature and purpose of Spirit baptism”.<sup>174</sup>

Chan suggests that an understanding of Spirit baptism as “an invasive or irruptive manifestation of the Spirit in which one’s relationship to Jesus Christ is radically and significantly altered” provides a foundation from which one could argue that glossolalia is the “most natural and spontaneous response”.<sup>175</sup> Thus glossolalia can function as an important symbol of a spiritual reality rather than just an arbitrary, and therefore extraneous, sign. Rather than using the word “proof” in relation to

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<sup>169</sup> Peter D. Hocken, “A Charismatic View on the Distinctives of Pentecostalism,” in *Pentecostalism in Context*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 100.

<sup>170</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 41.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>173</sup> ———, “The Language Game of Glossolalia,” 93.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> ———, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 58.

glossolalia, Chan prefers the word “concomitant”: when one experiences the coming of the Spirit in such a manner, the concomitant result is glossolalia. He also recognizes the need to understand the place of Spirit baptism and glossolalia within the spiritual lifestyle of Pentecostals, or as part of a spiritual development in which one experiences growing intimacy with God and holiness of life.<sup>176</sup> A failure to understand Spirit baptism in relation to sanctification has resulted in power being divorced from holiness.

Whilst recognizing the contributions of biblical scholars, like Robert P. Menzies, to the debate, Chan also notes that their inability to conclusively establish the relationship between glossolalia and Spirit baptism reveals the limits of a strictly biblical theological approach to establishing doctrine.<sup>177</sup> This is due once again to the contextual and cultural aspects of doctrine:

*No matter how finely biblical scholars weave their exegetical nets they will not be able to catch the “truth” as long as there is failure to recognize that what passes as objective or scientific interpretation is actually a pattern of viewing the texts from the perspective of a particular interpretive community.*<sup>178</sup>

Within the Pentecostal “cultural-linguistic” community Pentecostals are able to make sense of the idea that glossolalia fits their experience of Spirit baptism.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, their own community’s interpretation of Scripture has been able to support this view. But it is this community-based interpretation and expression that poses problems when critiqued by someone outside of the community. As Chan explains again, “the failure to recognize the critical role of the community in the interpretive process is one main reason why biblical scholars on both sides of the debate over tongues and the doctrine of subsequence are not anywhere nearer to resolving the issues”.<sup>180</sup> This observation could also be added to the critique of exegetical literature above.

In particular, Chan should be commended for his willingness to critically evaluate traditional Pentecostal ideas, and for his ability to look beyond the traditional categories and appreciate the broader possibilities. He notes that ideas that are not well reflected upon tend to play on our unconscious fear of losing them.<sup>181</sup> This can certainly be said of Spirit baptism. Amongst classical Pentecostals there sometimes exists an unwavering conviction that Spirit baptism is important to Pentecostalism, but no one can clearly say why. On the other hand, “when values are embodied in a

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 17.

clearly defined and coherently developed system of thought, we can become more self-critical".<sup>182</sup> This is the task of the theologian in relation to Spirit baptism and glossolalia, and there is certainly more work to do along these lines.

**Amos Yong:**

Similarly to Chan, Amos Yong argues for a reinterpretation of Spirit baptism as part of his pneumatological soteriology. He suggests that, although Spirit baptism includes the classical Pentecostal emphasis on empowerment for witness and the idea of initiation into the body of Christ, it should not be limited to merely these categories. Rather, his metaphor of Spirit baptism attempts to "capture the dynamic and full experience of Christian salvation not only in terms of dying with Christ but also in terms of being raised with him to do the things that he did".<sup>183</sup> For Yong, salvation is a "holistic and multidimensional process of the transformation of individuals" which is a dynamic process including justification (I was saved), sanctification (I am being saved) and glorification (I will be saved).<sup>184</sup> Each stage of this process, Yong argues, is a moment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>185</sup> In this way Spirit baptism describes a broad concept of Christian salvation in which Jesus, who was anointed by the Spirit to do the works He did, pours out the same Spirit upon all flesh so that his followers may accomplish even greater works than he did. This, according to Yong, is a Lukan pneumatological soteriology.<sup>186</sup> Furthermore, if Spirit baptism is a New Testament metaphor for the full salvific work of God, then "there is no necessary antagonism between Spirit baptism understood as Christian initiation, on the one hand, and Spirit baptism understood as a later empowering of the Spirit, on the other".<sup>187</sup> For Yong, Spirit baptism can represent all of the above and more.

Once again, we can observe the trend towards the integration of soteriology and a charismatic pneumatology. Interestingly, because this has occurred within the context of Yong's discussion of salvation rather than Spirit baptism, he also argues for salvation to be understood "in dynamic and eschatological terms".<sup>188</sup> He relates Spirit baptism to the entirety of Christian salvation viewed as a process rather than a punctiliar event. Thus "Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a metaphor for Christian salvation calls attention to the process of humans experiencing the saving graces of God along with the presence of crisis moments when such grace is palpably felt as radically transformative".<sup>189</sup> While this concept of Spirit baptism may be helpful ecumenically as a more palatable alternative to the

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh*, 101.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 105.

classical Pentecostal construct, it does, by necessity, require a view of salvation that is process-oriented rather than a view of salvation as a discrete experience. Although not everyone will be comfortable with this, Yong has, at the very least, provided us with an option for moving beyond the persistently troublesome question of subsequence.

**Peter D. Hocken:**

Peter D. Hocken recognizes that early Pentecostalism was categorized by renewed eschatological urgency, and suggests that Spirit baptism should be understood within this context.<sup>190</sup> In other words, Spirit baptism was seen as the pouring out of the Holy Spirit so that the world could be reached before the Lord's return. Thus Spirit baptism and eschatology were inseparably linked. Hocken's thesis is that the labelling of the Pentecostal experience as Spirit baptism should be viewed as a prophetic rather than an exegetical insight.<sup>191</sup> Thus, "it is an interpretation of contemporary experience in the light of the Scriptures rather than exegesis of the Scriptures illuminated by present circumstances".<sup>192</sup> The meaning and significance of Spirit baptism today is that it represents a statement about what the Spirit is doing in the present, experienced personally.

In a separate article, Hocken also describes the disparity between Pentecostal experience and Pentecostal doctrine concerning baptism in the Spirit:

*There was a narrowing process from Pentecostal experience (what the Pentecostals experienced when they were baptized in the Spirit) to Pentecostal witness (how they testified to this experience) to Pentecostal doctrine (how it became schematized in teaching) to Pentecostal statement of faith (in which teaching was made official by particular Pentecostal denominations).<sup>193</sup>*

In contrast to the purpose of Spirit baptism, Hocken explains that the meaning of Spirit baptism "lies in the believer's changed relationship to the persons of the Trinity, and in particular to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the Spirit is manifest and through whom we have access to the Father".<sup>194</sup> It is "the total immersion of the believer by the agency of the Spirit into the being and mystery of Christ to the glory of the Father".<sup>195</sup> He then supports this assertion through testimonies from early Pentecostal literature. Hocken also notes the revelatory significance of Spirit baptism and suggests that power in the Spirit, highlighted by Pentecostals, is a consequence of this revelation rather than the direct result

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<sup>190</sup> Hocken, "Baptized in Spirit - an Eschatological Concept," 265.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> — — —, "The Meaning and Purpose of "Baptism in the Spirit", " *Pneuma* 7, no. 2 (1985): 125.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 131.

of Spirit baptism.<sup>196</sup> Hocken's focus on the meaning rather than the purpose of Spirit baptism, and his attempt to explain this meaning in Trinitarian terms, anticipates the direction this thesis will take in later chapters.

**Frank D. Macchia:**

Frank D. Macchia's book, *Baptized in the Spirit*, represents possibly the most comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of Spirit baptism from a Pentecostal perspective. Against current theological trends, Macchia sees great potential in the doctrine of Spirit baptism and urges a return to this doctrine as the Pentecostal distinctive. One of his main concerns is to develop an ecumenical pneumatology, and he sees Spirit baptism as the Pentecostal distinctive most able to connect to other traditions.<sup>197</sup> Even though different denominations may interpret Spirit baptism differently based on their ecclesiological and soteriological assumptions, all Christian communities accept the category. As part of this ecumenical thrust, Macchia attempts to rework the doctrine of Spirit baptism "in a way that cherishes our unique accents but expands them in response to the broader contours of the biblical witness and the diversity of voices at the ecumenical table".<sup>198</sup> He uses the term "ecumenically sensitive" to describe the understanding of Spirit baptism that Pentecostals should begin to develop.<sup>199</sup> In order for this to occur, though, Macchia believes that we need to expand the boundaries of the discussion and I agree. Even though this thesis expands in a different direction to Macchia's own study, the basic premise is the same.

To summarize his lengthy argument, Macchia distinguishes between Spirit baptism as theologically and experientially defined, then argues that we need a broader framework within which to integrate these dimensions. This integrating framework, he suggests, is eschatology understood within the context of the Kingdom of God as a reign of divine love. He appreciates Spirit baptism as a metaphor that can unite sanctification, charismatic empowerment, and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God in power in the life of the church and throughout creation.<sup>200</sup>

*In the broader context of the New Testament, Spirit baptism is a fluid metaphor surrounded by ambiguous imagery that suggests broader boundaries pneumatologically than Spirit empowerment.*<sup>201</sup>

This link between Spirit baptism and the Kingdom of God leads to an eschatological understanding of Spirit baptism that goes beyond individual spirituality and the life of the church. In other words, Spirit

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>197</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 22.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 14.

baptism, above and beyond empowerment, sanctifies, renews and empowers the people of God and will continue to do so until Spirit baptism eschatologically transforms the whole of creation into the dwelling place of God.

This expansive view of Spirit baptism also allows him to “question the assumption of many Pentecostals that Spirit baptism is merely an experience of power or renewal among individual Christians”.<sup>202</sup> Based on the premise that Spirit baptism gave rise to the church, he moves towards a “Spirit-baptized ecclesiology” by discussing the potential of Spirit baptism for community and anthropology, and the marks of a Spirit-baptized church. Thus “the church is not incidental to Spirit baptism but is rather its integral outcome”,<sup>203</sup> and the church is therefore seen as “a Spirit-baptized and gifted fellowship, a sign of grace in the midst of the gracelessness that is in the world”.<sup>204</sup> Finally, he considers the Spirit-baptized life as participation in the divine love mediated through the Spirit, which leads to faith in Christ and eschatological hope for the future.

Without doubt, Macchia has made an exceptional contribution to the theological study of Spirit baptism, particularly as an ecumenical rather than a purely Pentecostal category. In particular, his discussion of the Pentecost-Kingdom connection establishes Spirit baptism as an eschatological and soteriological reality rather than just an event of charismatic empowerment. Also, because of its breadth and depth, his explanation of Spirit baptism has the potential to significantly enrich the Pentecostal understanding of their experience. Several notable theologians, including Jürgen Moltmann and Clark H. Pinnock, who have reviewed Macchia’s book, provide feedback that is resoundingly positive. For example, Pinnock sees in Macchia’s consideration of Spirit baptism “a maturation of Pentecostal thinking” with both theological and ecumenical potential.<sup>205</sup> Moltmann calls Macchia’s book convincing because “starting from the center of Pentecostalism’s special focus on Spirit baptism, he proceeds to walk forward into the universal horizons this center is opening, discovering signs and wonders”.<sup>206</sup> Finally, Henry H. Knight affirms Macchia’s work for “the creativity, the genuineness of its Pentecostalism, its ecumenicity, and above all the emphasis on love”.<sup>207</sup> This being said, several questions require further consideration.

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>204</sup> Clark H. Pinnock, "Review of Frank D. Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008): 4.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>206</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, "On the Abundance of the Holy Spirit: Friendly Remarks for *Baptized in the Spirit* by Frank D. Macchia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008): 10.

<sup>207</sup> Henry H. Knight, "Reflections on Frank Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008): 7.



Firstly, Macchia has stated a commitment throughout his work to cherish the unique Pentecostal accents of Spirit baptism. Yet one may question how successful he has been in this endeavor. In his attempt to move the discussion forward through a theological expansion of the Spirit baptism metaphor, does he stretch the metaphor too far? It seems at some points that any experience or work of the Spirit is included under the rubric of Spirit baptism so that it becomes, for Macchia, a metaphor to describe any indwelling of the Spirit.<sup>208</sup> To suggest that Ephesians 4:7-10, for example, is a reference to Spirit baptism seems to me to be something of a theological and exegetical leap. Furthermore, while Spirit baptism as a metaphor for the entirety of the Spirit's work in the Christian life, from salvation to eschatological fulfillment, may or may not be biblically justifiable, the challenge is to reconcile this construct with the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. How can we reconcile Macchia's expanded, inclusive, and in some ways nebulous, concept of Spirit baptism with the usual Pentecostal crisis experience? It is at this point that it becomes difficult to see how the unique Pentecostal accents have been preserved. By expanding the boundaries of Spirit baptism, does Macchia end up with a metaphor that is too far removed from traditional or contemporary Pentecostal understandings?

This concern is further borne out by the lack of a clear distinction between the reception of the Spirit at conversion and the experience of Spirit baptism. Although Macchia wishes to integrate the themes of sanctification and empowerment, if he uses Spirit baptism to refer to the reception of the Spirit at conversion it is difficult to see how his doctrine remains Pentecostal at all. For example, he states that "Spirit baptism brings the reign of the Father, the reign of the crucified and risen Christ, and the reign of divine life to all of creation through the indwelling of the Spirit".<sup>209</sup> But could one not also say precisely the same thing about the indwelling of the Spirit at conversion? Traditionally, both the Pentecostal experience and doctrine of Spirit baptism have almost always stipulated that salvation, logically at least if not temporally, is a prerequisite for Spirit baptism. While I have been critical of a doctrinal preoccupation with subsequence, to define Spirit baptism as broadly as Macchia does makes one wonder how useful this definition will be to a Pentecostal Christian trying to make sense of their experience.

Ultimately, though, these questions should not detract from what is an outstanding source of theological reflection on Spirit baptism. Moreover, Macchia's work on this topic is not limited to this one book. Some of his earlier articles reflect theologically on the significance of glossolalia as a

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<sup>208</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 91.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

sacramental sign of God's presence here and now.<sup>210</sup> By understanding sacraments as "contexts for a dynamic and personal divine/human encounter", it is easy to see how tongues and Spirit baptism may fall into this category.<sup>211</sup> He explains that "speaking in tongues is integral to the experience of Spirit baptism for Pentecostals and is the audible medium for realizing the presence of God to empower and heal".<sup>212</sup> Regarding the Pentecostal association between tongues and Spirit baptism, Macchia observes that this conclusion arises from a process that is "not so much a rationalistic inductive method of biblical interpretation as it is a creative interaction with the book of Acts in the context of Pentecostal worship".<sup>213</sup> In contrast to the approach used by non-Pentecostal scholars like James Dunn, Macchia argues that the process of reading and interacting with biblical narrative is more complex and creative than merely investigating the original intention of the author. Tongues as initial evidence of Spirit baptism function, among Pentecostals, as a visible/audible sign that makes God's "free, eschatological presence here and now to empower, liberate, and heal".<sup>214</sup>

#### **Shane Clifton:**

Shane Clifton first engages with Spirit baptism indirectly through his study of Pentecostal theological method,<sup>215</sup> but then addresses the topic directly in a later article.<sup>216</sup> His initial insights into the hermeneutical and methodological differences between Pentecostals and evangelicals provide a useful backdrop for understanding the differences on the particular issue of Spirit baptism. From the outset, Clifton notes the "experiential, oral and narrative structure of Pentecostal spirituality, which can be contrasted with Protestant rationalism".<sup>217</sup> This has theological and hermeneutical implications. Pentecostals do not approach the biblical text with the assumption that a single objective truth exists that can be discovered by the careful application of historical-critical exegesis. Rather, the Pentecostal perspective sees "Scripture as a narrative that facilitates, mediates, and points to the experience of, and relationship with God".<sup>218</sup> From very early on in their history this put Pentecostals at odds with fundamentalists, who taught that "every single word of the Bible was verbally inspired and to differ with them on this novel view of scripture was to read oneself out of Christianity altogether".<sup>219</sup> Jacobsen describes the early Pentecostal approach to theology thus:

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<sup>210</sup> ———, "Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience," *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993).

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>215</sup> Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Theological Method: A Colourful and Creative Approach" (Sydney College of Divinity, 2001).

<sup>216</sup> ———, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development."

<sup>217</sup> ———, "Pentecostal Theological Method", 25.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>219</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 75-76.

*So when they took up the task of thinking in the Spirit – of rereading the Bible in the light of their own experience of God and the spiritual needs of the world – they wrote down exactly what they thought with whatever words seemed to work the best. The one thing that mattered was that the whole thing rang true to their own lived experience of faith and to the lived faith of others. This was not abstract speculation; it was theological reflection grounded in real life.*<sup>220</sup>

Jacobsen explains elsewhere that theology and experience went “hand in hand” within early Pentecostalism, so that “it was experience guided by theological truth that really mattered”.<sup>221</sup> Although this inevitably leads to accusations of extreme subjectivity, as Clifton notes, Pentecostals see the grounding of theology in real life experience as the only way to achieve an “authentic” theology. Furthermore, the church community in dialogue with the biblical narrative provides an objective (insofar as this is possible) perspective on the theological interpretation of experience.<sup>222</sup>

As part of his analysis of Pentecostal theological method, Clifton employs Avery Dulles as a means to understand Pentecostal approaches to revelation. Dulles classifies the various approaches to revelation under the designations of doctrine, history, inner experience, dialectic presence, and new awareness.<sup>223</sup> Whereas many evangelical theologians would identify most closely with revelation as doctrine, the final three models of revelation align, according to Clifton, more readily with Pentecostal identity. If revelation as inner experience “consists in an immediate experience of God who inwardly communicates with each believer”,<sup>224</sup> Spirit baptism may well be, and indeed has often been, understood in these terms. As an example of dialectic presence, Spirit baptism may be seen as an immanent revelation of a God who is transcendent.<sup>225</sup> Finally, if revelation comes primarily through a “new awareness”, it is a common feature of Pentecostal testimony to describe Spirit baptism as a thoroughly life-changing and perspective-altering experience.

It is not difficult to observe the differences between the Pentecostal approach to epistemology and revelation mentioned above and the propositionalist epistemologies of many evangelicals. The ongoing dialectical tension between objectivity and subjectivity, or propositional truth and personal experience, is a challenge that Pentecostals need to confront. As Clifton observes:

*Pentecostals would seek to hold in tension these seemingly paradoxically [sic] perspectives of objective and subjective revelation. Thus, while the experience and impact of baptism in the*

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<sup>220</sup> Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003), xi.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>222</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Theological Method", 52.

<sup>223</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 27-28.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>225</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Theological Method", 36.

*Spirit is necessarily personal, the community context of this experience and the role of Scripture in defining this experience help to externalise and objectify (as far as is possible and desirable) the content of this revelatory new awareness, and thereby ensure that the centrality of Christ and the revelation of the triune God through the Scriptures is maintained.*<sup>226</sup>

It is the Pentecostal appeal to experience that will not go away despite the most logical and carefully defended appeals to biblical propositions.

Clifton's emphases on methodology and epistemology carry through into his later article where he attempts to bypass the debate surrounding the specific doctrine of Spirit baptism and consider the nature of doctrine itself. From a methodological viewpoint, he attempts to clarify "the meaning and function of baptism in the Spirit for Pentecostals" in order to determine whether or not the doctrine needs to be reformulated.<sup>227</sup> He notes that "much of the debate surrounds the interpretation of biblical texts; the comparison between the theology of Paul and Luke; the use of biblical narrative for the formation of doctrine, and; the role of communal experiences of the Spirit in the task of biblical hermeneutics".<sup>228</sup> The problem with this is that, in all of these areas, doctrine is usually understood in a propositionalist manner. But this model of doctrine has been largely rejected within contemporary theology for its hermeneutical naivety and its questionable theory of objective knowledge.<sup>229</sup> As an alternative, he suggests that, in line with Lindbeck's culturally-linguistic theory of doctrine, the place to start when contemplating baptism in the Spirit is by discussing the function of the doctrine within the Pentecostal community.<sup>230</sup>

Clifton explains that the doctrine of Spirit baptism arose "in response to concrete historical situations and experiences, judged by Pentecostals to be revelatory events of the manifest presence of God contiguous with the biblical narrative".<sup>231</sup> Then, explained through Lonergan's functions of meaning,<sup>232</sup> Spirit baptism rose to prominence within Pentecostal communities because of its function in constituting Pentecostal community (constitutive), framing the Pentecostal experience in a structured and unstructured manner (effective), encapsulating Pentecostal identity and worldview (cognitive), and communicating globally the Pentecostal experience (communicative).<sup>233</sup> Thus Spirit baptism functioned as a meaningful experience in Pentecostal communities.

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>227</sup> ———, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 6.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>232</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 76-81.

<sup>233</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 14.

Clifton does raise an interesting point about the need for doctrinal development in contexts where traditions have become inauthentic.<sup>234</sup> Although the precise meaning of “inauthentic” in this context requires clarification, the question can still be asked whether or not the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism falls into this category. In relation to traditions and doctrines, changing contexts result in new data, fresh questions, and new insights that may lead, in turn, to the discovery of error. These new developments may necessitate changes in doctrines as their function and meaning in the community of faith changes. The challenge for the Pentecostal community is whether or not they have properly understood and processed these changes pertaining to the doctrine of Spirit baptism:

*If the experience of the Spirit for Pentecostals is eschatological sign and missiological empowerment, liberative challenge to the status quo, and experientially inclusive theology, then the question might well be asked, “where is the experience of the Spirit in authoritarian and institutionalized Pentecostal churches in Australia today?”<sup>235</sup>*

Because so much of the early Pentecostal worldview has undergone development and revision in the previous century, Clifton proposes that the time may also be ripe to rethink the doctrine of Spirit baptism.<sup>236</sup> The challenges in any such revisioning process are both hermeneutical and theological. There are certainly difficulties in communicating the doctrine of Spirit baptism in contemporary contexts<sup>237</sup> and Pentecostals desperately need a doctrinal statement that encapsulates the fullness of the Pentecostal experience. With this in mind, Clifton does suggest a rewording of the doctrine of Spirit baptism that we will return to at a later stage.

Clifton concludes his paper with some comments leading towards the proposed rewording of the doctrine of Spirit baptism that we have just mentioned. In seeking to avoid elitism and encourage ecumenical consideration of Spirit baptism, Clifton suggests that “all the doctrine is saying is that there is another dimension of the Spirit available, labelled by Pentecostals as baptism in the Spirit”.<sup>238</sup> One could argue that the suggestion that another “dimension” of the Spirit has been embraced by Pentecostals is still elitist in language at least. Yet this accusation of elitism must be balanced by the question of distinctiveness, in that without something distinct there is no rationale for distinct existence. In one sense all denominations believe that they have something distinct, and this distinctiveness could easily be misconstrued as elitism. In reality, however, the distinctives of the

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>235</sup> ———, “Pentecostal Theological Method”, 30.

<sup>236</sup> ———, “The Spirit and Doctrinal Development,” 19.

<sup>237</sup> Chan (Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 10) explains that when the doctrine of Spirit baptism is received before the experience but is communicated poorly, the resulting experience of Spirit baptism will almost certainly be constricted and narrow. This, he argues, is happening in Pentecostal churches today.

<sup>238</sup> Clifton, “The Spirit and Doctrinal Development,” 17.

various denominations often constitute their identity and are not usually intended as elite claims. While there is still more work to be done in order to explain Spirit baptism in ecumenically sensitive terms, Clifton's analysis helpfully recognizes the significance of the Pentecostal *experience* of Spirit baptism rather than just its doctrinal formulation. Indeed, it must be remembered that the experience preceded the doctrine, meaning any attempt to criticize the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism without first understanding the experience is somewhat misguided.

**Joel Shuman:**

Along similar lines to Clifton, Joel Shuman has also recognized that an epistemological question must be answered before the discussion around Spirit baptism can move forward. In his opinion, many of the debates around Spirit baptism "are destined to remain largely intractable" because of the participants' underlying assumptions about doctrine itself.<sup>239</sup> Furthermore, this intractability is not without consequences as "classical Pentecostalism has experienced a fundamental reduction in the emphasis on its distinctive doctrine in recent years, resulting in a practical departure from the tradition".<sup>240</sup> Shuman's solution is to define the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and tongues as one of many practices of a unique cultural-linguistic community. Based on this starting point, Spirit baptism and tongues become doctrines that can only be fully understood and properly critiqued by those who are a part of the Pentecostal cultural-linguistic community.<sup>241</sup>

*Interpreted within this framework, the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit" represents both a description of a phenomenon that occurs, or is expected to occur, when the Pentecostal community gathers for worship and a prescription concerning the form and meaning of that liturgical experience. It is a phrase that finds its full intelligibility in the unique and, to some extent, esoteric language of the Pentecostal community. The further pursuit of this constructive formulation requires an investigation of certain presuppositions concerning language, knowledge and theological doctrine.*<sup>242</sup>

Shuman is critical of the attempt to resolve the issue of Spirit baptism based on purely biblical categories, particularly those who would question the validity of the experience:

*Neither, however, can one deny that the experience of another is not compatible with objective truth as presented in Scripture. Such a view of Scripture is based both upon an inadequate*

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<sup>239</sup> Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account," 208.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-213.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

*epistemology and an understanding of Scripture that fails to take its narrative structure and content seriously as being capable of establishing doctrine.*<sup>243</sup>

Finally, based on this cultural-linguistic understanding of Spirit baptism, Shuman urges Pentecostal Christians to maintain their emphasis on the experience:

*Pentecostals, then, should not be concerned to argue for the validity of their doctrines and practices from certain allegedly "universal" principles; neither, however, should they withdraw from debate or de-emphasize the doctrine within their communities. To the extent that the first century witness never understood itself as a hypothesis needing to verify itself from someone else's standards, but simply proclaimed what God had done, so should contemporary Pentecostals continue in the peculiarity of their own tradition.*<sup>244</sup>

While Shuman has rightly recognized the existence of preliminary epistemological and methodological questions, whether or not the cultural-linguistic method is the best approach for understanding Spirit baptism is open to debate. The question of methodology will be taken up in the next chapter.

#### 1.4 The Need for Further Reflection:

If one thing is clear from the preceding analysis of exegetical and theological literature it is that more work is needed, a fact also emphasized by several theologians. Lederle urges the need for serious theological reflection including the clarification of doctrinal teaching and Pentecostal distinctives.<sup>245</sup> Tan May Ling questions whether or not we have clarified our fundamental truth (Spirit baptism) adequately and clearly. If not, then it may be necessary to work towards a reformulation of the doctrine. Ling explains that "precisely because this experience is credible we need to reformulate to make it intelligible".<sup>246</sup>

What is also apparent from our survey of recent theological reflection on Spirit baptism is that the various approaches have generally proceeded in either of two directions methodologically. Firstly, theologians like Macchia have sought to expand the definition of Spirit baptism, usually by attempting to relate Spirit baptism to a broader theological context. Wheelock, for example, calls for a "deepening and broadening" of the concept of Spirit baptism in view of the realization of the Kingdom of God.<sup>247</sup> Similarly, Simon Chan believes that the meaning of Spirit baptism must be enlarged beyond

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>245</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*, loc 99.

<sup>246</sup> Ling, "A Response to Frank Macchia's "Groans Too Deep for Words," 4.

<sup>247</sup> Wheelock, "Spirit Baptism in American Pentecostal Thought", 4.

the enduement of power.<sup>248</sup> If power has to do with the purpose or result rather than the meaning of Spirit baptism, then we have all too often described Spirit baptism in terms of what it is for rather than what it is.<sup>249</sup> Therefore, "some kind of doctrine specifying the experiential distinctiveness of Spirit baptism is needed for the long term survival of Pentecostal charismatic reality".<sup>250</sup> The methodological commonality between the approaches in this first category is that their expansion of Spirit baptism occurs within their existing methodological framework. Usually, this incorporates elements of biblical exegesis and historical theological study integrated and synthesized into conclusions. In this the methodology largely reflects the usual approach in conservative scholarship with both positive and negative results.

Positively, by relating Spirit baptism to other key theological themes like eschatology and soteriology this group of scholars have been able to demonstrate that a broader understanding of Spirit baptism is both necessary for the survival of the doctrine within Pentecostalism and the acceptance of the doctrine ecumenically. The question, however, is whether or not this methodology is ideal for explicating the Pentecostal experience and doctrine of Spirit baptism. In fact, the propositionalist nature of this methodology seems somewhat at odds with a Pentecostal epistemology that is heavily oriented towards experience and narrative. What can result from this approach is a doctrinal statement that is cognitively sound but experientially disconnected. For example, Macchia's expansive and multi-faceted construct of Spirit baptism, while helpful doctrinally and ecumenically, bears little resemblance to the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, at least as it has been traditionally understood and explained. While this is probably his intention to some degree, it is still difficult to reconcile his construct with the Pentecostal experience in a way that treasures and preserves that experience. How, for example, does a Spirit baptized life relate to the unique crisis experience of Spirit baptism?

The second methodological approach, exemplified by Clifton and Shuman, is to engage with the epistemological and methodological issues in an attempt to reframe the methodology employed for the explication of Spirit baptism. Rather than attempting to redefine Spirit baptism through an expansion of existing concepts, the focus becomes to shift the perspective from which the issue is being addressed. Key themes in this approach include the significance of the Pentecostal appeal to experience and the meaning and function of Spirit baptism within the Pentecostal community. Implicit in this approach is the recognition that both doctrines and experiences are inevitably shaped by the

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<sup>248</sup> Simon Chan, "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2, no. 2 (1999): 201.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.



community within which they develop, and cannot be indiscriminately compared with or evaluated against doctrines or experiences arising from different community contexts. As Clifton notes, “our focal point is not just exegetical analysis or comparative doctrinal debates but, rather, an examination of the experiences and texts which gave rise (over time) to the Pentecostal doctrine”.<sup>251</sup> This obviously highlights the contextual and communal character of Spirit baptism as a crucial element of any theological reflection. Importantly, this does not mean that Spirit baptism is simply a subjective product of Pentecostal language and culture with no external reference. Rather, Clifton argues that “the doctrine arose in response to concrete historical situations and experiences, judged by Pentecostals to be revelatory events of the manifest presence of God contiguous with the biblical narrative, and this belies any critique that the doctrine has no real reference”.<sup>252</sup>

Overall, both Shuman’s and Clifton’s articles are suggestive rather than comprehensive so there is certainly room for this second approach to be developed further. The question is not simply whether or not Spirit baptism is a biblically justifiable experience of the Spirit, but also whether Spirit baptism fulfils an important and meaningful function within the Pentecostal community. Modern scholarship has demonstrated that building a doctrine is not merely a case of following a biblical precedent, nor is it simply a case of finding the “correct” doctrine in any given situation.<sup>253</sup> Doctrine is essentially an expression of meaning, and meaning is heavily influenced by context and situation. Therefore, to explicate the meaning of Spirit baptism, we need a methodology that moves beyond simple exegesis and basic doctrinal critique.

Summarily, the overwhelming theme to emerge from the recent theological literature is the need to expand the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism. I submit, though, that this expansion needs to be methodological as well as doctrinal. Purely doctrinal expansion seems to result in a construct of Spirit baptism that, while being ecumenically sensitive, fails to capture the essence of the Pentecostal experience. Thus what is needed is not further doctrinal analysis but rather a methodological turn. The next chapter will discuss the key elements of a Pentecostal philosophy and epistemology, and demonstrate that a methodology appropriate for studying Pentecostal theology should allow for reflection on these key elements. I will also suggest Lonergan’s functions of meaning<sup>254</sup> as a suitable methodology that provides a useful framework for our analysis of Spirit baptism. While Clifton has already applied these functions of meaning to Spirit baptism in a suggestive sense, I believe there is unexplored potential in this approach. Based on this framework the following four chapters will

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<sup>251</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 11.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>253</sup> Chan, "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence," 196.

<sup>254</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 76-81.

explicate the meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism under the headings of each function of meaning (cognitive, effective, constitutive, and communicative). Throughout, we will reflect on the possible implications of this study for the ongoing place of Spirit baptism in Pentecostal doctrine and praxis, and work towards a revision or reformulation of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

What the previous chapter made plain is that the topic of Spirit baptism has received widespread treatment from within and without Pentecostalism. What is equally plain is that the debate over the validity of the Pentecostal experience and doctrine is far from resolved. We are currently confronted by a variety of approaches to research and interpretation, often yielding opposed or contradictory results. This certainly creates some challenges for anyone wishing to move the discussion forward. Firstly, the challenge is to understand the different sides of the debate, their conclusions, and the underlying assumptions that contribute to these conclusions. This may provide some insight into why, after decades of scholarship, we seem no closer to a consensus. Secondly, the challenge is to identify a way forward that does not simply retrace existing paths in an attempt to answer the same tired questions, but rather brings a new perspective to the paths themselves. In light of these challenges, it was suggested in the previous chapter that there is now the need for a methodological turn.

This methodological turn is further necessitated by the fact that, despite the volume of material that has already been written on Spirit baptism, we do not seem to have a detailed theological study of Spirit baptism supported and guided by a carefully explained methodology. While certain authors have touched on possible methodologies and their potential applications to Spirit baptism,<sup>1</sup> these suggestions have not yet been applied in a detailed manner. Furthermore, Pentecostal theologians have rarely dealt with the issue of method, and it is difficult to discern anything resembling a generally accepted Pentecostal theological methodology. What is needed, therefore, is not simply more material on Spirit baptism, but a methodological approach that can make sense of what has already been written and begin to move the debate forward. My hope is that the application of such a methodology in this work will contribute meaningfully to the explication of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

The present chapter has two purposes. Firstly, to define the rules, as it were, for our discussion of the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. It would seem self-evident that a suitable methodology for studying Pentecostal theology should allow for engagement with and reflection on the key elements of Pentecostal spirituality. Therefore, some comment is warranted to identify what precisely those key elements are. To this end, an examination of Pentecostal philosophy should illuminate the basic structure of a Pentecostal worldview, including the implicit assumptions

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account" and Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development."

that drive Pentecostal spirituality and epistemology. Then, given the strongly experiential nature of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, what is meant by the (often tricky) concept of experience in this context needs to be explored. The second part of this chapter will then detail the methodology for our analysis of the meaning and function of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. This methodology will be derived primarily from Bernard Lonergan's work on theological method, in particular his four functions of meaning (cognitive, effective, constitutive, communicative).<sup>2</sup> It will be demonstrated that these functions of meaning provide a framework for the explication of Pentecostal Spirit baptism as a meaningful experience, a framework which will also be used to structure the remainder of the thesis.

## 2.1 Pentecostal Philosophy and Worldview:

There are undoubtedly those, even from within the ranks, who would scoff at the idea that a Pentecostal philosophy even exists. In fact, Pentecostals have tended to eschew philosophy rather than embrace it. This may well be because it is claimed that "much philosophy of religion has reduced religion to propositional thinking, a narrowing of the richness of religious lived experience".<sup>3</sup> For Pentecostals, who so value their religious experience, this is unacceptable. But what this negative attitude towards philosophy fails to recognize is that philosophy, at least as it relates to worldview and epistemology, is unavoidably implicit in all thought and action even if it is not explicitly perceived or understood.

Recently, James K. A. Smith has recognized this and attempted "to explicate the elements of a Pentecostal worldview from implicit assumptions and affirmations that are embedded in Pentecostal practice and confession".<sup>4</sup> This worldview, he argues, is "not a set of doctrines or dogmas", but rather "latent, implicit theological and philosophical intuitions ... embedded within, and enacted by, Pentecostal rituals and practices".<sup>5</sup> He identifies five key elements of the Pentecostal worldview, namely a position of radical openness to God (especially the possibility of God doing something differently or new), an enchanted theology of creation and culture, a nondualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality, an affective, narrative epistemology, and an eschatological orientation to mission and justice.<sup>6</sup> While all of these elements could have some bearing on our discussion of Spirit baptism, there are two that are particularly relevant, namely a

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<sup>2</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 76-81.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 111.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xix.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

position of radical openness to God, and an affective, narrative epistemology. These two elements are especially important as we seek to understand the place and importance of Spirit baptism in Pentecostal spirituality.

Firstly, Smith suggests that the Pentecostal openness to God's moving is the primary condition that predicates the other elements of the Pentecostal worldview. In the face of secular naturalism and modernism, Pentecostals cling to "the plausibility structures of a mythical world" by entertaining "an openness to divine surprise".<sup>7</sup> In this way there is an ongoing expectation for the unexpected and the miraculous in Pentecostal ecclesiology and worship. It is not difficult to see the relevance of this for our discussion of Spirit baptism. Not only is this openness and expectation reflected in many first-hand accounts of Spirit baptism, but this radical openness also allows for the possibility of a "new" move of the Spirit that might resonate with Scripture whilst not being explicitly evident therein. In the same way, this openness means that negative or critical exegetical and rational arguments (against Spirit baptism) do not carry the same weight for Pentecostals as they do for other Christian communities.

This openness to "new" moves of the Spirit is evident from the very beginning of Pentecostalism itself. It has usually been represented that the students in Parham's Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, *first* read the book of Acts, *then* sought the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues.<sup>8</sup> However, many now believe that the order of events was more dynamic than linear. While there was a desire and expectation for a "second blessing" amongst early Pentecostals, arising from their Wesleyan roots, it is less likely that they sought a specific experience based purely on their reading of Scripture, and more likely that they interpreted their "new" experience in light of Scripture. As Bundy states, "professional historians recently have shown, after sustained prayer and fasting, the students first started to speak in tongues and, then, in an effort to figure out what it might mean, started to search the NT for similar occurrences in apostolic times".<sup>9</sup> This dynamic interaction between experience and Scripture would indicate that Pentecostals readily embraced Spirit baptism primarily because they sensed that it was from God, not because of a cognitional process or biblical study leading to a certain conclusion. This is evidence of the radical openness to God that Smith describes.

Secondly, Smith writes that "because of an emphasis on the role of experience, and in contrast to rationalistic evangelical theology ... pentecostal spirituality is rooted in affective, narrative,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>8</sup> D.D. Bundy, "Bibliography and Historiography," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 397.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

epistemic practice”.<sup>10</sup> According to this epistemology, imagination precedes intellectual reflection and story comes before propositions. A narrative, therefore, “makes sense of a life, a series of events, or an experience by a ‘logic’ that is not deductive but affective”.<sup>11</sup> This is essentially how Pentecostals deal with their experience of Spirit baptism which is often an emotive or affective experience and difficult to reduce to a set of propositions. As we have just mentioned, the initial experience of Spirit baptism led to basic biblical reflection, followed at a significantly later date by more sustained exegetical and theological reflection. In these early years, while there may have been disagreements over the conclusions resulting from the post-experiential reflection, the experience itself was not usually called into question. The linkage and production of meaning are not the result of a cognitive inference, therefore, but rather of an affective construal. This appreciation of and emphasis on experience will be the focus of our next section, but first leads naturally into a brief discussion of epistemology.

Interestingly, Smith sees in Pentecostal epistemology some important points of contact with a postmodern worldview. He highlights the similarities between a postmodern appreciation of knowledge gained through experience and the Pentecostal epistemology of narrative and testimony. He even suggests that “Pentecostal practice can function as a sort of countermodernity”.<sup>12</sup>

*Because postmodernism rejects the reductionistic picture of human beings as merely thinking things, it also calls into question the privileging of reason or intellect as queen of the faculties. Instead, postmodernism argues that our orientation to the world is not primarily mediated by intellectual perception, but rather by a more fundamental "passional orientation" - an affective comportment to the world that "construes" the world of experience on the basis of an "understanding" that is precognitive.*<sup>13</sup>

This feature of postmodernism bears obvious similarities to the Pentecostal’s worldview and their affective, narrative epistemology. Henry I. Lederle has similarly argued that Pentecostalism challenged the modernist worldview that dominated the West at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

In many ways, doctrinal divergence between evangelicals and Pentecostals can be traced precisely to this question of epistemology, in particular the epistemological question of objectivity. Whereas

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 43.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>14</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*, 17.

evangelicals have usually been clear on what they mean by objectivity (Scripture), Pentecostals have always struggled to explain how their experiential emphasis can produce objectivity. Thus they have usually been perceived as “primitive” in the sense that they place less value on objectivity and rationalism. Indeed, Lederle demonstrates that early opposition to Pentecostal Spirit baptism was based mainly on an underlying preoccupation with Enlightenment rationalism rather than biblical or theological principles.<sup>15</sup> As Smith highlights, this preoccupation with rationalism is incompatible with a Pentecostal worldview and Pentecostal worship:

*Pentecostal worship constitutes a kind of performative postmodernism, an enacted refusal of rationalism. Implicit in the practices of Pentecostalism are both a philosophical anthropology and an epistemology that resist the slimmed-down reductionism of modern cognitivism.*<sup>16</sup>

In other words, whereas evangelicals preference cognitive rationalism, Pentecostals preference experience and affections. This distinction is also, in part, the distinction between modernism and postmodernism, and the reason why Pentecostalism may be more compatible with postmodernity than evangelicalism. While modernism is reductionistic and based on detailed observation and analysis, postmodernism seeks an experience that is “integrated and holistic”.<sup>17</sup>

There are no doubt those who would see in this Pentecostal epistemology an inherent anti-intellectualism, and there is certainly no shortage of examples of Pentecostal anti-intellectualism. Yet, Smith argues, such anti-intellectualism relates to the populism that characterizes most expressions of Pentecostalism rather than Pentecostal spirituality itself.<sup>18</sup> He sees in the Pentecostal practice of testimony an implicit epistemic assumption which is “not antirational, but antirationalist; it is not a critique or rejection of reason as such but rather a commentary on a particularly reductionistic model of reason and rationality”.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the Pentecostal critique of rationalism is aimed at those who would privilege rational thought and argument over a spirituality of experience and encounter. Indeed, recent efforts in Pentecostal scholarship contradict the notion that Pentecostalism is antirational and bear witness to a commitment on the part of Pentecostals, or at least certain sectors of Pentecostalism, to rational reflection. The point of the Pentecostal worldview is to “affirm the primacy of the heart and affections as the basis for a rational, intellectual engagement with and interpretation of the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., loc 53.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 59.

<sup>17</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

world".<sup>20</sup> Part of the goal of this chapter is to provide a framework for Pentecostals to be able to justify their affective and experiential emphasis.

If we accept these elements (a radical openness to God, and an affective, narrative epistemology) as implicit in the Pentecostal worldview, it is easy to understand the primary place that experience plays in Pentecostal spirituality. Yet this understanding is the beginning of our discussion rather than the end. Despite regular references to Pentecostal experience and some attempt to unpack the meaning of this notion, Smith does not consider in any detail the precise meaning of experience in this context. While this may not have been considered necessary for his broad study of Pentecostal philosophy, because experience is such a central concept in this thesis it requires further explanation here.

## 2.2 Experience:

We have already frequently referred to Pentecostal Spirit baptism as an experience of the Holy Spirit, and also to the epistemological focus on experience common within Pentecostalism. As Chan notes, although Pentecostal Christians do not always agree on what distinguishes them from other denominations, "what comes through over and over again in their discussions and writings is a certain kind of spiritual experience of an intense, direct and overwhelming nature centering in the person of Christ which they schematize as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'".<sup>21</sup> Mark J. Cartledge describes Spirit baptism as a doctrine "emphasising a postconversion crisis experience of being overwhelmed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as a means of empowerment for Christian life and witness".<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in his discussion of the Pentecostal "horizon", Yun identifies "the vitality of experience" as a key element of that horizon,<sup>23</sup> and Russell P. Spittler also confirms that personal experience is attributed significant worth amongst Pentecostals. This personal experience includes "not only religious feeling, and emotions of joy, or sorrow, but Pentecostals consider personal experience the arena of true religion".<sup>24</sup> In short, the testimony of the Pentecostal movement has been to witness to the experiential power of God as known and received in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the assumption of Pentecostalism in general is that

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>21</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Mark J. Cartledge, "Pentecostal Experience: An Example of Practical-Theological Rescripting," *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 28, no. 1 (2008): 22.

<sup>23</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 131.

<sup>24</sup> Russell P. Spittler, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Spirituality," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 804.



some measure of religious experience is or should be a formative dimension in authentic Christian life.<sup>25</sup>

That being said, it is not sufficient methodologically to speak of experience without further clarification. If we are willing to accept that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is a religious experience, it becomes necessary to then clarify what is meant by “experience” and how this experience can inform doctrine. In the oft-cited words of Alfred North Whitehead, “the word ‘experience’ is one of the most deceitful in philosophy”.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, before we can speak of an “experience” of the Holy Spirit with any clarity or precision, we must first explain what we mean. As Yun recognizes, the Pentecostal emphasis on experience can create some problems because people endow the word “experience” with a wide variety of meanings.<sup>27</sup> In this he draws from Donald Gelpi who describes experience as a “weasel word” which twists and wriggles because “no sooner does one think that one has pinned a weasel word down to a single meaning than one finds it signifying something totally different”.<sup>28</sup> With this multitude of meanings in mind, Yun suggests that we must answer the key questions: How is Spirit baptism an experience? To what kind of experience are we referring?<sup>29</sup> Yun himself does not attempt to answer these questions, meaning that there is more work to do in this area. As Harvey Cox observes, if Pentecostals wish to interact with other denominations they will have to be clearer about what they mean by “experience”.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, before we can move forward, we must deal with this question of experience.

By virtue of the fact that this thesis employs a Catholic methodology, or at least a methodology from a Catholic source, to examine a Pentecostal experience, there is a sense in which this thesis functions as a sort of Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue. It is interesting to note from the outset that the International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue also acknowledged the importance of experience and even agreed on a definition in its second Final Report (1977-82):

*By experience the dialogue understands the process or event by which one comes to a personal awareness of God. The experience of God's “presence” or “absence” can be a matter of conscious awareness. At the same time, and at a deeper level, there remains the*

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<sup>25</sup> Ralph Del Colle, “The Implications of “Religious Experience” for Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue: A Catholic Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 45, no. 4 (2010): 525.

<sup>26</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985), 16.

<sup>27</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 139.

<sup>28</sup> Donald Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 140.

<sup>30</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 313.

*constant abiding faith-conviction that God's loving presence is revealed in the person of his Son, through the Holy Spirit.*<sup>31</sup>

There have also been other articles written on the potential for dialogue in this area.<sup>32</sup> The point here is not the definition itself, but rather that both denominations acknowledge the importance of experience and, furthermore, have agreed that it needs to be defined. The necessity of such a definition will be readily apparent as we examine the diversity of views on experience in general and religious experience in particular. The aim here is not to attempt a comprehensive definition of experience, but rather to set some parameters and boundaries for our discussion of Pentecostal Spirit baptism in later chapters.

### 2.2.1 Overcoming the Subjective/Objective Divide:

As a first step I feel it is necessary to deal with some of the negative perceptions surrounding the notion of experience and the tendency to subordinate experience in the hierarchy of knowledge sources, religious or otherwise. For example, Bloesch has argued that “the sources of theology are Scripture and tradition”, while experience is “the medium of revelation but not its source or norm”.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Peter Jensen claims that “experience intimates, the gospel enlightens; the gospel interprets, experience confirms”.<sup>34</sup> The implication is obvious: that, when compared with so-called objective or external sources, subjective or internal experience is inferior as a source of revelation or knowledge. This is further confirmed by Jensen’s statement that “neither the intimation nor the confirmation is foundational, since we may well misunderstand our experiences”.<sup>35</sup> The problem is that statements like this create an unnecessary and unhelpful dichotomy between what is external (seen as objective and “real”) and what is internal (seen as subjective and therefore unreliable). The evangelical appeal to Scripture as an objective source of knowledge serves as an example of this. This dichotomy, as I will demonstrate below, represents a failure to reflect on basic epistemological presuppositions.

The source of this dichotomy lies partly in our contemporary notions of reality drawn primarily from science. If we have a limited notion of what is “real” then we may also have a limited notion of what can be objectified and function objectively. Ormerod observes that science “has a very

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<sup>31</sup> "Final Report," *Pneuma* 12 (1990): 99.

<sup>32</sup> Del Colle, "The Implications of "Religious Experience"."

<sup>33</sup> Donald G. Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 116.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Jensen, *The Revelation of God*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 2002), 108.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* In this he essentially ignores the possibility that the gospel can also be misunderstood.

high level of cultural authority as a paradigm of reason",<sup>36</sup> meaning that we often carry scientific presuppositions into areas of enquiry within which they may not belong. The question of what is "real" is actually a metaphysical rather than a scientific question, because science presupposes rather than proves existence.<sup>37</sup> To demonstrate this, Ormerod, drawing from Augustine, has identified two distinct criteria for reality.<sup>38</sup> One criterion sees the essence of reality as deriving from existence in space and time. What is contained within space and time is therefore "real", and what is not contained within space and time does not really exist. This fits very nicely with the scientific method with its focus on empirical data, but "there are other valid forms of reasoning besides those of science".<sup>39</sup> The second criterion "relates what is real to what is the conclusion of a reasoned argument".<sup>40</sup> In other words, reality is not limited to that which is corporeal, but rather realities can be confirmed or eliminated based on rational argument. According to Ormerod, "to embrace intellectual conversion is to begin to adopt the second criterion as the exclusive one for determining what is real", and he therefore calls for "an intellectual conversion which challenges our unreflective criteria for what is real".<sup>41</sup> If this can occur, we may also overcome the tendency to view objects of enquiry (or objectivity) only in terms of what exists in space and time.

Lonergan adopts a similar approach in relation to our objectification of God. He argues that "certainly God is not an object in the naive realist sense of what is already out there now, or already up there now, or already in here now".<sup>42</sup> Rather, God can be objectified if "by an object one means anything that is intended in questions and known through correct answers, anything within the world mediated by meaning".<sup>43</sup> In other words, objectivity is not that God is external to me, but simply that God can be objectified through intentionality.<sup>44</sup> This helps us to understand objectivity in terms of what can be objectified rather than in terms of spatial distinction or externality. Lonergan also recognizes that other things of an incorporeal nature, like one's own consciousness, can be objectified.<sup>45</sup> Hence if what is real cannot be limited to what is corporeal, then what may be objectified cannot be limited in this way either. It is the mistaken equation of reality with

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<sup>36</sup> Neil Ormerod, "Preliminary Steps Towards a Natural Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2011): 119.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>42</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 341.

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

<sup>44</sup> ———, *Insight*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 400-401. Lonergan explains that "objectivity in its principal sense is what is known through any sets of judgements satisfying a determinate pattern" (401).

<sup>45</sup> ———, *Method in Theology*, 9.

corporeality that causes many people to view experiences of, or interactions with, external sources as exclusively objective and inherently more trustworthy than experiences of an internal, or non-corporeal, nature. Unfortunately, this view serves to reinforce the false dichotomy highlighted earlier.

Discovering the alternative to this dichotomy requires a return to the basics of cognitional theory and a much broader notion of experience. Lonergan identifies four basic operations that move us from ignorance to knowledge through cognitional process, namely experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding.<sup>46</sup> Experience in this sense is extremely broad and involves any interaction that we have either externally or internally. Even those interactions with external sources which are supposed to be objective are in reality external (and subjective) experiences. Experience provides the data which we seek to understand and make judgements about, which in turn provides the basis for our decisions. Along similar lines, Gabriel Fackre has described experience as “the total human encounter with our environment in its web of interrelationships”.<sup>47</sup> The crucial element to note is that all knowledge therefore begins with experience and it is an essential part of the process. This understanding challenges the regnant view that epistemology involves a fundamental tension between external objectivity and internal subjectivity. Instead, the distinction should be between experiences as internal or external, and known as such through a judgement.<sup>48</sup>

If experience is understood in this way, then studying and interpreting Scripture is just as much an experience as an emotive and affective encounter with God. Both are simply the beginning of the cognitional process. Amos Yong has argued that “all thought and reflection...emerge out of experience”<sup>49</sup> which means that “Scripture itself is interpreted experience”.<sup>50</sup> As Smith, in reference to Heidegger, notes, “an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us”.<sup>51</sup> In other words, it would be naïve to think that our interpretation of Scripture can be objective in the sense that we bring nothing of ourselves, as the experiencing subject, to the interpretation. Rather:

*We inhabit the world as interpreting creatures. We encounter things in the world not as things “in themselves” but as things that we use, as things “for” something. Because we*

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>47</sup> Gabriel Fackre, *The Christian Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 134.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 124.

<sup>49</sup> Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community* (Hants: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), 246.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 136.

*encounter entities in the world as things “for” something, we also encounter them always already “as” something.*<sup>52</sup>

To refer once again to Yong, “we do not interpret either Scripture or tradition directly, but rather interpret our experience of reading Scripture and tradition”.<sup>53</sup>

In short, “to be human is to interpret ... to experience the world is to interpret the world”.<sup>54</sup> As a subject I experience all things (both internal and external) and every experience passes through this process of understanding, judgement and decision. The aforementioned distinction, between internal and external experiences, is often overlooked or incorrectly understood as a distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. Without this distinction, interior experiences can be deemed to be subjective and less important, while external experiences are seen as more objective and therefore more important. But all experience is subjective in that it is the experience of a subject. The way to move past this subjectivity is through an authentic process of understanding, judgement and decision. Our objectivity is therefore based on the judgements we make about our experiences, not on whether those experiences are internal or external. Certainly judgements about experiences can still be right or wrong, authentic or inauthentic, but it is not the experience itself that should be treated with suspicion.

As a side note, it is important to be clear about what is meant here by internal and external experiences. The distinction should not be misunderstood as a question of what occurs inside or outside one’s own skin. Rather, the distinction is between experiences as sensitive or conscious.<sup>55</sup> External experiences involve the senses while internal experiences are of one’s own conscious or intentional acts.<sup>56</sup> The question to answer in determining whether an experience is internal or external is whether we are intending a sensory experience or our own consciousness or self-presence. Through experience we intend an object and become aware of it, and the object that we are intending defines whether an experience is internal or external.<sup>57</sup> The process of understanding and judging can be applied either to external (sensitive) or internal (conscious) experiences.

The point to emphasize here is that experience, whether external or internal, is the only avenue we have for understanding or appreciating God (or any knowledge for that matter). Reading and

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>53</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 247.

<sup>54</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 137.

<sup>55</sup> Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 124.

<sup>56</sup> ———, *The Lonergan Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 384.

<sup>57</sup> ———, *Method in Theology*, 7.

interpreting the Bible could be classified as a sensitive or external experience, whereas an emotive encounter with God could be classified as a conscious or internal experience. In either case, based on those internal or external experiences, we then make decisions and judgements about the experience. Certainly there may be different tools and processes used to make judgements depending on whether the experience is internal or external. To access and delineate the content of internal experiences, for example, we need a language of interiority. It is therefore important to attend to one's own experiences and make that distinction for oneself, but one cannot say that internal experiences are inherently inferior (or superior) to external experiences.

This distinction has important implications for our present study of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. Spirit baptism is an experience which can be understood and judged to mean something. But because of negative perceptions about the value of subjective experience it has often been viewed as highly questionable by those from outside Pentecostalism. However, if we recognize that all knowledge comes to us through experiences (both internal and external), the focus of this thesis changes drastically. Rather than attempting to justify the Pentecostal emphasis on experience and dedicating considerable time to proving that "subjective" experience can function as a source of knowledge and doctrine, these can be taken as given. Based on the understanding of experience that I have advocated above, we would have no knowledge whatsoever without experience. Instead, my focus is to explore and critique the judgements and decisions that have been made by Pentecostals on the basis of this experience of Spirit baptism. Furthermore, I suggest that Spirit baptism primarily involves a shift in consciousness and should therefore be classified as an internal (conscious) rather than an external experience (although sensory elements may play a secondary role in the experience). As such, the tools and processes for studying Spirit baptism will be different to those required for studying an external experience. But both internal and external experiences are valid starting points in the cognitional process.

To illustrate the importance of overcoming the subjective/objective divide, let us consider an interesting study, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience*,<sup>58</sup> by Caroline Franks Davis. She notes from the start that skepticism surrounding religious experience is a relatively recent development, yet a development that demands "a critical reassessment of the value of religious experiences as support for religious claims".<sup>59</sup> I would also suggest that this skepticism is not limited to those outside of the Christian faith, but is evident in the many, usually rationalistic, criticisms aimed at Pentecostal Spirit baptism by other Christian traditions. In fact, the following statement made

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<sup>58</sup> Caroline Franks Davis, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

about religious experience in general seems to be such an accurate account of the history of Pentecostal Spirit baptism that it could well be assumed, albeit mistakenly, that Davis is talking exclusively about the particular Pentecostal experience:

*They are challenged on all sides, by philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, members of other religious traditions, and even by members of their own tradition with widely differing views. But “arguments from religious experience” have been largely unconvincing, and religious experience continues to be regarded as something rare and obscure, inaccessible to ordinary routes of enquiry.<sup>60</sup>*

While the scope of her study goes well beyond the unique experiences of Pentecostals, her reassessment of the value of religious experience is pertinent to the discussion around Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

Experience, according to Davis, is a “roughly datable mental event which is undergone by a subject and of which the subject is to some extent aware”.<sup>61</sup> As a roughly datable event Davis thus excludes the notion of experience as simply an accumulation of events and judgements, and the awareness of the experiencing subject implies some level of participation. She deliberately abstains from providing a definition of *religious* experience in view of the plethora of religious traditions and variations of experiences within those traditions.<sup>62</sup> Generally, though, she sees religious experiences as those that “the subjects themselves describe in religious terms or which are intrinsically religious”.<sup>63</sup> Based on these guidelines it would seem reasonable to assert that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is a religious experience in that the practice of Pentecostal believers is usually to describe their experience of Spirit baptism in religious terms. Moreover, one could argue

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>62</sup> She does, however, provide an interesting taxonomy of religious experience. For Davis, interpretive experiences are those normal experiences that are viewed in religious terms because of a pre-existing religious interpretive framework. Although people question whether or not these should strictly be classified as “religious experience”, Davis argues that their personal importance in the lives of religious people means that they shouldn’t be ignored. Quasi-sensory religious experiences are those in which the primary element is a physical or sensory sensation, for example visions, voices, feelings of heat, pain etc.. For such experiences the sensations are taken to be representations of the presence of a spiritual being. Revelatory experiences involve sudden flashes of insight, convictions, inspirations or revelations. Regenerative experiences, including a wide range of experiences, effectively renew the faith of the experiencing subject. Although they may involve common feelings like peace, security, hope or comfort, they are classified as religious if they occur during religious activity and are seen as having their source in a divine power. Numinous experiences, a concept derived from Rudolf Otto, involve both “creature-consciousness” and “mysterium tremendum” which Davis describes in more detail than we can afford here. Finally, mystical experiences are characterized by “the sense of having apprehended an ultimate reality, the sense of freedom from the limitations of time, space and the individual ego, a sense of ‘oneness’, and bliss or serenity” (p.54). Interestingly, the challenge of categorizing religious experiences is evidenced by the fact that Pentecostal Spirit baptism could probably be variously classified as numinous, quasi-sensory, regenerative or even mystical (Ibid., 35-54).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 31.

that it is intrinsically religious in the sense that it involves “the sense of the presence or activity of a non-physical holy being or power”.<sup>64</sup>

Davis also identifies some common challenges to the evidential value of religious experience. Firstly, the popular view of religious experiences as non-cognitive is usually expressed in one of three ways. Either “religious experiences occur within the framework of an autonomous language-game”, or “religious utterances have an emotive or conative function, but not a cognitive function”, or “religious experiences, particularly of the numinous and mystical varieties, are radically ineffable, and so there are no verbally expressible claims for which they could be evidence”.<sup>65</sup> In other words, some suggest that a non-cognitive religious experience has no evidential value beyond what it can tell us about the psychological state of the experiencing subject. Those who identify religious experiences as entirely non-cognitive question whether they are able to communicate anything meaningful about religion itself.<sup>66</sup> Such a view deems experience to be entirely subjective in the most negative sense of the word. Secondly, the rise of secularism and rationalism over the previous few centuries has given rise to other challenges against religious experience that earlier cultures did not have to deal with:

*The most powerful challenges to religious experience will prove to be the “conflicting claims challenge”, that subjects of religious experience cannot agree on a single, consistent account of the alleged percepts, and the “reductionist challenge”, that religious experiences can be explained more plausibly by reference to natural factors alone than by explanations which allow certain religious experiences to be veridical.*<sup>67</sup>

Despite these challenges, Davis sets out to demonstrate that “religious experience provides substantial evidence for certain crucial and fundamental religious doctrines”.<sup>68</sup> Eventually, after examining various arguments *from* religious experience and various arguments *against* religious experience, Davis concludes that religious experiences can certainly provide evidential value for religious beliefs, particularly when they function as part of a cumulative argument.<sup>69</sup>

While many elements of Davis’s study will be helpful as we proceed, the purpose of this illustration is to demonstrate the challenges of dealing with experience without addressing the subjective/objective divide. There is always the sense in Davis’s writing that religious experience must satisfy a certain set of criteria in order to be deemed veridical. But these criteria are not

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 241.



explicitly stated and seem to be satisfied only when an experience can be more or less verified by external sources and withstand external scrutiny. Thus “evidentially weak religious experiences” are those which are considered to be “generally unreliable sources of knowledge” or may “succumb to sceptical challenges”.<sup>70</sup> This implies that “subjective” religious experience must still be evaluated against an “objective” set of criteria, indicating that Davis has not made the important epistemological distinction between internal and external experiences. As a result, because Davis does not overcome the perceived limitations of subjective experience, she is forced to dedicate the majority of her book to proving that subjective internal experience can still have *some* evidential value for religious claims. Because of the failure to overcome the alleged dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity, one gets the feeling that she is always fighting an uphill battle.

So that we can avoid this unnecessary opposition to experience, it is important to emphasize again that all knowledge comes through internal or external experiences, and furthermore all of these experiences are subjective in the sense that they involve an experiencing subject. Thus the question is not whether we are having a subjective experience or appreciating an objective reality, but rather whether our experience is internal or external. While this distinction may alter the tools or processes we use to understand and reflect on our experience, both internal and external experiences are valid sources of knowledge. This will guide our discussion of experience as we move forward.

### 2.2.2 Experience as Pre-conceptual:

We have already touched briefly on Lonergan’s cognitional theory and broad concept of experience, but the other implication of his cognitional process is that experience is pre-conceptual in the sense that it precedes understanding, judgement and decision. To explain this, Lonergan distinguishes between consciousness and knowledge such that “consciousness is just experience, but knowledge is a compound of experience, understanding, and judging”.<sup>71</sup> In other words, conscious experience precedes knowledge and conceptual reflection. Lonergan, however, describes the move from experience towards knowledge as a movement in the direction of, as Fischer terms it, the “fuller and larger reality”.<sup>72</sup> So, while the goal is knowledge, the starting point is pre-conceptual experience. This understanding of experience as pre-conceptual also resonates with Smith’s description of divine revelation:

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 245-248.

<sup>71</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 106.

<sup>72</sup> Kathleen Fischer, "Religious Experience in Lonergan and Whitehead," *Religious Studies* 16, no. 1 (1980): 75.

*Should our phenomenology of revelation recognize it as first and foremost a kind of precognitive, affective seizure of our desire – a capturing of our imagination on a register that is not readily commensurate with the intellect? ... Before they're ever "intellectual", "ordinary believers" are gripped by divine revelation in a way that is irreducible to the cognitive.*<sup>73</sup>

Loneragan situates this pre-conceptual religious experience firstly within the world of interiority in that "the gift of God's love first is described as an experience and only consequently is objectified in theological categories".<sup>74</sup> We could say the same of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. The experience itself occurs within the realm of interiority, but the explication can occur within the realms of common sense, theory, or the interior realm of meaning.<sup>75</sup>

By defining experience as a pre-conceptual process, Lonergan recognizes a distinction between the experience and the conceptual reflection that results. This distinction opens the possibility for conceptual reflection on an experience without limiting the experience to the results of the reflection. As we have already discussed, in our knowing we move from experience to understanding, judgement and decision. Even though our understanding, judgements and decisions based on an experience may be wrong, this does not necessarily detract from the importance of the experience itself. Therefore it is not the experiences themselves that should be critiqued and (all too often) criticized, but rather the conceptual reflection on the experiences should be the focus.

This will be discussed in more detail later, but it is also important to clarify that experience as a pre-conceptual event does not mean it is entirely unmediated. Even prior to conceptual reflection on an experience, that experience is still partly the product of communal and personal context and conditioning. In fact, James K. A. Smith suggests that Pentecostal worship effectively functions in "training" Pentecostal affective responses. He explains that:

*Pentecostal worship is affectively prefocused, patterned to highlight certain aspects of experience as salient; it is also regulative or exemplary, seeking to inculcate certain emotional habits that, when inscribed and sedimented in the believer, become part of her emotional repertoire beyond gathered worship, thus priming and disposing her to construe the world of her experience in certain ways. In this way we might see Pentecostal experience as epistemic and hermeneutic training.*<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 120.

<sup>74</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 107.

<sup>75</sup> These realms of meaning will be expanded in section 2.3.1.

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 80.

In other words, experiences themselves, though they are pre-conceptual, are not unmediated. In light of this, it becomes important for our analysis of Pentecostal Spirit baptism to realize that a pre-conceptual experience does not suggest that the experience of Spirit baptism is independent of any social conditioning. Thus, while we can reflect on the meaning of a particular experience, that reflection must consider the social and ecclesial context within which the experience took place. The experience may have a meaning for Pentecostal Christians which is not readily apparent to those outside the Pentecostal context. Yet, according to this model of experience, this is entirely to be expected and does not detract in any way from the reality or value of the experience.

To explain how experience can be both pre-conceptual and contextually conditioned, Lonergan uses the concept of mediated immediacy.<sup>77</sup> Immediacy incorporates the immediate world of sense experience and the immediate world of religious experience, and accounts for the pre-conceptual aspect of experience. But this immediate world must still be mediated to us by meaning. That meaning can be derived from any number of sources throughout our lives and, deliberately or not, shapes our immediate responses. Thus we have a religious experience that is immediate in the sense that it is pre-conceptual and involves the transformation of consciousness, but it is also mediated in the sense that it is social and unavoidably shaped by culture and context. This recognition is also highlighted by Amos Yong and Peter D. Neumann. Yong uses “mediated immediacy” to describe the divine encounter in that the immediate encounter with the divine and transcendent Spirit is engaged through human acts of interpretation and is thus not entirely unmediated.<sup>78</sup> Yet, Yong urges, even these acts of interpretation “are graced by and through the Spirit” which is a necessary part of theological interpretation.<sup>79</sup> Neumann explains that experiences, both general and religious, “need to be acknowledged as being mediated through the horizons of specific linguistic, cultural, and historical situations in which humans find themselves”.<sup>80</sup> Similarly to Yong, Neumann uses the designation “mediated immediacy” to describe “the possibility of direct encounter with God, yet mediated through context and therefore interpreted”.<sup>81</sup>

As a side point, there are certainly some points of contact between Lonergan’s notion of experience and the Pentecostal construct. Most notably for Lonergan, religious experience is a transformation of consciousness that is both an event (insomuch as the transformation occurs at a particular time and place) and a process (insomuch as the transformation establishes a dynamic state). This

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<sup>77</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 77.

<sup>78</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 227-229.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>80</sup> Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 30.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

dynamic or transformed state “spontaneously manifests itself in changed attitudes, in that harvest of the Spirit that is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control”.<sup>82</sup> This understanding of experience should resonate with Pentecostals in that, although the crisis event of Spirit baptism receives much of the focus, there is usually the expectation that the individual will be transformed as a result of the experience. In other words, because the event of Spirit baptism inaugurates the ongoing abiding of the Spirit, it is to be expected that “the harvest of the Spirit”, as Lonergan calls it, will be evident in the life of the believer.

We may also be able to gain further insight into the pre-conceptual nature of experience through Lonergan’s notion of elemental meaning. Firstly, it would seem beyond question that Pentecostal Spirit baptism *means* something, in the sense that it embodies or carries meaning. As an “experiential pattern”, the type of meaning that Spirit baptism embodies could be classified as elemental.<sup>83</sup> According to Lonergan, elemental meaning occurs when the meaning is not separated from the meant (as in a work of art).<sup>84</sup> In other words, the meaningful experience occurs prior to the conceptualization of the experience. Thus elemental meaning involves experiencing and being transformed by the experience. For Pentecostals, the experience of Spirit baptism is usually deeply meaningful but is in many ways ineffable. As Lonergan notes the “proper apprehension and appreciation” of elemental meaning is not “conceptual clarification or judicial weighing of conceptualized evidence”. Rather, it is “an invitation to participate, to try it, to see for oneself”.<sup>85</sup> One who has not experienced Pentecostal Spirit baptism may be able to comment on the biblical category of Spirit baptism, but they are less than qualified to comment on the Pentecostal experience. Hughes explains that, for elemental meaning, “the meaning is encountered in the experience and cannot be separated from the experience: one must have the experience to discover its meaning”.<sup>86</sup>

This does not mean, however, that elemental meaning cannot be conceptualized. Indeed, the challenge facing Pentecostal theology is to reflect upon and explicate their experience of Spirit baptism in a way that demonstrates its meaningfulness without devaluing its experiential nature. As an experience of the Spirit, the obvious question to answer is what that experience means exegetically, theologically and practically. Yet this conceptual reflection should not overlook the primacy of the experience. Neumann has suggested that “a maturing Pentecostal theology, then,

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<sup>82</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 108.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>86</sup> Glenn Hughes, "Gerard Manley Hopkins and Lonergan's Notion of Elemental Meaning," *Lonergan Workshop Journal* 19: 108.

needs to acknowledge the ways in which experience of God is mediated, while simultaneously upholding the belief in the immediacy (or directness) of encounter with God".<sup>87</sup> It seems self-evident from the previous chapter that the exegetical debate is unlikely to be finally resolved either way. This is partly because, by focusing on the doctrinal issues of subsequence and initial evidence, the debate fails to engage with the vitality of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. For the Pentecostal movement, however, whose emphasis on spiritual experience and encounter is well documented,<sup>88</sup> such a methodology is problematic. Lonergan himself seems to look favourably on experience as a source for theology, describing "his movement from stress on proofs to religious experience as the basis of theistic reflection, as a shift from the abstract to the concrete".<sup>89</sup> The methodological framework required for a study of Pentecostal Spirit baptism should therefore allow for the transition from experience to theology. This transition has often been problematic for Pentecostals and requires further comment before we continue.

### 2.2.3 Experience as a Source of Doctrine:

If there is one criticism that has consistently been aimed at Pentecostals, it is that their doctrines rely too heavily on their experiences. But, in light of what we have already said about overcoming the subjective/objective divide, I believe this criticism is drastically overused. After all, what else can our doctrines be based upon if not experience (internal or external)? Several authors have recently attempted to provide a rationale for this Pentecostal appreciation of experience as a source of doctrine. Peter Althouse, for example, appeals to Jesuit theologian George Schner to describe not experience *per se*, but the way the Pentecostal appeal to "experience" functions as an appeal to authority.<sup>90</sup> After agreeing that religious experience is a difficult concept to define, Althouse claims that "experience has varying degrees of meaning and conceptualization that need to be identified before one can speak accurately of Pentecostal experience".<sup>91</sup> He argues, firstly, that the appeal to experience functions rhetorically as an appeal to authority.<sup>92</sup> This is significant for Pentecostals who often emphasize the primacy of experience over argument by reference to

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<sup>87</sup> Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*, 160.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 17-27.

<sup>89</sup> Fischer, "Religious Experience in Lonergan and Whitehead," 70.

<sup>90</sup> Along similar lines, Peter D. Neumann has also used Schner's work to navigate the tricky concept of experience and has considered Pentecostal experience in light of Schner's continuum (Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*, 33).

<sup>91</sup> Peter Althouse, "Toward a Theological Understanding of the Pentecostal Appeal to Experience," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 38, no. 4 (2001): 400.

<sup>92</sup> George P. Schner, Philip Gordon Ziegler, and Mark Husbands, *Essays Catholic and Critical* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 109.

the adage that “a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument”.<sup>93</sup> To help us understand the meaning inherent in the Pentecostal notion of experience, Althouse employs Schner’s continuum to describe how the appeal to experience functions for various theologies: the appeal transcendental, the appeal hermeneutical, the appeal constructive, the appeal confessional, and the appeal mystical/immediate.<sup>94</sup> While it is not necessary to explain each type of appeal for the purpose of this study, it is important to note that Althouse classifies the Pentecostal appeal to experience as “an appeal confessional”.<sup>95</sup> A brief discussion of this particular appeal to experience will indicate the perceived importance of experience, from a Pentecostal perspective, for driving belief and doctrine.

The appeal confessional is an appeal to “the way things are” or “the way things should be”, and seeks to articulate the encounter with God in a devotional manner.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, it is an appeal to the authority of experience which is happy to repudiate or set aside criticisms when they endanger the experience.<sup>97</sup> This has often been the case for Pentecostals who seem happy to ignore criticisms of their experience and even question the usefulness of debates on the topic. Finally, the appeal confessional maintains that “the transcendent is mediated to the community by the experience, just as the community is established by the experience”.<sup>98</sup> This is also true of the Pentecostal appeal to the experience of Spirit baptism – it is perceived as an encounter with the divine that fulfils a constitutive function within the Pentecostal community. In this, Pentecostals make a key judgement about their experience. They understand their experience of Spirit baptism as an encounter with divinity and therefore judge that their experience has real authority in guiding and informing belief and doctrine. The veracity of this understanding and judgement will be the topic of the next chapter, but suffice to say that Pentecostals view their experience as valuable and authoritative based upon the presence of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, Althouse does state that the appeal confessional can hinder theology if it avoids theological construction.<sup>99</sup> Whether or not this applies to Pentecostal Spirit baptism remains to be seen.

On the question of experience as a source of doctrine, both Amos Yong and Peter D. Neumann have argued for the epistemological value of experience. Yong has observed that, for Pentecostals,

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<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Barry Chant, "The Spirit of Pentecost: Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia" (Dissertation, Macquarie University, 1999), 41.

<sup>94</sup> Althouse, "Pentecostal Appeal to Experience," 407.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 410.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 408, 411.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

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

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

“experience functions as an object for theological reflection”.<sup>100</sup> While this carries risks, these risks can be mitigated if experience is discerned by way of theological reflection “amidst the self-in-community”.<sup>101</sup> Along similar lines, Neumann argues strongly that “experience and theology are interconnected for Pentecostals”<sup>102</sup>, to the point that “Pentecostalism cannot be rightly understood without an appreciation of the weight granted to encounters with the Spirit as a resource for theological reflection”.<sup>103</sup> That interconnectedness often results in a tension between experience and theological articulation as Pentecostals struggle to formalize their experiences into doctrinal or theological statements. As with Yong, Neumann recognizes that Pentecostals engage in discernment of their own experiences. This discernment occurs within the context of community which exists as “a Pentecostal sub-cultural-linguistic framework, shaped in part by the traditional media of the Spirit – Scripture, tradition, and reason”.<sup>104</sup>

Tony Richie has also recognized the importance of experience, and conceptual reflection on that experience, for the development of beliefs and doctrines. Firstly, he suggests that the maturation of Pentecostalism should also encourage the identification of effective models of experience.<sup>105</sup> He appeals to Rudolf Otto’s description of “numinous experience” as the foundation of all religion.<sup>106</sup> The three components of this numinous experience, designated *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, are interesting. As *mysterium* the numinous is entirely different from any experience we have in normal life and provokes wondrous silence. As *mysterium tremendum* the numinous provokes terror because it presents as overwhelming power. Finally, as *fascinans*, the numinous presents as merciful and gracious. Based on these categories Spirit baptism could certainly be viewed as experience of the numinous. In fact, Richie argues that “looking at the experience of Spirit baptism through the lens of numinous encounter affirms that it involves an ontological, objective reality rather than a subjective human fabrication”.<sup>107</sup> While we may be critical of Richie, in line with what we have said earlier, for his apparent polarization of objectivity and subjectivity, the important point to note here is that it is the conviction that God is involved in their experience that gives Pentecostals the confidence to appeal to that experience as authoritative.

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<sup>100</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 249.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 253. This reflects Yong’s understanding of theological reflection as the continuous interplay of Spirit, Word, and community.

<sup>102</sup> Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*, 7.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>105</sup> Tony Richie, "Awe-Full Encounters: A Pentecostal Conversation with C.S. Lewis Concerning Religious Experience," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14, no. 1 (2005): 101.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

Richie also refers to C.S. Lewis and his belief that the “arrogant assumption that outside observation is intrinsically superior to inside experience must end”.<sup>108</sup> This resonates both with Lonergan’s categories of experience as internal or external, and with our recognition in the previous section that internal and external experiences are equally subjective. Furthermore, Richie believes that “integration of intellectual observation and experiential participation is absolutely essential for fully informed Christian theology and spirituality”.<sup>109</sup> In the sense that our experiences must be followed by intellectual observation and reflection, I agree wholeheartedly with this sentiment. However, I also believe that Richie establishes too strong a division between experience and reason. His notion that both religious experience and religious reason are legitimate ways of learning about reality as it is seems to imply that each can exist without the other.<sup>110</sup> While he does state that we need both to “fully know”, experience as a pre-conceptual event would suggest that we need both experience and reason to know *anything*. I believe that he would be helped tremendously here by a clear distinction between experience as pre-conceptual and the conceptual reflection that follows the experience. In this sense experience and reason are not opposite ends of a spectrum but rather related events in the cognitional process. While some may argue that this is simply semantics, the juxtaposition of reason and experience usually results in one being privileged over the other depending on epistemological convictions.

All in all, Richie poses some interesting challenges to the Pentecostal movement. Concerning Spirit baptism, these challenges encourage Pentecostals to value their experience but also to reflect critically on the meaning of the experience. In his own words, “Spirit baptism is a way of knowing God that completes dogma with direct encounter and counters rationalist reductionism at its core with relational intensity and intimacy”.<sup>111</sup> While Pentecostalism has been quick to embrace and encourage the experience of Spirit baptism, the critical reflection has usually lagged somewhat behind if it has come at all. Perhaps it is this lack of critical reflection that has encouraged criticism rather than the experience of Spirit baptism itself.

We could describe this lack of critical reflection as a failure to adequately engage in the processes of understanding, judgement and decision. Or, in common theological parlance, it is again the challenge of moving from experience to doctrine, a challenge which is an ever-present reality for Pentecostals. James K. A. Smith has claimed that “Pentecostal spirituality is, in a sense, looking for words - for categories and frameworks to articulate its implicit ‘genius’, the intuitions embedded

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 114-115.



in practice".<sup>112</sup> In other words, Pentecostals are looking to explicate their experiences in a meaningful way but lack the categories to do so. Stronstad also observes that it is in the area of the relationship between experience and doctrine that Pentecostals have usually drawn criticism.<sup>113</sup> While some Pentecostals have argued that experience functions to verify or certify theology, Stronstad argues that experience also fills a presuppositional place in Pentecostal theology.<sup>114</sup> In other words, charismatic experience becomes a lens enabling Pentecostals to understand the charismatic life of the early church better than those without a charismatic experience of their own. Furthermore, given that exegesis and theology without presuppositions is impossible,<sup>115</sup> the question becomes not *if* we bring any presuppositions to theology but rather which ones we bring. Stronstad's thesis is that all interpreters bring both conceptual and experiential presuppositions to their study, and that these must "coexist like a marriage of equal and complementary partners".<sup>116</sup>

*Whether we are considering exegesis, theology, history, the parables, or any other aspect of biblical scholarship, there are appropriate and legitimate experiential presuppositions which give their possessor a better understanding of the Bible than those who do not possess them.*<sup>117</sup>

For the Pentecostal, their own charismatic experience better enables them to understand and contribute to a charismatic theology. Significantly, this suggests that critical reflection on the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism should come primarily from within Pentecostalism.

Overall, it is crucial to affirm that an internal experience like Spirit baptism, in as much as it can lead to certain judgements, is an important and valid stimulus for doctrinal and theological reflection. While Pentecostals have often been marginalized because of their willingness to derive doctrine from experience, this marginalization is neither necessary nor appropriate. While I agree that some of the Pentecostal doctrines derived from the experience of Spirit baptism may be deserving of criticism, this does invalidate the experience itself. Nor does it mean that transitioning from experience to doctrine is impossible. Failure to engage in a process appropriately does not render the process itself invalid. A key element of this thesis will be to evaluate and possibly reframe some of the judgements or doctrinal assertions that have arisen from the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. That experience is a valid source of doctrine is therefore assumed.

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<sup>112</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 71.

<sup>113</sup> Stronstad, "Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics," 15.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>115</sup> See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 157. Lonergan calls the illusion of presuppositionless exegesis the *Principle of the Empty Head*.

<sup>116</sup> Stronstad, "Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics," 24.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

#### 2.2.4 The Interpreted Character of Experience:

Our final observation on experience relates to the interpreted and mediated character of experience, a fact attested to by several authors. Ralph Del Colle examines different paradigms for religious experience within the context of the dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals. What is particularly helpful as a starting point is Del Colle's reference to George Schner's rules for understanding the mediation of experience: experience as construct, experience as intentional, experience as derivative, and experience as dialectical.<sup>118</sup> These elements are present in the personal mediation of experience and can be observed in the experience of Spirit baptism:

*So, for example, if one claims to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit, this will involve the agent's construct of Spirit-baptism, dependent as it is on the recipient's intention and its particular ecclesial derivation. This will not negate the dialectical or transformative dimension of the experience in the event. What is ruled out is the notion that the experience is an unmediated given for the recipient.*<sup>119</sup>

This is an important point which resists the temptation to view one's own experience of Spirit baptism as normative. The constructive and derivative nature of experience takes into account the influence of community and individual presuppositions and expectations.

Similar observations can be found in the work of Jesuit theologian Donald Gelpi. He evaluates what he calls the "turn to experience" in contemporary theology and suggests that the results of this turn have usually been negative.<sup>120</sup> His criticism is aimed not at experience as a theological category, but rather at the constructs of experience espoused by contemporary theologians. He traces the development of experience as a focus in liberation theology, process theology, and transcendental Thomism, but in each case finds philosophical shortcomings. After recognizing that there is no general consensus amongst philosophers regarding the generic variables that function in human experience, Gelpi argues for a triadic understanding of experience which "defines experience as a process made up of relational elements called feelings".<sup>121</sup> He identifies these feelings as evaluations, actions, and tendencies, which "all mutually condition one another and

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<sup>118</sup> Del Colle, "The Implications of "Religious Experience", " 526.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience*, 5.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 126.

contribute to the process of ongoing self-definition".<sup>122</sup> This construct, he argues, "gives promise of interpretative applicability and adequacy"<sup>123</sup> and "aspires to metaphysical universality".<sup>124</sup>

For Gelpi, experience is not limited to a pre-conceptual event as it is for Lonergan. In fact, Gelpi is critical of Lonergan's restrictive definition of experience as "the data one understands and judges".<sup>125</sup> He suggests that this indicates Lonergan's preference for rationalistic thinking, so that "he fails to recognize that images and feelings can and do play a far more important role in the human grasp of reality".<sup>126</sup> While I am not convinced that Lonergan neglects the emotional and affective nature of experience as totally as Gelpi implies, Gelpi's emphasis in this area does tie in nicely with the Pentecostal notion of experience. In fact, Yong suggests that "Pentecostals (and charismatics) should take Gelpi seriously because his oeuvre is, to date ... the richest philosophical explication of Pentecostal-charismatic experience".<sup>127</sup> He justifies this statement by explaining that Gelpi's "speculative theory illuminates the logic of Pentecostal and charismatic practice, even while the practices and experiences themselves cry out for metaphysical and theological explication".<sup>128</sup> After identifying that the question of what precisely is meant by experience remains unresolved within Pentecostalism, Yong appeals to Gelpi's work which "cautions us about too naive an understanding of the notion of experience, particularly as that interfaces with issues of theological hermeneutics and methodology".<sup>129</sup> Gelpi himself, according to Yong, was driven by the broader question of "what does it mean to experience the Spirit of God?"<sup>130</sup>

Although Pentecostals may struggle to reconcile Gelpi's broad concept of experience with their own usage of the word, he does nevertheless make some very useful and helpful observations. Of particular relevance for this section is his claim that his triadic model of experience "acknowledges the interpreted character of human experience".<sup>131</sup> More specifically, he recognizes that religious experiences are interpreted through one's own religious categories, which are in turn derived from one's own culture and religious context. Whereas an experience of God or an encounter with God provides certitude of faith, provided that one recognizes in that experience the touch of God, it is

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Amos Yong, "In Search of Foundations: The Oeuvre of Donald L. Gelpi, SJ, and Its Significance for Pentecostal Theology and Philosophy," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 1 (2002): 24.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>129</sup> ———, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 90.

<sup>130</sup> ———, "In Search of Foundations," 23.

<sup>131</sup> Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience*, 146.

the attempt to interpret the meaning of that divine touch that results in beliefs and doctrines.<sup>132</sup> Any divine encounter is almost always interpreted and communicated via symbols, and these symbols are derived from one's own religious categories. Gelpi himself defines a real symbol as "any reality that mediates the grasp of meaning", and in many cases these "exhibit cultural and linguistic conditioning".<sup>133</sup> He also recognizes the role of social experience in that "the persons, things, and communities we experience stand within experience, not outside it, and help make it into the kind of experience it eventually becomes".<sup>134</sup> In other words, the meaning of a religious experience is not a fixed reality to be discovered, but is shaped by and saturated in our own social and religious context and conditioning.

This notion is also found in Karl Rahner's writing on religious experience. For Rahner, a "genuine experience of the Spirit does not consist in particular objects of experience found in human awareness but occurs rather when a man [sic] experiences the radical re-ordering of his transcendent nature in knowledge and freedom towards the immediate reality of God through God's self-communication in grace".<sup>135</sup> Rahner also argues that "we are not faced with the alternatives of being forced either to recognize expressions of religious enthusiasm, at least when they are genuine, as the unadulterated operation of the Holy Spirit, or to discount them from the start, even from the human point of view, as 'rubbish', the result of human religious impulses going off the rails".<sup>136</sup> Rather, religious enthusiasm can be "a genuine experience of divine grace," as long as one realizes that the psychological phenomena that attend such experiences and are "essential for their occurrence" ought not to be identified "in their brute reality as manifestations of the divine Spirit".<sup>137</sup> In other words, God may be at work in religious experience without ascribing the whole of the experience to God.

Thus, while Rahner will not say that each individual religious experience is a unique experience of divine grace, he does recognize the value of religious experience:

*All expressions of religious enthusiasm, whenever they are to some degree genuine and in earnest, are spiritual events in which the grace filled transcendence of man comes plainly to the fore and in which the subject freely experiences God as both the ultimate goal of this transcendence and the very ground of the experience itself.*<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>135</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations Volume XVI* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983), 27-28.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>137</sup> Del Colle, "The Implications of "Religious Experience", " 534.

<sup>138</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations Volume XVI*, 45.

In religious experience, the presence of God is mediated to the subject through their own finite categories and historical horizon.<sup>139</sup> This should come as both a relief and a challenge to Pentecostals. It is a relief in the sense that the burden of proof for an experience of the Spirit does not rely on the peculiar manifestations of each experience. Because it is to be expected that such manifestations will be influenced by the uniqueness of the experiencing subject, the actual involvement of the Holy Spirit in a religious experience does not depend on these manifestations. But the challenge then becomes to lay down elitist or normative claims regarding that experience or its manifestations. The unique manifestations or phenomena associated with an experience may reflect general expectations in most cases but cannot be universally prescribed.

With this in mind, it could be argued that the psychological phenomena associated with an experience, as a product of community participation, largely resist external critique. In this case, someone from outside Pentecostalism should not necessarily expect to understand the unique way in which the Pentecostal community expresses or physically manifests the encounter with God that they have termed Spirit baptism. This being said, as we begin to interpret and explicate the meaning of the experience (or, to put it differently, as we move from experience to doctrine) we make judgements that are open to criticism. For example, by calling an experience "Spirit baptism" Pentecostals are making an interpretive decision and are automatically embedding that experience with meaning. Furthermore, as doctrines develop to describe the metaphysical reality that this unique experience represents, these doctrines invite and even require careful scrutiny and reflection. But the peculiarities or particularities of various religious experiences are, at least partially, a product of the ecclesial and social context within which they occur and do not necessarily indicate whether or not God is at work in these experiences.

Overall, it seems beyond question that the experiencing subject brings personal and communal presuppositions to an experience which influence the interpretation of the experience. In fact, as Smith has pointed out, the religious community may also influence the expression of the experience itself in terms of emotional habits and responses. However, as Rahner has argued, this does not detract from the reality and meaning of the experience as an encounter with God. What is needed is careful reflection on the experience to ensure that the phenomena do not obscure the transcendent meaning. This is precisely the goal of this thesis in relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism. One could argue that certain peculiarities of the Pentecostal experience, like subsequence and initial evidence, have received so much attention that they may have obscured the richness of

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<sup>139</sup> Del Colle, "The Implications of "Religious Experience", " 534.

meaning contained in the experience. If that is the case, then it becomes crucial that we look beyond these peculiarities to discover this richness of meaning.

### 2.2.5 Summary:

What our discussion of experience has highlighted is that any religious experience will inevitably be multi-faceted and difficult to define. Therefore, we need to extract from the many accounts of experience those descriptive categories most applicable to Pentecostal Spirit baptism. What it means to call Pentecostal Spirit baptism an experience cannot be explained in a neat and narrow definition, but by making some fundamental qualifications from the outset we have attempted to frame our understanding of experience in these terms.

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, we have dealt with the question of objectivity and subjectivity which seems to become an obstacle in any discussion of experience. As with all experiences there is an experiencing subject, therefore the experience of Spirit baptism is necessarily subjective. But we have argued that all knowledge comes through experiences (either internal or external) and internal experiences are not intrinsically inferior to external experiences. This distinction allows us to overcome the flawed assumption that knowledge derived from external sources is *ipso facto* superior to or more objective to knowledge derived from an internal experience. Secondly, we have recognized that experience is a pre-conceptual event in the sense that it precedes critical reflection and carries elemental meaning. This means that our critical focus should be primarily on the judgements made about an experience rather than the experience itself. Thirdly, we have assumed, based on the preceding points, that experience can function as a valid source of doctrine. Whether or not this transition (from experience to doctrine) has produced satisfactory results in the past has no direct bearing on the inherent value of experience as an authoritative starting point for theological reflection. Finally, we have pointed out that experiences are shaped by ecclesial and cultural context, and this must be taken into account when considering their meaning.

One final observation on objectivity and subjectivity is warranted before we proceed to our discussion of theological method. If one considers logical proof to be of foundational importance, then the desire is for objectivity independent of the concrete existing subject.<sup>140</sup> But, as Lonergan points out, “objectivity itself is not reached by what is independent of the concrete existing

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<sup>140</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 338.

subject".<sup>141</sup> Rather, the self-transcendence or authentic subjectivity of the existing subject is the only path to authentic objectivity.<sup>142</sup> The solution, therefore, is firstly to recognize the necessarily subjective nature of the experience of Spirit baptism, then to seek objectivity through authentic reflection on that experience. The next section of this chapter will explain the specific methodology that will be employed to guide that reflection.

### 2.3 Bernard Lonergan's Method in Theology:

For the content and structure of our methodology we look now to the work of Catholic theologian Bernard Lonergan, in particular his detailed and insightful *Method in Theology*.<sup>143</sup> While we will be utilizing his *functions of meaning* as the categories to guide our discussion of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, some preliminary foundational concepts must be addressed. Lonergan bases his theological method on his understanding of cognitional theory (to which we referred above) and the conscious and intentional operations of the human subject. By identifying the "normative pattern of our conscious and intentional operations", namely experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding, Lonergan claims to have found a "rock on which one can build".<sup>144</sup> In other words, this cognitional theory becomes the foundation for his theological method. The four processes of cognitional theory follow "the unfolding exigencies of the mind to ask questions and order thought".<sup>145</sup> The results yielded by this basic method are, as required by any method, cumulative and progressive.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity." Ibid., 292.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>145</sup> Neil Ormerod, "Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 794.

<sup>146</sup> It must be acknowledged that Lonergan's method is not without its critics. For example, as we have just referenced, Gelpi regards Lonergan's definition of experience as overly rationalistic (Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience*, 115). Some other objections to Lonergan's method have been summarised and responded to by Hugo Meynell (Hugo Meynell, "On Objections to Lonergan's Method," *The Heythrop Journal* 19, no. 4 [1978]). However, the overwhelming response to Lonergan's work, including from Gelpi (Donald Gelpi, "A Response to Amos Yong," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11, no. 1 [2002]), is one of appreciation. But can Lonergan's method be applied to Pentecostalism? The method itself is built upon Lonergan's much larger coherent framework of meaning which is intended to have universal application. Interestingly, one of the criticisms to which Meynell refers is the extreme generality of Lonergan's method. But it is precisely this generality that allows the method, or elements of it, to be applied in numerous different situations. Elsewhere, Meynell states that "Lonergan's philosophy is one of the outstanding achievements of our time, and applicable to a vast range of pressing intellectual, moral, social, political, educational and religious problems" (Hugo Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991], 185). There is no reason to think that Lonergan's method, general as it is, cannot be applied within a Pentecostal context.

By applying these conscious operations to the theological task, Lonergan suggests eight functional specialities or processes in the theological endeavour: research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications. The first four of these functional specialities, corresponding to the four conscious operations, are the mediating phase and guide the theologian as they encounter the past. The second four, corresponding to the four conscious operations in reverse order, represent the mediated phase and challenge the theologian to confront the future.

*As the first phase rises from the almost endless multiplicity of data first to an interpretative, then to a narrative, and then to a dialectical unity, the second phase descends from the unity of a grounding horizon towards the almost endlessly varied sensibilities, mentalities, interests, and tastes of mankind.*<sup>147</sup>

It is important to note that the interaction between these functional specialities is more like a dialectical interaction rather than a linear progression. In Lonergan's own words, they are "a series of interdependent sets" rather than a single set of operations that occur one after the other.<sup>148</sup> Or, to put it differently, they are all reciprocally dependent on each other, particularly within each phase.

While a thorough explanation of these functional specialities is beyond the scope of this thesis and would take considerably more space than we have available, it may be helpful to suggest where this thesis may fit into the overall theological process described by Lonergan. Of the functional speciality *dialectic*, Lonergan explains that it "assembles, classifies, analyses the conflicting views of evaluators, historians, interpreters, researchers".<sup>149</sup>

*One has to assemble the manifold, ascertain differences, reduce differences to their grounds. Such grounds may lie in some social, cultural, historical context, in the native endowment or the formation of given authors, in the presence or absence of intellectual, moral, or religious conversion, in the manner in which the method and task of systematic theology were conceived.*<sup>150</sup>

Given the numerous and varied positions on Spirit baptism identified in the previous chapter, it seems likely that this thesis will necessarily involve the functional speciality of dialectic. According to Lonergan, the needed solution to ongoing points of theological dispute is a methodology that will answer basic philosophical and epistemological questions and apply the answers to theological

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<sup>147</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 142.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.



method.<sup>151</sup> It is worth noting that Lonergan does not suggest that dialectic will provide the means or method to resolve all theological disputes. Rather, “decision, finally, is reached only partially by dialectic, which tends to eliminate evidently foolish oppositions and so narrows down issues, but is not to be expected to go to the roots of all conflict for, ultimately, conflicts have their ground in the heart of man”.<sup>152</sup> The expectation here is not that all disputes or conflicts around Spirit baptism will be miraculously resolved, but rather that Lonergan’s categories and method will help us to see the issues more clearly and light the way forward.

Lonergan’s cognitional theory also gives rise to other sets of categories, two of which are the *realms of meaning* and the *functions of meaning*. While the functions of meaning provide the structure of this thesis, understanding the realms of meaning is a necessary precursor to appropriating the functions of meaning. Lonergan proposes that different modes of conscious and intentional operations give rise to different realms of meaning. These realms, called common-sense, theory, interiority and transcendence, are the result of different exigencies and modes of operation. We will take some time to explain these realms of meaning in more detail before moving onto the functions of meaning.

### 2.3.1 Realms of Meaning:

According to Lonergan, meaning is intended and interpreted in four different realms, namely common-sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence.<sup>153</sup> These realms of meaning have already been used by Lonergan<sup>154</sup> and others<sup>155</sup> to explain the diversities of religious utterances and doctrines, and therefore may be helpful in explaining the many and varied positions on Spirit baptism. As Smith suggests, “religious discourse might usefully be understood as operating within different dimensions” (the realms of meaning).<sup>156</sup> The key point to be made here is that a subject operating in one realm of meaning may feel themselves contradicted by a subject operating in a different realm of meaning.<sup>157</sup> Yet “seeming contradictions can be resolved, and the adequacy (or otherwise) of each position recognized, once one appropriates the conscious operation that is the

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 81-85.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>155</sup> For example, Marc Smith, "Religious Language and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning," *Sophia* 25, no. 1 (1986).

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 24.

source of the realm of meaning in question”.<sup>158</sup> Lonergan describes the person with the ability to consciously function in each of these realms and move between the realms as having a “differentiated consciousness”, while a person without that ability has an “undifferentiated consciousness”. Importantly, “no one with a less or a differently differentiated consciousness is capable of understanding accurately what is said by a person with a more fully differentiated consciousness”.<sup>159</sup>

In relation to our present task, these realms of meaning may provide some insight into the different facets of the debate around Pentecostal Spirit baptism. If disputes occur in different realms of meaning, the conclusions can be vastly different because the processes pertaining to each realm are vastly different. This is not to say that one conclusion is right and one conclusion is wrong, but rather that each argument uses a different process and is working towards a different goal. As Lonergan suggests, understanding the various functions and realms of meaning “will yield some insight into the diversity of the expressions of religious experience”.<sup>160</sup> We will return again to this issue after a more detailed explanation of each realm of meaning.

The first realm of meaning, the common-sense realm, arises from the basic insights and observations we make concerning the persons and things that relate to us. The objects of this realm are the people and objects of the visible universe. As we live our lives, we observe these objects and accumulate insights concerning them. The self-correcting nature of this process is a natural and spontaneous procedure in which future insights may confirm, qualify, or correct previous insights, resulting in a heuristic ability to deal with situations as they arise.<sup>161</sup> The language of this common-sense realm is everyday language and is used to denote rather than to define; to describe obvious characteristics rather than intrinsic properties; to communicate common meaning and understanding. Consequently, the meaning intended in the common-sense realm is common meaning and should be understood by those from a similar context.

It may be appropriate to classify many of the descriptions of Spirit baptism in this realm of meaning, particularly those written by Pentecostal Christians for Pentecostal Christians. In these cases, words and concepts communicate a meaning common to Pentecostals. They represent explorations of Spirit baptism in a language understood by (but somewhat limited to) Pentecostal theology and practice, and head towards an understanding of Spirit baptism derived from the

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>159</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 330.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 81.

Pentecostal community and context. While this may be sufficient in some situations, the lack of clarity and precision may make it difficult for those outside Pentecostalism to interact with these writings. Furthermore, whereas the source of Pentecostal common meaning about Spirit baptism is primarily a shared experience, the source of common meaning for other Christians on this issue may lie elsewhere (e.g. in decisions about how biblical texts should be interpreted or applied). Recognizing these potential differences in common meaning, or competing worlds of common-sense, makes it easy to understand why disagreements and differences arise.

The second realm of meaning, theory, is the result of a systematic exigency imposed on the realm of common-sense.<sup>162</sup> Objects perceived in the common-sense realm may be easy to identify, but the common-sense realm does not seek or provide precise definitions for these objects. Whereas the realm of common-sense is concerned with things as they relate to us, the realm of theory “asks not just how things are in relation to us, but how things are in relation to one another; not just how to correctly use words, but their precise meaning; not just their meaning for this people in this place and time, but their meaning for all people everywhere”.<sup>163</sup> These questions require the development of technical meaning and language which relate to the same objects as those intended in the realm of common-sense, but in a different way. Someone operating in the realm of common-sense can perceive a flower and comment on the beauty of its petals, but a botanist may perceive the same flower and contemplate the flavonoids that give the petals their unique pigment as a result of inherited genomes. While the same object that was perceived in the realm of common-sense is in view, the realm of theory regards that object from a different standpoint and seeks to know that object through a different method. The meaning expressed in the realm of theory is expressed in technical rather than common language.

It is highly questionable whether, to this stage, the debate on Spirit baptism has progressed to the realm of theory. A person operating within the realm of common-sense has a different goal in mind to the person operating within the realm of theory. A layperson may be quite content to describe their experience of Spirit baptism using the descriptive and emotive language of their social context or spiritual community. Or, Pentecostal and evangelical theologians may explore Spirit baptism only within the context of their respective common meanings. As Ormerod notes, “Lonergan refers to the work of modern biblical and historical scholarship as a specialized form of common sense”.<sup>164</sup> But the authentic theologian who wishes to move beyond the common-sense realm must attempt to define and understand how their experience of Spirit baptism relates to other experiences of

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 81-82.

<sup>163</sup> Ormerod, "Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning," 780.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 782.

Spirit baptism, and further develop technical language to explain their experience ontologically and theologically. Given the challenges presented by the highly varied and personal nature of experience, it is perhaps not surprising that the realm of the theory has been relatively neglected thus far.

The third realm is the realm of interiority.<sup>165</sup> This realm is necessitated by the critical exigency resulting from tension between the realms of common-sense and theory. In this realm the object changes from an external reality to the internal consciousness. In other words, interiority involves self-appropriation as one seeks to understand one's own operations, subjectivity and structure. Only by turning to the interior is man able to answer the three basic questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it?<sup>166</sup> Answering these questions provides a methodological foundation that accounts for the realms of common sense and theory and understands the differences between them. The realm of interiority "offers an invariant basis for ongoing systems and a standpoint from which all the differentiations of human consciousness can be explored".<sup>167</sup> Whereas an undifferentiated consciousness demands homogeneity and assumes that either common-sense or theory must be correct at the expense of the other, a differentiated consciousness possesses the self-knowledge that comes from interior reflection and therefore "understands the different realms and knows how to shift from one to any other".<sup>168</sup> In other words, the undifferentiated consciousness expects that all procedures leading to knowledge are the same and, therefore, all studies of a particular topic must yield identical or complementary results. On the other hand, the unity of a differentiated consciousness understands the different realms of meaning and recognizes that studies conducted in the different realms may involve different procedures and yield different results. Furthermore, one operating in the realm of interiority does not despise the realms of common-sense and theory, but understands the differences in their methods and aims.

The realm of interiority also enables us to explore what is meant by the meaning intended in the realms of common-sense and theory. Those operating within the realms of common-sense and theory still mean something, but they have not stopped to reflect on the meaning of their meaning. Interiority allows us to do this primarily because meaning arises from the interior. As Ormerod explains, "meaning exists primarily in persons, in hearts and minds, and only secondarily in what is

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<sup>165</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 83.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 84.

said, written or otherwise expressed".<sup>169</sup> It is also in this realm of interiority that interior experiences, like Spirit baptism, can be reflected upon and analysed. A common-sense expression of Spirit baptism may recognize the experience without taking the time to understand its meaning theoretically. Or a purely theoretical analysis of Spirit baptism may focus on definitions of terms and various presentations and interpretations of biblical evidence without engaging with the Pentecostal experience. Such analyses remain within the realms of common-sense and theory without progressing to the realm of interiority. It is only within the realm of interiority, where the experiencing subject becomes the object, that the meaning of Spirit baptism can be properly understood. I propose that Lonergan's *functions of meaning*, to be explained shortly, will be a helpful set of categories for understanding the meaning of Spirit baptism within the realm of interiority.

The final realm of meaning is transcendence, or the realm in which God is known and loved.<sup>170</sup> This realm arises from the exigence related to "the human desire for complete intelligibility, unconditioned judgement and a good beyond all criticism".<sup>171</sup> These desires will only be satisfied through a movement beyond the realms of common-sense, theory, and interiority into the realm of transcendence. Thus the subject operating in the realm of transcendence is in love with God, and meaning emerges through relationship with God. It is only in this realm, according to Lonergan, that a person can reach "basic fulfilment, peace, joy".<sup>172</sup> This realm, in which the mystery of love and awe can be experienced, is also the source of religious expression.<sup>173</sup> Without the realm of transcendence we would have nothing religious to reflect upon. It could be argued that the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, as elemental meaning and a theophanic encounter with God, fits squarely into this realm of meaning. It is only our conceptualization of Spirit baptism that requires us to operate within the other realms. As with the functional specialities, moving between the realms of meaning does not need to be a linear process. In fact, someone can begin with an experience in the realm of transcendence and move from there into the other realms.

There are several helpful insights that can be gleaned from Lonergan's notion of realms of meaning. Firstly, it is important to note that "one cannot be in two realms at the same time – and thus arises the often-felt tension between parties operating within and espousing different dimensions of

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<sup>169</sup> Neil Ormerod, "Transposing Theology into the Categories of Meaning," *Gregorianum* 92, no. 3 (2011): 519.

<sup>170</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 84.

<sup>171</sup> Ormerod, "Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning," 781.

<sup>172</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 84.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

meaning".<sup>174</sup> In other words, as has already been mentioned, studies of Spirit baptism performed within different realms of meaning, which have different goals and employ different operations, cannot be expected to yield the same conclusions. This differentiation may account for some of the disagreement on Spirit baptism, assuming of course that at least some studies are operating within the realms of theory or interiority.

There is also the unavoidable reality that "there are as many brands of common sense as there are differing places and times".<sup>175</sup> In other words, the realm of common-sense is not a realm of fixed meaning. When Pentecostals wish to talk about Spirit baptism amongst themselves, their own common sense language expressing their own common sense meaning is quite sufficient. Yet when people from outside Pentecostalism wish to enter the conversation, this common sense language and common sense meaning becomes the problem. What we end up with is competing worlds of common sense using the same words but talking, in essence, different languages. Because competing worlds of common sense are a reality of the world in which we live, it is not surprising that people from competing worlds often do not agree. The experiences, language, and common meanings that give rise to each world of common sense are fundamentally different. It is in the turn to the realms of theory and interiority that we can move beyond the differences of our common sense worlds and understand the different perspectives of those worlds. Unfortunately, it seems that few, if any, of the existing studies of Spirit baptism take place within the realms of theory or interiority.

Part of the reason for this may be the common tendency within Pentecostalism and evangelicalism to eschew all things philosophical, including cognitional theory and epistemology. This is almost certainly based on the perception that philosophy is fundamentally humanistic and anti-theistic. As renowned evangelical theologian Donald G. Bloesch writes: "I contend that every philosophy represents a rationalization for a false theology or religion and that true theology necessarily excludes philosophy".<sup>176</sup> While this may not be the view held by all Pentecostal and evangelical theologians, it is prevalent enough to mean that philosophy as a foundation for theology is relatively overlooked. Thus there is a failure to recognize the existence of, let alone attend to, the realms of theory or interiority.

If acknowledging and understanding these four realms of meaning is the first step in the development of our methodology, it stands to reason that they will play a part in this thesis. As

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<sup>174</sup> Smith, "Religious Language and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning," 27.

<sup>175</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 303.

<sup>176</sup> Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit*, 43.

Lonergan reminds us, “when the realms of common sense, of theory, of interiority, and of transcendence are distinguished and related, one easily understands the diversity of religious utterance”.<sup>177</sup> Although the *functions* of meaning will provide the structure of this thesis, each of the functions of meaning can operate within each of the realms of meaning. Thus we must be aware of these realms of meaning and the underlying part that they play in the discussion. So, as we turn our attention now to the functions of meaning, which will provide the framework for our analysis of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, it is important that these realms of meaning are never far from our minds.

### 2.3.2 Functions of Meaning:

As was mentioned above, operating within the realm of interiority enables us to reflect on the meaning of meaning. If we acknowledge that Pentecostal Spirit baptism *means* something, we must then attempt to describe this meaning in an appropriate way. The set of categories that we will use as a framework for this reflection are the fourfold functions of meaning, namely cognitive, effective, constitutive and communicative.<sup>178</sup> By virtue of their ontological aspect these functions of meaning may be applied to meaning regardless of its content, context or carrier.<sup>179</sup> The distinction between the various functions of meaning also carries the implicit recognition that meaning can be multi-faceted. By identifying how Spirit baptism, as a meaningful experience, fulfils each of these functions proper to meaning, we may be able to explicate Spirit baptism in a way that integrates the various hermeneutical and theological approaches without ignoring the significance and meaning inherent in the Pentecostal experience. Such integration may be helpful in contributing to a more coherent Pentecostal self-understanding and a more intelligent communication of that self-understanding.

The first function of meaning, the cognitive function, enables us to interact with a world mediated by meaning.<sup>180</sup> This function moves us beyond our immediate experience to a larger world which requires us to submit our experience to the accumulation of truth gained through experience, understanding, and judgement. It answers the basic question of whether or not the communicated meaning is true and real. Though it may be asserted that one of the primary functions of meaning is to communicate truth, it is also possible to have untrue meaning that still functions effectively,

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<sup>177</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 114.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-81.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

constitutively and communicatively. Thus it is the cognitive function of meaning that allows us to distinguish truth from falsehood. Clifton explains that the cognitive function of meaning relates to “its sustainability in the light of the dominant rationalities of the contemporary context”.<sup>181</sup> In other words, as far as Spirit baptism is concerned, can the key assertions that Pentecostals make about Spirit baptism be demonstrated as true in light of what we now know in other areas like theology, hermeneutics, sociology, and psychology?

To this end, the cognitive function of meaning must determine what is meant by Spirit baptism within the community of faith and then decide if the meaning held by the community about Spirit baptism is true. This cognitive function can be observed in the attempts to rationally define and defend Spirit baptism, usually through biblical exegesis or theological reflection, for the benefit of the larger world (the world beyond Pentecostalism). Considerable time and energy has been dedicated to making the transition from the experience of Spirit baptism to the explanatory doctrine, and to championing that doctrine as objectively true. It is perhaps not surprising that this truthfulness has usually been evaluated in terms of “subsequence” and “initial evidence”, arguably the most distinctive and measurable aspects of the experience. The challenge for Pentecostals is that their cognitive explanations of these issues have often been deemed insufficient or even untenable by scholars without a Pentecostal agenda. This, in turn, has led many scholars to question or even reject the validity of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. Clearly there is more work for Pentecostals to do in this area. Lonergan recognizes the difficulties of cognitive meaning, stating that “it is not to be forgotten that division resides mainly in the cognitive meaning of the Christian message”.<sup>182</sup> Yet part of the cognitive function of meaning should also be to recognize that one also needs to attend to the effective, constitutive and communicative functions of meaning in order to appreciate the fullness of that meaning. Disagreements in cognitive meaning may be mitigated by convergences in the other functions of meaning.

The second function of meaning, the effective function, “functions to inform and direct action that transforms the environment”.<sup>183</sup> In other words, it is not enough to just mean, rather meaning should encourage and direct doing.<sup>184</sup> Within the Pentecostal community, Spirit baptism functioned effectively to inform and direct the actions of the Pentecostal church. The eschatological conviction that the early Pentecostal believers were living in the end times, fostered and reinforced by their understanding of Spirit baptism as “latter rain”, compelled them to pursue

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<sup>181</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 19.

<sup>182</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 368.

<sup>183</sup> Gerard Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 212.

<sup>184</sup> Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 109.



ferently the conversion of unbelievers through mission. According to Clifton, “since the Spirit was understood as a sign of the end-times, as facilitating personal holiness, and as empowering for mission, it also acted as a transcendent force for cultural and social change”.<sup>185</sup> This effective function of Spirit baptism as an empowering experience gave the early Pentecostal church its motivation and direction. Yet, within our current context, we must question whether the effective function of Spirit baptism has changed since the early days of Pentecostalism. If so, in what way does Spirit baptism inform and direct the actions of the Pentecostal church in the present?

The third function of meaning, the constitutive function, relates to the intrinsic meanings that constitute social institutions and human cultures.<sup>186</sup> Meaning has the capacity to function as an element that creates and sustains communities. When people share the same cognitive, constitutive and effective meanings we have the genesis of community. These communities are therefore constituted by common beliefs and experiences, and Spirit baptism as an act of meaning functioned as a constitutive experience in Pentecostal Christianity. Despite huge variations in cultural and historical contexts, and despite other doctrinal disagreements, the Pentecostal church has been able to remain largely a united movement. This, as Clifton states, “was associated with the shared experience and theology of baptism in the Spirit”.<sup>187</sup>

Some may question whether or not Spirit baptism remains a constitutive experience for Pentecostalism in light of evolutions and changes within the Pentecostal community. Certainly, as Lonergan explains, institutions and cultures have the capacity to change, and such changes may result in changes to constitutive meaning.<sup>188</sup> As Pentecostal theology and ecclesiology have changed, have the meanings that constitute the Pentecostal community changed? According to Lonergan, “community coheres or divides, begins or ends, just where the common field of experience, common understanding, common judgement, common commitments begin and end”.<sup>189</sup> There is also a relationship here to the cognitive function of meaning. If you could prove to a community that their beliefs don’t function cognitively then the constitutive function of the belief also begins to break down and the community begins to deteriorate. For this reason, if the Pentecostal community is to endure as a vital and contributory element of Christianity, there must be some clarity and cognitive agreement regarding these common experiences, understandings, and judgements. Spirit baptism has the potential to remain a constitutive experience for

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<sup>185</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 15.

<sup>186</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 78.

<sup>187</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 14.

<sup>188</sup> Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 109.

<sup>189</sup> ———, *Method in Theology*, 79.

Pentecostalism, but some reformulation of the doctrine may be required to preserve parity between the developing experience of the Pentecostal community and the cognitive content of the doctrine.

The fourth function of meaning, the communicative function, describes the way in which meaning is communicated to other people in the present and to successive generations.<sup>190</sup> As a form of elemental meaning based in experience, the communicative function of Spirit baptism in the early years occurred primarily through other people participating in the experience. Then, as the doctrine developed, the communication of the doctrine became “the foundation of the remarkable growth of Pentecostalism throughout the twentieth century”.<sup>191</sup> As a meaningful experience, Spirit baptism functions communicatively insofar as it is able to communicate the communally constitutive elements of Pentecostalism. Some, though, have questioned whether the meaning of Spirit baptism has been adequately communicated to successive generations.<sup>192</sup> Ormerod’s question regarding Eucharistic doctrine within the Roman Catholic tradition could also be asked of Spirit baptism and Pentecostalism: “What is central to the tradition, and what has simply developed as a mode of expressing a particular belief within a framework of meaning that no longer communicates to people?”<sup>193</sup>

While this section has touched only briefly on each of the functions of meaning and their potential application to Spirit baptism, the next four chapters will allow us to dive much deeper. I suggest that these functions of meaning are very helpful categories for explicating the meaning of Spirit baptism so that the importance of the experience to Pentecostalism, in all its breadth and depth, can be recognized. One possible reason for the lack of a consensus on Spirit baptism is a failure to recognize the significance of each of these functions of meaning. For example, an exegete, whether they know it or not, may place too much emphasis on the cognitive function or assume that it is the only criteria for evaluating the experience of Spirit baptism. Macchia labels this the “dominant fundamentalist hermeneutic shared among our [Pentecostal’s] most severe critics”.<sup>194</sup> On the other hand, a pragmatist may recognize and embrace the effective and constitutive function of Spirit baptism without giving due consideration to the cognitive function. Yet, to fully understand the significance and meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, one should consider how Spirit baptism fulfils each of the functions proper to meaning. In this way, the meaning and significance of

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>191</sup> Clifton, “The Spirit and Doctrinal Development,” 15.

<sup>192</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*.

<sup>193</sup> Ormerod, “Transposing Theology into the Categories of Meaning,” 530.

<sup>194</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 52.

Pentecostal Spirit baptism should not be limited solely to its meaning as perceived in the biblical text, or solely to its meaning as perceived through the experience of Pentecostal Christians. Rather, Spirit baptism can be understood as an experience of the Spirit with multiple facets of meaning.

### 2.3.3 Lonergan and Spirit Baptism Elsewhere:

It is interesting to note that the present study is not the first attempt to apply elements of Lonergan's methodology to the topic of Spirit baptism. In his book, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Koo Dong Yun utilizes Lonergan's functional speciality of dialectic as his methodology to compare and contrast the views of nine different theologians.<sup>195</sup> His aim is to promote ecumenical dialogue on the topic of Spirit baptism by bringing out the "affinities and oppositions" of the various positions.<sup>196</sup> Following a detailed analysis of each theologian, Yun classifies the various constructs according to how they answer three questions: (1) How many baptisms does each theologian hold? (2) Do all Christians receive Spirit baptism? (3) Under what major Christian doctrine do we elaborate on Spirit baptism?<sup>197</sup> The result is a helpful study on Spirit baptism from several theological perspectives, including Pentecostal, Charismatic, Reformed, sacramental, and dispensational.

As part of his comparative analysis, Yun focuses on Lonergan's concept of "horizons" to explain the differences between the various constructs.<sup>198</sup> According to Lonergan, a "horizon", in the epistemological sense, refers to "the scope of our knowledge, and the range of our interests".<sup>199</sup> These individual or communal horizons are shaped by our historical situation, social context, education, and personal development. As Yun explains: "Each theologian stands within one's horizon, and ... every horizon comes with its presuppositions, biases, interests and limitations".<sup>200</sup> His conclusion, therefore, is that the constructs of the various theologians are largely a product of their ecclesiastical and theological traditions. In his own words: "In comparing the different constructs of Spirit baptism, I realized that theologians propose various views because they stand within different horizons".<sup>201</sup> Macchia is on the same track when he suggests that the impasse resulting from various interpretations of Spirit baptism relating to Christian initiation is the result

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<sup>195</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, vii. The theologians analysed are Charles Parham, Ernest Williams, Larry Christenson, Cyrus Scofield, Lewis Chafer, Donald Gelpi, Kilian McDonnell, Francis Sullivan and Karl Barth.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>199</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 236.

<sup>200</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 149.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 130.

of competing ecclesiologies.<sup>202</sup> In relation to the realms of meaning mentioned above, some of these different horizons could also be referred to as competing worlds of common sense.

In keeping with his quest for an ecumenical theology of Spirit baptism, Yun argues that “an amalgamation of the various theological constructs of Spirit baptism will bring a more adequate understanding or meaning of Spirit baptism, as long as two views are not radically or dialectically different”.<sup>203</sup> Lonergan explains that different horizons have complementary, genetic, or dialectical differences,<sup>204</sup> and Yun finds all three kinds of differences among the various constructs of Spirit baptism.<sup>205</sup> Whereas complementary or genetic differences can be bridged, dialectical differences can only be overcome through conversion, to which we will shortly return. Ultimately, Yun does not promote one construct of Spirit baptism as the perfect model for all, but is happy to accept multiple constructs of Spirit baptism based on one’s ecclesial context or horizon.<sup>206</sup> Yun insists that doctrines should not be construed as universal truth claims, but rather as statements of belief or guiding religious rules for each particular community.<sup>207</sup> Consequently, he suggests that the Classical Pentecostal construct of Spirit baptism served a positive purpose by providing the Pentecostal community with a necessary and distinctive identity.<sup>208</sup>

In his denial of a universal truth claim, Yun utilizes Lonergan’s method within the context of George A. Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic theory of doctrine.<sup>209</sup> Yet Lindbeck’s theory has often been criticized for the absolute subjectivity which results from his implicit denial of universal truth. Explained in terms of the functions of meaning, for Lindbeck doctrines function constitutively but not cognitively, for it is the universal truth claim that leads us into the cognitive function of meaning and the realm of theory. One implication of this theory is that, if doctrinal or religious language cannot say anything about external, objective reality, then we cannot critique our doctrines or our traditions beyond their function in the community. Furthermore, if religion is purely a cultural-linguistic construct, then adherents are committing to nothing beyond the doctrinal statements of a particular community. Without an external point of reference, such a commitment can be nothing more than arbitrary. As Ormerod states, “while Lindbeck has highlighted the importance of religious tradition in shaping our religious consciousness, his conceptualist assumptions have

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<sup>202</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 62.

<sup>203</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 135.

<sup>204</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 236.

<sup>205</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 156.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Applying Lindbeck’s theory of doctrine to Spirit baptism has also been attempted by Joel Shuman as noted in the previous chapter.

trapped the subject within the horizon created by that tradition”.<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, Ormerod argues that “no tradition would ever have been able to produce its own critics” unless “there are norms which transcend every cultural-linguistic context, inherent as they are within the subject itself”.<sup>211</sup> In other words, the complete relativism suggested by Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic theory of doctrine is not supported by the observable patterns of religious and doctrinal development. As an alternative, Ormerod suggests that Lonergan’s methodology “encompasses all the gains” that Lindbeck seeks “without the confusions and limitations in which Lindbeck is trapped”.<sup>212</sup> In short, Yun’s decision to align himself with Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic theory effectively removes the external reference point that may have allowed him to move beyond simply an analysis of the various horizons.

Overall, Yun has done exceedingly well to recognize that the difference between various views on Spirit baptism is not merely a difference of opinion but rather a difference of horizon. As an exercise in dialectic, Yun’s study is primarily interested in the classification of these different horizons rather than in making choices and taking sides. Therefore, considering the concept of “horizon” is only one part of a larger methodological and epistemological framework, there is more work to be done. Although Yun identifies the existence of dialectically opposed horizons, in particular the Reformed construct as opposed to the classical Pentecostal construct,<sup>213</sup> there is very little said about how these dialectical differences may be processed through decision and conversion. According to Lonergan, “dialectical differences involve mutual repudiation ... each considers repudiation of its opposites the one and only intelligent, reasonable, and responsible stand”.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, because such differences are based on dialectically opposed horizons, the only way to deal with them is through a process of intellectual, moral or religious conversion.

In this sense, conversion indicates a “slow process of maturation” involving a quest for authentic subjectivity.<sup>215</sup> The importance of this conversion lies in the fact that it leads us to a decision on dialectically opposed horizons which, in turn, provides us with the foundations for our theological study. Such a decision must not be taken lightly but should be the product of careful reflection and self-scrutiny. It also requires that we “know others accurately” and “judge them fairly”, a feat that Lonergan states can occur “only through the movement towards cognitional and moral self-

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<sup>210</sup> Neil Ormerod, *Method, Meaning and Revelation: The Meaning and Function of Revelation in Bernard Lonergan’s Method in Theology* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000), 203.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>213</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 156.

<sup>214</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 247.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 253.

transcendence”.<sup>216</sup> This process of self-transcendence involves a differentiation of consciousness which leads us back to a consideration of the realms of meaning.<sup>217</sup> Only through differentiation of consciousness and authentic conversion is one able to make the best decision on the dialectically opposed horizons associated with the debate on Spirit baptism.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks:

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish the foundation for our methodological study of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. By identifying key elements of the Pentecostal worldview we were able to appreciate the pre-existing assumptions that influence the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and their understanding of that experience. This, among other things, highlighted the importance of experience for Pentecostals within the context of a radical openness to God and an affective, narrative epistemology.

We then stipulated some parameters for our understanding of experience that will guide the discussion in the chapters to come. Of critical importance was the overcoming of the subjective/objective divide by recognizing that all knowledge comes through subjective experiences, whether external or internal. This recognition dispels the regnant perception that internal experiences are naturally “subjective” and therefore intrinsically inferior, as a source of knowledge, to external experiences as naturally “objective”. We also highlighted the pre-conceptual nature of experience and the importance of critical reflection on that experience for the development of doctrine. Finally, we drew attention to the mediated nature of experience and the impact that communal and personal context has on religious experience. This does not mean that God is not at work in our experiences, but does suggest that not all elements of experiential expression or psychological phenomena associated with an experience should be automatically attributed to God.

Having laid this groundwork, the final step was to propose Lonergan’s functions of meaning as a framework capable of engaging with the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and explicating the meaning of that experience. The task now at hand is to explore how Pentecostal Spirit baptism fulfills each of these functions proper to meaning. To this end, beginning with the cognitive

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 252-253.

<sup>217</sup> I have previously explained that a person with a differentiated consciousness has the ability to consciously function in and move between each of the realms of meaning. The relationship between conversion and differentiation of consciousness has also been explored in detail in Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

function of meaning, we will devote a chapter to each function of meaning and its application to Pentecostal Spirit baptism. The hope is that the insights we gain along the way will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the experience and a more sustainable presentation of the doctrine.

## Chapter 3: The Cognitive Function

The first function of meaning that we will employ to guide our study of Pentecostal Spirit baptism is the cognitive function of meaning. In short, the cognitive function of meaning relates to the truthfulness of meaning. When we have in focus the meaning of an experience like Pentecostal Spirit baptism, this cognitive meaning relates specifically to the truthfulness of judgements made about the experience and the doctrines derived from those judgements. Yet it is precisely in this area, concerning doctrines that have emerged from the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, that criticism against Pentecostals has been most readily forthcoming. This suggests that, for Pentecostals, explaining the cognitive meaning that they have ascribed to Spirit baptism may be the most challenging of the four functions of meaning. The longevity of the doctrinal debate around Spirit baptism, coupled with the lack of genuine progress, underlines the difficulty of clearly establishing the truthfulness or veracity of common doctrinal assertions in this area. In fact, I will argue in this chapter that some of the common assertions made about Spirit baptism, which have become the focus of the debate, are actually secondary to other implicit assertions about Spirit baptism that are often overlooked. If this is the case, these implicit assertions must be identified and should form the basis of our cognitive arguments. How this will occur should become evident as the chapter progresses.

We will begin with a summary of the common doctrinal assertions that Pentecostals have derived from their experiences of Spirit baptism. Due to the great variety of individual experiences this list could potentially be endless, but we will focus here on the most frequently cited assertions, namely subsequence, initial evidence, and empowerment.<sup>1</sup> A critique of these common assertions will demonstrate the cognitive challenges they present and the consequent need for a refocusing of the discussion. The second part of the chapter will propose a direction for this refocusing by using the language of the experience itself to identify the implicit assertions, upon which the more common assertions are contingent, central to the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. Our analysis of the cognitive function of meaning in relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism will then focus primarily on these implicit and central assertions. If it can be demonstrated that these implicit assertions about Pentecostal Spirit baptism are reasonable then it can be said that they function cognitively. If we can establish the cognitive meaning of Spirit baptism, then we will have a basic doctrinal or theological argument that functions as an apologetic for the Pentecostal experience. Throughout this process we will be confronting a basic question that Pentecostals have always

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<sup>1</sup> These will be referred to as the “common” assertions throughout this chapter.



struggled to answer: how do we move beyond the experiential and develop a theology that captures the essence of the experience yet still fits into a larger framework? I hope to have made a small contribution towards answering this question, at least insofar as Spirit baptism is concerned, by the end of the chapter.

### 3.1 The Cognitive Function of Meaning Revisited:

We have already briefly discussed the cognitive function of meaning in the previous chapter, but for the sake of clarity some further comment is warranted. Fundamentally, the functions of meaning are concerned with what meaning does. The most basic thing that meaning does is it *means*, hence the cognitive function of meaning. The cognitive function of meaning moves us from a world where everything is immediate and limited to what we see, to a world mediated by meaning in which “reality is known through the actuation of all our capacities to experience, imagine, understand, reflect and judge”.<sup>2</sup> In other words, by functioning cognitively, meaning enables us to interact with a world beyond ourselves and reflect on the world that we experience. For Lonergan, this world mediated by meaning is the “larger” world in which we live out our lives. But simply because this world mediated by meaning might be called the “real” world<sup>3</sup> does not mean that everything in this world is true or truthful. As surely as our understanding and judgements make possible a world mediated by meaning, our judgements, and therefore the meaning they imply, can go astray. As Lonergan explains:

*Though the larger world is the real world, still it is insecure, for meaning is insecure. There is truth but also error, fact but also fiction, honesty but also deceit, science but also myth.*<sup>4</sup>

The way to distinguish truth from error is to submit our judgements to the accumulation of knowledge in this world full of meaning. In doing so we can determine whether or not the meaning we are apprehending is truthful, and therefore whether it functions cognitively.

Anthony Kelly calls the cognitive function of meaning the most obvious,<sup>5</sup> yet we have already acknowledged that for Pentecostals it has been the most difficult. The cognitive function of an experience may be determined by evaluating the truthfulness of assertions or statements made about the experience. As we move from experience to understanding to judgement as part of the cognitional process, the result is usually assertions intended to express the meaning of our

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Kelly, "The Exegete and the Theologian: Is Collaboration Possible?," *Australian eJournal of Theology* 17 (2010): 71.

<sup>3</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 77.

<sup>4</sup> ———, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, "The Exegete and the Theologian," 71.

experiences. In examining what has been asserted about Pentecostal Spirit baptism, we should remember that we are concerned here not with the experience itself, but with the judgements made about the experience. It is these judgements, embodied in the form of assertive statements, that must be evaluated to determine whether or not they are true and therefore whether or not they function cognitively. Clifton has said that the cognitive function of meaning relates to its “explanatory capacity (and hence its truthfulness)”.<sup>6</sup> Put differently, do the assertions that Pentecostals have made about Spirit baptism have the capacity to explain the experience in a way that satisfies the cognitive responsibility to pursue truth?

It is important to note that this quest for truthfulness does not necessarily correspond with a quest for absolute proof. The expectation of absolute proof presupposes that every aspect of an experience can be empirically known and verified. But this expectation fails to consider the complexities and ambiguities of human experience, religious or otherwise. Thus, with regards to ascertaining the truthfulness of judgements made about an experience, we are concerned not with certainty but with plausibility. In other words, we must be able to reasonably assert that our judgements about the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism form a cognitive foundation that is internally coherent and plausible. My argument throughout will be that certain implicit assertions about Pentecostal Spirit baptism, to which I have already alluded, provide a much stronger cognitive foundation for the experience than the common assertions. In order to be able to demonstrate this, it is first necessary to return briefly to the common assertions about Spirit baptism and discuss their place in a Pentecostal theology of Spirit baptism and the cognitive challenges they create.

### 3.2 What has Commonly been Asserted about Pentecostal Spirit Baptism?

The common assertions identified in the introduction to this chapter were subsequence, initial evidence, and empowerment. There are a number of statements that we could use to support the identification of these doctrines as common assertions made about Pentecostal Spirit baptism. Howard M. Ervin described it this way in 1984:

*It is a consensus of the classical Pentecostal view that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is subsequent to conversion and new birth. This argues for two clearly distinguished actions of the Holy Spirit in the life and experience of the believer. Furthermore, it is widely held in*

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<sup>6</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 10.

*Pentecostal circles that the reception of the Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit is evidenced by the phenomenon of speaking in tongues (glossolalia).<sup>7</sup>*

This statement obviously refers to the doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence. Similarly, Petts argues that “the baptism in the Spirit is an endowment with power, distinct from conversion, and that the experience should be evidenced by speaking in tongues”.<sup>8</sup> This is another succinct statement which, I believe, generally represents the view held by many Pentecostals for the majority of the last century. The three common assertions that can be drawn from these statements are that Spirit baptism is **distinct from or subsequent to conversion (subsequence)**, is for the purpose of **endowment with power (empowerment)**, and is evidenced by **speaking in tongues (initial evidence)**. I have argued in chapter 1 that a never-ending debate on the issues of subsequence and initial evidence helps no one. Nevertheless, I believe there is the need to return to these classical assertions here if for no other reason than to re-evaluate what is genuinely important about Pentecostal Spirit baptism and to look for a way forward. We will now examine each of these common assertions in turn.

### 3.2.1 Distinct From or Subsequent to Conversion:

The Pentecostal assertion that Spirit baptism is an event distinct from or subsequent to conversion has already been explained previously and does not require a great deal of further explication. The idea of a unique post-conversion experience was certainly not unique to Pentecostalism. Anderson has suggested that the doctrine of subsequence was inherited by Pentecostalism from the nineteenth century Holiness movement and their notion of a “second work of grace” related to sanctification.<sup>9</sup> This is also supported by Donald W. Dayton who traces this development in great detail.<sup>10</sup> While some Pentecostals came to identify this second work of grace with Spirit baptism, others added Spirit baptism to conversion and sanctification as a third work of grace.<sup>11</sup> Alexander Boddy, for example, believed that God had three events for people, namely regeneration, sanctification, and baptism in the Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Over time, though, the classical Pentecostal position came to the fore and became a doctrine that distinguished the Pentecostal movement for many years.

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<sup>7</sup> Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, vii.

<sup>8</sup> Petts, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," 115.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 191.

<sup>10</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 191.

<sup>12</sup> Gavin Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy: Pentecostal Anglican Pioneer* (London: Paternoster, 2007), 162.

One possible reason for the prominence and persistence of the doctrine of subsequence is that it reflects the reality and phenomenology of the Pentecostal experience. Those who experience Pentecostal Spirit baptism would usually consider themselves to be Christians prior to the experience. However, while the notion of subsequence may have been a logical conclusion arising from the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, the Scriptural arguments in support of the doctrine of subsequence developed mainly in response to criticism. Indeed, the idea that Spirit baptism is distinct from or subsequent to conversion has been possibly the most talked about and hotly debated topic in the variety of Pentecostal interactions with other denominations. There have been lengthy arguments both for and against,<sup>13</sup> with both sides convinced of the truthfulness of their position. These arguments have generally focused on five accounts from the book of Acts: the outpouring on Pentecost in Acts 2; the case of the Samaritans in Acts 8; the story of Saul in Acts 9; Cornelius and his household in Acts 10; and the Ephesians in Acts 19.<sup>14</sup> In all of these cases it was adduced by early Pentecostals and the generations following that the reception of or baptism in the Holy Spirit for the people in these accounts was an event subsequent to their initial conversion. The classical Pentecostal position is well summarized by John Nichol writing in 1966:

*Every Pentecostal believes in the reality of a present-day experience for believers such as was received by the early disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). For the Pentecostal this experience is scriptural; it is called the baptism with the Holy Spirit: it is an experience subsequent to conversion; and the initial evidence of having received the Pentecostal baptism is that a person under the Spirit's influence speaks in a language hitherto unknown.<sup>15</sup>*

This is a clear statement of the doctrine of subsequence and highlights the belief that this doctrine has a firm foundation in Scripture. The appeal to Scripture as a foundation for subsequence is echoed in Gordon F. Atter's claim that "all Pentecostals believe that there is an experience which can be properly and scripturally called the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and that this experience is subsequent to conversion".<sup>16</sup> Thus it would seem that, based on the narrative accounts from the book of Acts coupled with their own experiences, Pentecostals found a pattern of experience that they deemed to be normative for all Christians.

Herein lies one of the most significant challenges to the doctrine of subsequence. Pentecostals have continued to argue that subsequence is supported, and even necessitated, by the biblical

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<sup>13</sup> Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Menzies and Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

<sup>14</sup> Petts, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," 99-100.

<sup>15</sup> John Thomas Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New Jersey: Logos International, 1966), 8.

<sup>16</sup> Gordon F. Atter, *The Third Force* (Ontario: The College Press, 1962), 121.

accounts of Spirit baptism and therefore establishes a pattern that all believers should seek to follow. But even if one is willing to accept that these five stories in Acts support the idea of subsequence, it is more difficult to convincingly argue that five anecdotal examples is enough to justify a normative pattern and dogmatic statement of doctrine. Even if the four or five accounts of Spirit baptism in the book of Acts can all be proven to be subsequent to conversion, this is still a relatively small number of cases to claim a normative pattern for all Christians. This difficulty has been consistently highlighted by those opposed to the Pentecostal construct of Spirit baptism.

As I mentioned in chapter 1, the debate often comes down to different approaches to hermeneutics and epistemology. Johns has noted that “Pentecostals differ from Evangelicals and Fundamentalists in [their] approach to the Bible”.<sup>17</sup> On the Pentecostal side, “a Pentecostal paradigm for knowledge and truth springs from an experiential knowledge of God which alters the believer’s approach to reading and interpreting reality”.<sup>18</sup> In other words, experience shapes the Pentecostal worldview and consequently their reading of Scripture. This contrasts with the evangelical emphasis on exegetical analysis of Scripture, particularly the didactic passages. I have argued in chapter 2 that a rational approach to Scripture is not inherently superior to an approach from experience, but they are certainly different. Thus it is not at all surprising that Pentecostals and Evangelicals can read the same passage of Scripture over and over again and continue to maintain opposite positions on its interpretation.

Despite these cognitive difficulties, there are still those within Pentecostalism who have continued to champion the doctrine of subsequence from a biblical basis. In the second part of their book entitled *Spirit and Power*, William and Robert P. Menzies argue that “the issue of subsequence still remains high on today’s theological agenda”.<sup>19</sup> In their own words, “Pentecostals have proclaimed that all Christians may, and indeed should, experience a baptism in the Holy Spirit distinct from and subsequent to the experience of new birth”.<sup>20</sup> They are firm in their conviction that “Luke’s intention to teach a baptism in the Spirit distinct from (at least logically if not chronologically) conversion for every believer – the essence of the doctrine of subsequence – is easily demonstrated”.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Jackie David Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit: The Dynamics of a Pentecostal Model of Praxis," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 79.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Menzies and Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, 109.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 110.

*The doctrine of subsequence articulates a conviction crucial for Pentecostal theology and practice: Spirit baptism, in the Pentecostal sense, is distinct from (at least logically, if not chronologically) conversion. This conviction, I would add, is integral to Pentecostalism's continued sense of expectation and effectiveness in mission.*<sup>22</sup>

One could well argue that they have overstated their case, both in terms of the importance placed upon subsequence in the mind of many Pentecostals, and the importance of the doctrine to Pentecostal theology and practice. While it is not necessary to engage with each element of their argument here, a task that many have undertaken elsewhere, it is important to note that such a dogmatic approach to subsequence is becoming increasingly rare within Pentecostal theology.

In actual fact, some Pentecostal scholars have recently questioned this long-held doctrine of subsequence. In relation to the issue of subsequence, Fee argues that there is "in fact very little biblical support for the traditional Pentecostal position on this matter".<sup>23</sup> His position is essentially that Pentecostals have stretched too far hermeneutically in an attempt to justify all aspects of their experience of Spirit baptism, including the timing. It is important to note that Fee is not criticizing the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, only the biblical arguments for subsequence. Directly after his comment questioning the biblical warrant for subsequence, he states that "this is of little real consequence to the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, either as to the validity of the experience itself or to its articulation".<sup>24</sup> Therefore, although Pentecostals may need to reformulate their doctrinal justification, their experience is valid:

*In other words, Fee and others want to stress the fact that Pentecostals, charismatics and others have had a valid experience that is important for their lives and that they call baptism in the Spirit. But they should not make a dogmatic statement on the basis of their experience, nor should they make it normative for all other Christians.*<sup>25</sup>

By acknowledging that the Pentecostal experience itself is valid, Fee allows for the possibility of an experience of the Spirit subsequent to conversion. However, in his mind, this subsequence is not, as Pentecostals have often argued, necessitated by the New Testament narrative or Luke's intention.

This brings us back to the issue of language, mentioned in chapter 1, and the relationship between Pentecostal Spirit baptism and biblical Spirit baptism. It would seem the assertion that Pentecostal

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>23</sup> Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 106.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 106-107.

<sup>25</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, "Rethinking Spirit Baptism: The Natural and the Supernatural," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series* 15 (1999): 169.

Spirit baptism is subsequent to conversion is, at least from an experiential or phenomenological point of view, difficult to dispute. This could be supported by countless testimonies. If the Pentecostal argument had stopped there ("our experience that we have called Spirit baptism is subsequent to conversion"), it would have been hard to mount an argument against this. But attempting to definitively prove that subsequence is both implied and necessitated by the biblical accounts of Spirit baptism presents significant difficulties. Notwithstanding the obvious cultural, contextual and linguistic gaps between the biblical era and present day, there are hermeneutical issues with the Pentecostal argument that are difficult to overcome. At best one feels it could be demonstrated that biblical Spirit baptism *may* occur subsequent to conversion, but to say that it *must* occur that way in all cases, as classical Pentecostals have done, is too much of a stretch. For this reason I would argue that the classical Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence fails to function cognitively.

That is not to say that the notion of subsequence should be abandoned altogether. On the contrary, because it reflects the phenomenology of the Pentecostal experience I believe it remains a valid characteristic of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. However, the importance attached to this aspect of the experience needs to be reconsidered. Firstly, the idea of subsequence only refers to the timing of the experience and says very little about the essence of the experience itself. Secondly, to suggest that subsequence is a phenomenological reality may be plausible, but it is something of a leap to also suggest that it is an invariable theological reality. Indeed, Chan acknowledges that Pentecostals always fail to distinguish between a phenomenological reality and a theological reality.<sup>26</sup> He raises an interesting point by suggesting that events which are phenomenologically different may in fact be theologically one. He draws a parallel with the Catholic sacraments of confirmation and baptism, a parallel which will be discussed later in this chapter. Even though they are chronologically and experientially distinct, they "are one theological reality, one great work of Christian initiation".<sup>27</sup> He is also critical of the notion of conversion as an isolated crisis experience, so that anything that does not happen in that moment of conversion is seen as theologically distinct. In contrast, Chan urges that the Pentecostal idea of a multi-stage conversion process is not only important but a crucial part of a developed spirituality.<sup>28</sup>

Where Pentecostals have also run into trouble from a cognitive point of view is with their explanation of why there needs to be a subsequent baptism with the Spirit apart from conversion at all. If the Spirit is received at conversion, what makes Spirit baptism a unique and important

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<sup>26</sup> Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia," 91.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> ———, "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence," 210.

experience? Chan acknowledges that “some kind of doctrine specifying the experiential distinctiveness of Spirit baptism is needed for the long term survival of Pentecostal-charismatic reality”.<sup>29</sup> Some have argued that Spirit baptism is a re-intensification of the filling of the Spirit at conversion or is distinguished from the reception of the Spirit at conversion by a matter of degree. Yet Chan argues that Spirit Baptism is not just a re-intensification of conversion-initiation but is a unique experience requiring a paradigm shift.<sup>30</sup> We will return to this question of the uniqueness of the experience of Spirit baptism later in this chapter. The other rationale for a subsequent experience has usually been that Spirit baptism has the unique purpose of enduement with power for witness (Acts 1:8). Examining this common assertion is the topic of our next section.

### 3.2.2 The Purpose of Spirit Baptism is Enduement with Power:

As we have just mentioned, affirming the doctrine of subsequence means that Pentecostals have also been required to justify why Spirit baptism needs to be distinct from conversion at all. In other words, what is achieved or bestowed at Spirit baptism that is not achieved or bestowed at conversion? This is a key point in the whole debate. Dunn, and others like him, has argued that the Spirit is received in fullness at conversion.<sup>31</sup> Certainly, from a biblical perspective, this seems hard to refute. If this is the case, why do we need to be baptized in the Spirit at all? If we have already received the Spirit, what more is there that needs to happen?

For classical Pentecostals, these questions have typically been answered by associating Spirit baptism with a special enduement with power. Myer Pearlman, an early Pentecostal educator writing in 1937, addressed the topic of Spirit baptism under the subject heading “enduement with power”.<sup>32</sup> He argued that “one may be in touch with Christ and be a disciple of Christ and yet lack the special enduement of power mentioned in Acts 1:8”.<sup>33</sup> His understanding of Spirit baptism, written 75 years ago, sums up the key Pentecostal assertions perfectly: “in addition and subsequent to conversion, a believer may experience an enduement of power whose initial oncoming is signaled by a miraculous utterance in a language never learned by the speaker”.<sup>34</sup> To refer again

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 207-208.

<sup>31</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

<sup>32</sup> Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*, Pentecostal Classics (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1937), 308.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 310.



to Pentecostal pioneer Alexander Boddy, he wrote in 1912 that God “can endue us with power to witness for Christ. This is through ‘Baptism’ into the Holy Spirit”.<sup>35</sup> Gordon F.

Atter also wrote of Spirit baptism that “Pentecostals believe that this baptism is an enduement of power for witnessing and service”.<sup>36</sup> The literature suggests that this has been the default position of many Pentecostals for the last century.

This emphasis on empowerment for service sits firmly within the strongly eschatological and missiological context of early Pentecostalism. Menzies confirms that Pentecostals “have generally affirmed that the purpose of Spirit-baptism is to empower believers so that they might be effective witnesses”.<sup>37</sup> He argues that this gives Spirit baptism an important missiological orientation and definition such that “when the Pentecostal gift is confused with conversion, this missiological focus is lost”.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, he continues, the conviction that Spirit baptism is an empowerment that occurs subsequent to conversion is “integral to Pentecostalism’s continued sense of expectation and effectiveness in mission”.<sup>39</sup> The question, though, is whether empowerment is the only way to understand the purpose of Spirit baptism, or is there value in considering a broader understanding of this purpose?

Simon Chan is in fact quite critical of the definition of Spirit baptism as “the enduement of power for life and service”.<sup>40</sup> This, he argues, is a narrowing of the richness of the lived experience of Spirit baptism. He calls Spirit baptism a “theophany” and “the revelation of the triune God”.<sup>41</sup> In fact, Chan believes that if Spirit baptism can be understood as power at all, then that power is “only the result of that revelational encounter with the triune God”.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, Chan credits Menzies with reaching largely the same conclusions as the early Pentecostal pioneers, who “had a true instinctual grasp of their experience, even though their explanations were often inadequate”.<sup>43</sup> Yet there are limits to the biblical and theological value of Menzies’ arguments. Once again, it would seem that the Pentecostal attempt to explicate their experience has fallen short of capturing the essence of the experience itself. I wholeheartedly agree with Chan that there must be more to this dynamic experience than just empowerment. Early testimonies of Spirit baptism bear witness to the multi-dimensional nature of the experience, so that any attempt to reduce the experience to

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<sup>35</sup> Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy*, 162.

<sup>36</sup> Atter, *The Third Force*, 122.

<sup>37</sup> Menzies and Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, 112.

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

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

one dimension alone is inadequate. I therefore conclude that this assertion, that the primary purpose of Spirit baptism is enduement with power, fails to function cognitively for precisely this reason: that it fails to reflect the true essence of the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. While power for ministry may be one result of the experience, it is not sufficient on its own to describe what is truly unique about the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

Interestingly, enduement with power is not the only way that the purpose of Spirit baptism has historically been understood. Donald W. Dayton agrees that early Pentecostal texts were dominated by the theme of “power” in association with Spirit baptism.<sup>44</sup> Yet he also argues that as the Pentecostal movement grew out of Holiness and Wesleyan traditions, there was a tension for many years between the Wesleyan motifs of “perfection” and “cleansing” and the Pentecostal motif of “power” in relation to Spirit baptism.<sup>45</sup> In many cases, though, and over time, “the power themes merely overwhelmed the holiness themes”.<sup>46</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer also reflects on early Pentecostal literature and notes two understandings of Spirit baptism: “One stressed Spirit baptism as enduement with power for service and thus focused on various forms of evangelistic outreach; the other regarded the experience as primarily heralding the reign of Christ within individual believers and thus emphasized a spirituality of being (or character) rather than doing (or deeds)”.<sup>47</sup> This latter view of Spirit baptism, as emphasizing a spirituality of being, has been obscured over the years by evangelistic urgency. Certainly, though, there have been other options put forward for understanding the purpose of Spirit baptism.

There are also several other potential challenges with an automatic and, in many cases, exclusive association between Spirit baptism and enduement with power. Firstly, there is the elitist implication that those who have not experienced Spirit baptism have not been endued with power. While some Pentecostals may agree wholeheartedly with this statement, it seems to me to be an overly simplistic and narrow approach to spiritual empowerment. If empowerment through Spirit baptism is essential for effectiveness in mission, what hope is there for those who have not had this experience? Ford hints at this elitism when he observes a “history of divisiveness, sectarianism and in some cases an almost self-righteous attitude, not only towards non-Christians but even other Christians, which tends to develop in the recipients of the baptism in the Spirit”.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, there

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<sup>44</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 93.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>47</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *“Pentecost in My Soul”: Explorations in the Meaning of Pentecostal Experience in the Early Assemblies of God* (Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 9-10.

<sup>48</sup> J. Massingberd Ford, *Baptism of the Spirit: Three Essays on the Pentecostal Experience* (Illinois: Divine Word Publications, 1971), 31.

is the question of those who claim to have been “Spirit baptized” but do not exhibit any evidence of an “empowerment” for ministry. While the whole notion of “evidence” in this context can be problematic, it could be argued that someone who has been Spirit baptized without empowerment has experienced a “purpose-less” baptism. Surely there has to be more to the experience than this? More will be said on this topic when we propose some alternatives later in the chapter.

### 3.2.3 Evidenced by Speaking in Tongues:

We come now to the assertion about Pentecostal Spirit baptism that is perhaps the most problematic from a cognitive point of view: that the initial evidence of Spirit baptism is speaking in other tongues or glossolalia. Indeed, the issue of glossolalia has received special attention over the years.<sup>49</sup> The classical Pentecostal position is summed up well by Myer Pearlman, who asks the question: “what is the evidence that one has experienced the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?”<sup>50</sup> He responds by claiming that every case in the book of Acts where the results of the impartation of the Spirit are described, there is “an ecstatic speaking in a language that the person has never learned”.<sup>51</sup> The earliest newsletter published by the church at Azusa Street indicates the conviction that these tongues were a continuation of the New Testament narrative:

*The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a gift of power upon the sanctified life; so when we get it we have the same evidence as the Disciples received on the Day of Pentecost, in speaking in new tongues.*<sup>52</sup>

Many would argue that tongues are not given the same place of importance or prominence today that they once enjoyed, but for a long time this gift was seen as a crucial and evidential aspect of Spirit baptism.

In fact, this doctrine of initial evidence is already seen by many as Pentecostalism’s unique contribution to Christianity. As Dayton has demonstrated, the Pentecostal concept of Spirit baptism originated in late nineteenth-century revivalism and was by no means unique to

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<sup>49</sup> Studies relating to glossolalia have ranged from simplistic biblical arguments to more nuanced theological treatments like Gerald Hovenden, *Speaking in Tongues*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Mark J. Cartledge, *Speaking in Tongues* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2006). There have also been a number of psychological and sociological studies, although these aspects are beyond the ambit of this paper.

<sup>50</sup> Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*, 313.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Pentecost Has Come,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (1906): 2.

Pentecostalism.<sup>53</sup> Rather, it was only “the experience of speaking in tongues as the evidence of having received the baptism with the Holy Spirit” that set Pentecostalism apart.<sup>54</sup>

*Had it not been for the exercise of the gift of tongues, it seems certain that Pentecostals would have been allowed to remain part of the holiness movement. As it was, they were ostracized because of their insistence that the gift of new languages that they had encountered was the same as that in the scriptures.*<sup>55</sup>

This firm stance on the role of tongues as initial evidence soon became a pillar of Pentecostal doctrine. Grant Wacker explains:

*Institutional prescriptions and proscriptions sheathed the initial evidence doctrine in the hard steel of church discipline. With few exceptions, by the mid-1910s only those who had experienced or were wholeheartedly seeking baptism with tongues found themselves eligible for ordination as pastors or endorsement as missionaries.*<sup>56</sup>

Tongues, therefore, very quickly became a prerequisite for full acceptance into the Pentecostal community.<sup>57</sup>

As with the doctrine of subsequence, the Pentecostal belief that tongues should accompany Spirit baptism is taken largely from certain passages in Acts (2:1-21, 8:5-24, 10:34-48, 19:1-7).<sup>58</sup> There is the underlying assumption that these passages in Acts provide a normative pattern for our contemporary experience of the Spirit. A very interesting study on tongues in the early history of the Pentecostal movement in Great Britain comes from Neil Hudson.<sup>59</sup> Not surprisingly, in the beginning “the attention paid to the testimonies of the experiences [of this new phenomena of tongues] overtook any clear explanation of them”.<sup>60</sup> But this initial period of experiential euphoria was naturally and inevitably followed by “a period of evaluation”.<sup>61</sup> Hudson argues that, by 1925, tentative answers had been given to most of the major questions about the gift of tongues.<sup>62</sup> These answers formed the basis of the default Pentecostal position on tongues for many years to come. Hudson suggests that, for early Pentecostal Christians, “the fact that they could point to a tangible

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<sup>53</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 87ff.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>55</sup> Neil Hudson, "Strange Words and Their Impact on Early Pentecostals," in *Speaking in Tongues*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge, *Strange Words* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 57.

<sup>56</sup> Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 43.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>58</sup> Petts, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," 101.

<sup>59</sup> Hudson, "Strange Words and Their Impact on Early Pentecostals."

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

experience that vindicated their claim to have had a secondary spiritual encounter was a relief".<sup>63</sup> In this way the appeal of evidential tongues was pragmatic as well as spiritual.

The defenses written over the years about tongues as initial evidence have been many and varied. Possibly the earliest comprehensive explanation of the doctrine was written by Carl Brumback.<sup>64</sup> In his own words, Spirit baptism "is of a transcendent and miraculous character, producing extraordinary effects which are visible to the onlooker, its initial oncoming being signaled by an utterance in other tongues".<sup>65</sup> He correctly states that the absence of the spiritual experience makes it impossible for someone to speak with authority on the subject.<sup>66</sup> But he immediately turns his attention from the experience itself to the biblical accounts of glossolalia as evidence for the doctrine. In his mind, "any view of Scriptural phenomena, whose conclusions have been gained as a result of a modern, psychological approach, and not as a result of a reverent study of the phenomena in the light of other like phenomena in the Scriptures, will almost certainly be false".<sup>67</sup> This is not really surprising as most early defenses of tongues go to great lengths to emphasize that the Bible should be the ultimate source of authority on the subject. Brumback goes so far as to say that the Pentecostal movement is "thoroughly fundamental" and shares all the great doctrines of the church with evangelicals.<sup>68</sup> He looks to the book of Acts for a detailed description of Spirit baptism as experienced by early believers, then states that "what we find there should be that which is the pattern for all future baptisms or fillings with the Holy Ghost".<sup>69</sup> His conclusion is that "without this evidence [tongues] there can be no fully scriptural baptism with the Holy Ghost".<sup>70</sup> He finishes his study with the "hope, brethren, that this volume has strengthened your belief in the Scripturalness of our Pentecostal teaching with regard to speaking with other tongues".<sup>71</sup> Such a hardline stance on tongues was quite common in the early years of the movement.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>64</sup> Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* (London: Elim Publishing Company, 1946).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>72</sup> That is not to say that all Pentecostals held this dogmatic view of initial evidence in the early years. Early Pentecostal leaders like Alexander Boddy and Gerrit Polman believed that love was the evidence of Spirit baptism rather than tongues (Hudson, "Strange Words and Their Impact on Early Pentecostals," 65). Indeed, William Seymour came to the conclusion that tongues could only be viewed as the evidence of Spirit baptism if they were accompanied by "divinely-given" love (Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission & Revival* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006], 178). Others suggested that there was no absolute biblical statement to support a rule of tongues. Hudson notes that early Pentecostals in the UK and Europe were certainly not agreed on the notion of tongues as initial evidence (Hudson, "Strange Words and Their Impact on Early Pentecostals," 53).

More recent studies on glossolalia usually take a softer view. Hollenweger believes that “as Pentecostal scholars learned Greek and became New Testament professors in reputable universities and colleges, they realized that the doctrine of the initial evidence was difficult to defend”.<sup>73</sup> Hovenden, for example, examines the biblical phenomenon of tongues speech within the context of “inspired speech” in the ancient pagan and Jewish worlds.<sup>74</sup> He spends significant time examining the use of tongues in the Lukan and Pauline writings, but tends to be more conservative than many Pentecostal authors in his assertions. While recognizing that “tongues were a normal, and possibly widespread, part of the early church’s experience”, he stops well short of aligning himself with the view of tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism.<sup>75</sup> Others have attempted to reframe the doctrine of evidential tongues in broader theological terms. Macchia, for example, has proposed that tongues be viewed as a sacramental sign of Spirit baptism rather than evidential proof that Spirit baptism has been received.<sup>76</sup> There is obviously increasing recognition amongst Pentecostal scholars that the doctrine of initial evidence, at least as it has traditionally been presented, can be problematic.

There are a number of reasons for this. Most importantly, there is a question surrounding the entire notion of “evidence” in this context. Chan acknowledges the difficulty with a term like “evidence” in that it could be misunderstood as necessitating a causal connection.<sup>77</sup> In the same way that one does not need to cry in order to be sad, Chan argues that one does not need to speak in tongues in order to be filled with the Spirit. Therefore, “glossolalia does not have the status of proof”, and for this reason Chan prefers to see Spirit baptism and glossolalia as concomitant.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, he argues that glossolalia is the most natural concomitant of Spirit-filling:

*When one experiences the coming of the Spirit in such a manner, the most natural and spontaneous response is glossolalia. Like the gift of tears, glossolalia is not something to be sought but something to be received freely as a gift.*<sup>79</sup>

Along similar lines, Welker has strongly questioned the Scriptural basis for an automatic connection between the descent of the Spirit and speaking in tongues.<sup>80</sup> He notes that several passages in Acts (4:31; 8:17; 9:17; 11:15) provide accounts of people being filled with the Holy Spirit without the gift of tongues following.

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<sup>73</sup> Hollenweger, "Rethinking Spirit Baptism," 166.

<sup>74</sup> Hovenden, *Speaking in Tongues*.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>76</sup> Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words."

<sup>77</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 58.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 266.

As with the doctrine of subsequence, there is also the challenge of establishing a normative pattern based on a relatively small number of anecdotal examples. Henry I. Lederle has made this abundantly clear in his ecumenical analysis of the doctrine of initial evidence.<sup>81</sup> In addition to the lack of conclusive biblical evidence, Lederle warns against trying to pin down the dynamic presence and power of the Spirit to one particular charismata. Like Macchia and Chan, he sees in the doctrine of initial evidence the post-Enlightenment preoccupation with “empirical verification, intellectual guarantees, and linear causality”.<sup>82</sup> This has led to the doctrinal formalization (initial evidence) of a vibrant spiritual experience (glossolalia) which was neither necessary nor helpful. Perhaps the challenges created by this doctrinal formalization have contributed to what Macchia suspects is a general lack of understanding about initial evidence amongst Pentecostals.<sup>83</sup> This lack of understanding may well indicate that the doctrine of initial evidence fails to function cognitively.

Finally, it is important to distinguish between the doctrine of initial evidence as a doctrinal or theological statement about tongues, and the phenomenon of tongues as a Pentecostal experience. As with subsequence, the failure of the doctrine to function cognitively does not mean the experience itself has no place in Pentecostal spirituality. To propose this would be to ignore countless testimonies. In fact, I will suggest in later chapters that the phenomenon of tongues in relation to Spirit baptism has significance and meaning quite apart from evidential value. The point here is simply to highlight that the common Pentecostal explanation for tongues, framed as it has been in terms of initial evidence, presents some cognitive challenges.

### 3.2.4 Summary:

Thus far, this chapter has evaluated the common assertions about Pentecostal Spirit baptism and highlighted the associated challenges relating to the cognitive function of meaning. In light of these challenges, one of the key questions this chapter will address is whether or not the aspects of the Pentecostal experience that evolved into the doctrine of Spirit baptism were the most appropriate. In other words, do the common assertions that we have discussed above actually describe the most important aspects of the Pentecostal experience?

One of the challenges with identifying the core assertions or judgements made about Pentecostal Spirit baptism is that the individual experience can be very different for different people. With the

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<sup>81</sup> Henry I. Lederle, "Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement: An Ecumenical Appraisal," in *Initial Evidence*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1991).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>83</sup> Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words."

exception of speaking in tongues, the manifestations or psychological phenomena that accompany the experience have rarely been prescribed. Nearly 40 years ago, Durasoff wrote of the experience that it “may be a hushed experience with prayer ascending in little more than a whisper, it may be conversational in tone, or it may be an ecstatic, explosive outbreak accompanied by waves of joyful exhilaration”.<sup>84</sup> Even a cursory examination of early Pentecostal testimony will show this statement to be true. However, as Pentecostal Christians began to reflect on their own experiences, they made judgements about aspects of the experience which they deemed to be normative and therefore formed the basis of doctrine on the subject. The result for the most part was the three common assertions that we have just considered.

Furthermore, the traditional arguments for Spirit baptism have been primarily apologetic and have attempted to defend the characteristics and practicalities of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. In a pragmatic effort to answer the question: “is this a valid religious experience?”, Pentecostals have usually attempted to locate the experience in Scripture and build an explanation for the experience accordingly. The challenge is that such explanations only seem to function cognitively within a Pentecostal realm of common sense. That is, within the Pentecostal community at a particular point in time, and even then only to a limited degree. When these explanations or judgements are submitted to the accumulation of knowledge in the larger world mediated by meaning, to which Lonergan referred, they attract criticism.

Therefore, rather than attempt to defend these common assertions or explanations, the remainder of this chapter will propose and build on the answer to a more fundamental question: what is the key truth that should be asserted about the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism? In answer to this question many would automatically refer to the notions of subsequence, initial evidence, and enduement with power. But the difficulty with using these assertions to establish the cognitive plausibility of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is that they only describe the characteristics of the experience rather than the experience itself. Subsequence relates to the timing of the experience, and initial evidence or enduement with power both relate to the evidence or results of the experience. What has been consistently overlooked is the essence of the experience itself. Pentecostal writer Donald Gee captures something of this when he writes: “Only a powerful inward experience supplies an adequate reason for outward manifestations of the

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<sup>84</sup> Steve Durasoff, *Bright Wind of the Spirit: Pentecostalism Today* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 5.



Spirit, such as speaking with tongues, physical shakings, or cries of ecstasy".<sup>85</sup> It is this inward experience that we wish to bring into focus.

So, our starting point for moving forward must be to identify the key truth/s that we wish to assert about the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. These assertions must describe the experience itself rather than just the characteristics of the experience. My approach to this end will be to use the language of "Spirit baptism" itself to highlight two key assertions that are implicitly made even if they are not always acknowledged. I believe that this will provide a doctrinal and theological foundation for Spirit baptism, or at least the genesis of one, that is generally more stable than the foundation provided by the common assertions mentioned above. This seems to me to be an important and timely endeavour for Pentecostalism. Ekaputra Tupamahu asks a very pertinent question when he wonders what our response will be when a new generation of Pentecostals asks the question: "Why do we have to experience baptism in the Spirit? What is it for?"<sup>86</sup> In fact, I believe that these questions are already being asked. Tupamahu continues by saying that "if we do not provide a deep theological reflection to the things that we believe, it will not be surprising that many will surely abandon the Pentecostal doctrine".<sup>87</sup>

### 3.3 Identifying the Core Assertions about Spirit Baptism:

The premise for this section is that, rather than focusing on certain characteristics of the experience of Spirit baptism (e.g. the timing or the results), the key consideration must be the experience itself. As several authors have indicated, the transition from experience to doctrine has always been difficult for Pentecostals. Unfortunately, the end result is often a doctrine that fails to capture the richness of the lived experience or to reflect the true essence of the experience. As Poloma recognizes, one dilemma is the creation of rigid doctrines and religious legalisms set up in an attempt to capture and reproduce the charisma of the original movement.<sup>88</sup> This leads to the replacement of "right experience" with "right belief". But Spirit baptism is firstly an encounter engaged by experience and only secondly a doctrine.<sup>89</sup> Blumhofer is highly critical of the dogmatic formulations that have been used to describe the experience of Spirit baptism:

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<sup>85</sup> David A. Womack, *Pentecostal Experience: The Writings of Donald Gee* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1993), 233.

<sup>86</sup> Ekaputra Tupamahu, "Biblical Versus Sacramental Approach: A Comparative Study of Robert Menzies and Simon Chan's Views on Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 2 (2007): 265.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>88</sup> Poloma, "Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God," 27.

<sup>89</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 107.

*Gradually, Pentecostals came to be identified as those who believed that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a discrete experience always accompanied by speaking in tongues. Tongues speech became known as the uniform initial evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This dogmatic description, however, fails to capture (1) the process many early Pentecostals typically believed Spirit baptism was part of, (2) the results they insisted authenticated such baptism, or (3) the dispensational significance they assigned it, which developed a climate of anticipation and intensity.<sup>90</sup>*

All of this brings us to the place that we have been striving to reach. I have argued in the previous section that many of the common assertions that Pentecostals have made about Spirit baptism (or the basic judgements that they have made about their experiences) are secondary characteristics of the experience rather than primary elements. As a constructive alternative, I would like to propose some fundamental assertions that I believe relate to the core of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. These assertions about Pentecostal Spirit baptism have the experience itself as their primary focus. The judgements associated with these assertions focus on the essence of the experience rather than phenomenological peculiarities like subsequence and initial evidence. Because the key assertions about Spirit baptism, I believe, can be found in the name itself, some brief comments on the relationship between language and meaning are necessary.

### 3.3.1 To Name is to give Meaning:

That language communicates meaning is surely beyond question. Lonergan claims that “meaning finds its greatest liberation” through its “embodiment in language”.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, the language used to describe the Pentecostal experience, namely the term “Spirit baptism” or “baptism in/with the Spirit”, comes embedded with meaning. This meaning has two facets.

Firstly, there is the historical meaning associated with the language used. By naming their experience Spirit baptism Pentecostals have automatically embedded that experience with meaning derived from the Bible. Not surprisingly, then, Pentecostal defenses of their experience of Spirit baptism have usually depended upon establishing normative patterns from the biblical record for a post-conversion infilling of the Spirit characterized by speaking in tongues. In most cases, it has simply been assumed that Pentecostal Spirit baptism should mirror, in all aspects,

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<sup>90</sup> Blumhofer, *Pentecost in My Soul*, 17.

<sup>91</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 70.

biblical accounts of Spirit baptism. Yet I would argue that this assumption is based on a faulty premise, namely that language always means the same thing or refers to the same intended reality.

I have already suggested in chapter one that it would be overly simplistic to draw a straight line between biblical Spirit baptism and Pentecostal Spirit baptism and suggest that they are one and the same. If nothing else, the highly contextual nature of experience should cause us to question the assumption that two experiences from such vastly different contexts can be identical. But Pentecostals have always seen a general continuity between themselves and the New Testament so that the range of hermeneutical gaps between the two eras are often overlooked or ignored. For example, Durasoff claims that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is nothing new but “first happened 1900 years ago when the Christians received this baptism and spoke in tongues in a Jerusalem upper room”.<sup>92</sup> This attitude is representative of many within the Pentecostal community.

This assurance of continuity has also caused many to overlook the fact that the Pentecostal usage of the terms “Spirit baptism” or “baptism in the Holy Spirit” was a decision based on their own understanding of their experience and does not necessarily mean that the Pentecostal experience should be considered identical to the biblical experience. While this decision was almost certainly based on the Pentecostals’ conviction that their own experience was in continuity with the biblical narrative (Petts explicitly confirms that the Pentecostal terminology is derived from Acts 1:5<sup>93</sup>), there were surely other terms that could have been used. Wakefield has recognized that early Pentecostals “struggled to describe in words what they took to be a divine encounter”.<sup>94</sup> From the earliest days there was no uniformity on the designation to be used for the Pentecostal experience, with “Baptism of the Holy Ghost”, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, and “Fullness of the Spirit” all in common usage.<sup>95</sup> While the final choice of designation was, in all probability, intended to ground the experience in the biblical record and provide exegetical support for the experience, it was nonetheless a choice.

We have already made reference to Gordon Fee’s interesting and useful comment in relation to speaking in tongues or glossolalia:

*The question as to whether the “speaking in tongues” in contemporary Pentecostal and charismatic communities is the same in kind as that in the Pauline churches is moot – and probably somewhat irrelevant. There is simply no way to know. As an experienced phenomenon, it is analogous to theirs, meaning that it is understood to be a supernatural*

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<sup>92</sup> Durasoff, *Bright Wind of the Spirit*, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Petts, “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” 98.

<sup>94</sup> Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy*, 161.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

*activity of the Spirit which functions in many of the same ways, and for many of its practitioners has value similar to that described by Paul.*<sup>96</sup>

I would suggest that the same approach could be used for Spirit baptism. There is simply no way to know whether Spirit baptism in a contemporary, Pentecostal sense is the same in kind as Spirit baptism in the New Testament. It may be better, therefore, to view biblical Spirit baptism as analogous to Pentecostal Spirit baptism rather than identical. In this way Pentecostals can still rightfully claim biblical Spirit baptism as a precedent for their own experience without feeling the burden of absolute conformity.

Secondly, apart from the historical meaning, there is also the meaning of language in its current context. For Pentecostals, the term “Spirit baptism” carries a contextual, communal, and ecclesial meaning that forms the basis for their understanding of the experience. On this basis I suggest that the name itself contains implicit assumptions which are actually the key assertions that Pentecostals are making about their experience. Naming an experience “Spirit baptism” contains two implicit assertions. Firstly, it asserts that it is an action or experience of the Holy Spirit. Yet the involvement of the Spirit has usually just been presumed. In order to demonstrate that the Pentecostal construct of Spirit baptism functions cognitively we have to be able to affirm that this basic assertion is true. But there has been little or no attention paid to several key questions that arise from this assertion. What does it mean to say that the Holy Spirit is involved in an experience? What would we reasonably expect an experience of the Spirit to be like? In Trinitarian terms, why is this an experience of the Spirit in particular and not an experience of God in general? Secondly, the term “Spirit baptism” or “baptism in the Spirit” uses the metaphor of “baptism”. But what does baptism mean in this context? What is significant about being “baptized” in the Spirit? How is this different to other encounters with the Spirit that we may have throughout our Christian life?

By dealing with these two most basic assertions about Spirit baptism, that it is an experience of the Holy Spirit and is a baptismal experience, we are dealing with the core of the experience and the key to its cognitive veracity. But dealing with these issues is not an easy task. How, for example, does one establish the Spirit’s involvement in a particular experience? There are two elements to this task that will provide the structure for the rest of this chapter. Firstly, we must demonstrate that the doctrinal assertion, that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit, is a reasonable and plausible assertion or judgement. This will involve an appeal to sources of authority, the specifics of which will be expounded at the appropriate time and will be aimed at satisfying the cognitive function of meaning. Secondly, we must explore the theological meaning

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<sup>96</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 890.

and implications of this doctrinal assertion. This will provide understanding that both expands and supports the doctrine. The end result should be a doctrinal statement about Spirit baptism that resonates with the Pentecostal experience and provides insight into the meaning of that experience. To explain this approach in more detail we will begin with an excursus on the distinction, within the discipline of theology, between judgement and understanding.

### 3.3.2 The Distinction between Judgement and Understanding:

Anselm famously described theology as “faith seeking understanding” (*fides quaerens intellectum*).<sup>97</sup> While this approach, which has its precedent in Augustine, may sound simple, there is a key insight here. Anselm, like Augustine before him, recognized a distinction between faith as a love for and belief in God, and understanding as the quest for a deeper knowledge of Him. In this way, “knowledge of God not only presupposes faith, but faith also restlessly seeks deeper understanding”.<sup>98</sup> In terms of cognitional processes, this could be described as the distinction between judgement and understanding. In theological parlance, this could be related to the distinction between dogmatics and systematics.<sup>99</sup> Ormerod explains that dogmatic theology involves the proof of beliefs and doctrines through appeal to various sources of authority, like Scripture and Church creeds, as well as the logical clarification and exposition of these beliefs.<sup>100</sup> But the theological process does not stop there. With the recognition that theology is “faith seeking understanding”, Ormerod argues for “a clear distinction between the certainty of faith and the more speculative theological task of understanding what faith held to be true”.<sup>101</sup> In terms of Lonergan’s theological method which guides this thesis, this corresponds to the distinction between the functional specialities of Doctrines and Systematics. Let us turn to Lonergan to explain further.

According to Lonergan, the sixth of his eight functional specialities is “doctrines” which “express judgements of facts and judgements of value”.<sup>102</sup> These doctrines are the result of research, interpretation, history, dialectics, and conversion. But the facts and values expressed in doctrines give rise to further questions. Doctrinal expression may be “figurative or symbolic ... it may be

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<sup>97</sup> *Proslogion*.

<sup>98</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 2.

<sup>99</sup> Some may question whether this distinction actually exists. However, without this distinction, the task of theology can become confused or narrowly conceived in terms of doctrinal defence alone.

<sup>100</sup> Neil Ormerod, *The Trinity: Retrieving the Western Tradition*, Marquette Studies in Theology (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005), 15.

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

<sup>102</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 132.

descriptive and based ultimately on the meaning of words rather than on an understanding of realities ... it may, if pressed, quickly become vague and indefinite".<sup>103</sup> This necessitates the seventh functional speciality of "systematics". Systematics attempts to deal with the questions created by doctrines by developing "appropriate systems of conceptualization, to remove apparent inconsistencies, to move towards some grasp of spiritual matters both from their own inner coherence and from the analogies offered by more familiar human experience".<sup>104</sup> It is through this process that our faith stated in doctrine seeks understanding developed through systematics.

To illustrate, the Scriptures imply the Trinity and various church creeds affirm Trinitarian doctrine. For faith and knowledge this dogmatic theology is enough. However, the quest for understanding demands that we go further and delve deeper to understand the knowledge that holds our faith. This is necessarily a speculative exercise because we are usually trying to comprehend the incomprehensible. Thus this quest for understanding is not intended to produce or prove dogma or doctrine. Rather, our doctrine is enriched and supported by our quest for understanding. This process of "faith seeking understanding" is exemplified in Augustine's psychological analogy of the Trinity for which he has been frequently criticized. However, much of the criticism demonstrates a basic misunderstanding of what Augustine is trying to achieve. Rather than seeking to develop a new doctrine of the Trinity, Augustine is seeking to understand the Trinitarian doctrine that he has already assented to. Ormerod explains it this way:

*What he [Augustine] offers by way of analogy is not knowledge but understanding. For Augustine knowledge is derived from the assent of the mind to the contents of the Church's faith. This is a true knowledge but the mind, while it may understand the words that give expression to our faith, does not understand the realities to which they refer. Such understanding is difficult to attain, at best analogous, and is only the product of a long and pious search. It cannot claim the status knowledge but remains hypothetical.* <sup>105</sup>

This quest for understanding is the purpose of Augustine's psychological analogy of the Trinity and an example of his theological method.

There is one point that may require clarification for some. Because we use the labels "judgement" and "understanding" in respective correlation with "doctrine" and "systematics", it should not be assumed that doctrine is based purely on judgement without understanding. This would be a fideistic approach to judgement and doctrine. Lonergan himself states that doctrine is the result of research, interpretation, history, dialectics, and conversion. These functional specialities cannot

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ormerod, *The Trinity*, 44.

be undertaken without the application of reason and intellect to gain understanding. Rather, in this context, we are using the word “understanding” with a very particular meaning in mind. Specifically, we are referring to the theological task of looking beyond that which can be clearly stated in doctrine to the more nuanced and sometimes speculative task of understanding the theological realities to which the doctrine refers. In simple terms, we are asking and attempting to answer the questions implied by the doctrine. One may well understand the scriptural interpretations and historical circumstances that give rise to a particular doctrine, without any understanding of the theological realities that are assumed within or underpin the doctrine. It is with this latter concept of “understanding” in mind that we proceed.

It is also important to note, once again, that the burden of proof in the theological task is not absolute. Rather, as we have already mentioned, we are concerned with the plausibility and coherence of doctrine rather than certainty. When concern with certainty dominates, “the goal of theology becomes the careful ascertaining of the ‘facts’, that is, what we know to definitely be the case because it is necessarily so”.<sup>106</sup> But in a discipline like theology there are very few doctrines that can meet a standard of certainty and necessity. Ormerod states that “overall the Western theological tradition has viewed the goal of theology not as certainty and necessity but as understanding”.<sup>107</sup> This is also our goal as we attempt to develop a theology of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. Lonergan, as we have already explained, conceptualizes this goal through a distinction between judgement and understanding which he uses to form the basis of his distinction between the functional specialities of Doctrines and Systematics. There are very real consequences if this distinction between dogmatics and systematics collapses. Ormerod believes that “the further contemporary theology moves away from the distinction between dogmatic and systematic issues, the more the ‘facts’ of dogmatic theology become unintelligible and increasingly subject to disputation”.<sup>108</sup> If we don’t strive to understand doctrines they may begin to look like meaningless assertions. Understanding, however, identifies coherence and interrelationships so that doctrines become more coherent and trustworthy. There is always a risk that if people don’t understand they may stop believing.

Regarding Pentecostal Spirit baptism, the question of doctrine or faith relates essentially to that which we are asserting to be true. In this case, it is the key assertions that we have identified in the previous section, namely that Spirit baptism is both an experience of the Holy Spirit and a baptismal experience. We must examine the material derived from our sources of authority then

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 140.

make a judgement of fact or value about whether these doctrines or assertions are true. But that is only the first part of the process. From this doctrine alone we cannot understand the precise nature of the experience of Spirit baptism. While the doctrine may tell us that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit, the quest for understanding immediately poses a number of questions. To these questions we seek answers and understanding through theological reflection and analogy.

With all of this in mind and in order to explore the cognitive function of Spirit baptism, this chapter will essentially follow this theological methodology of judgement and understanding or doctrines and systematics. We will focus mainly on the key assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, but will also provide some brief comment on the significance of the baptism metaphor. In relation to Spirit baptism as an experience of the Holy Spirit, we will begin with a dogmatic or doctrinal analysis of this assertion through an appeal to various sources of authority. The aim is to determine whether this assertion or judgement is coherent and reasonable. If we are to demonstrate that this fundamental assertion about Spirit baptism can function cognitively we must be able to demonstrate that it is a reasonable assertion. In other words, it can reasonably be stated that the Holy Spirit is involved in the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. Then, in the movement from judgement to understanding, we will reflect theologically on the doctrine we have developed and seek to understand it. If our doctrine states that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, how can we understand this in a meaningful way and what is the theological significance of this doctrine?

### 3.4 Spirit Baptism is an Experience of the Holy Spirit:

The claim that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit is, for most Pentecostals, simply assumed and, for those outside Pentecostalism, often overlooked or undervalued. Yet this claim explains something of the importance of the experience to Pentecostals and their unwillingness to give it up despite any cognitive opposition. How, though, can we confirm or refute the action of divinity within a human experience? In relation to this question, Karl Rahner has written that “we must ... at least touch upon the question under what conditions a charismatic phenomenon can in any sense count as an experience of the Spirit, which, according to the dogma of the Church, is the grace-filled, divinising gift of God to justified mankind”.<sup>109</sup> To be able to do this, “one would have to indicate a category in which to locate religious phenomena, in such a way that on the one hand their human reality could be appreciated and, at the same time, critically examined, and on the

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<sup>109</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations Volume XVI*, 36.



other hand they could be judged, at least under certain conditions, to be in fact what they claim to be, that is the action of the Spirit of God".<sup>110</sup> This is certainly a difficult task given that "religious experience has always been a difficult thing for humans to judge".<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, by reference to the phenomenology of a religious experience we may be able to ascertain whether the observable or reportable aspects of that experience are what we might expect to see in an experience of divinity. Certainly, this will never attain the status of definitive proof which is why the language of evidence in relation to religious experience is problematic. But, as we have already mentioned, the goal of this study is plausibility and coherence rather than irrefutable proof.

The challenge of this approach, highlighted by Rahner above, is that religious experiences contain both human and divine elements. Given that it is obviously beyond our capability as human beings to directly observe and evaluate divine action in a metaphysical sense, discerning the action of divinity in human experience is quite challenging. Rahner acknowledges this by distinguishing between the categorial content of an experience (that content which connects us to our concrete reality), and the transcendent experience of grace which is at the heart of the divine-human encounter. In his mind, the categorial content of religious experiences cannot be made into a clear and decisive criteria for the presence or absence of genuine religious experiences of grace. In other words, even if the categorial content of an experience "arouses justified misgivings or even should be rejected altogether", there is still the possibility that the Holy Spirit is present in that experience (and vice versa).<sup>112</sup> That is not to say, however, that the categorial content of an experience is irrelevant, because "an experience ... has more chance of being genuine, that is, of being a real transcendent experience of grace which touches the core of personal freedom, if the categorial content is objectively correct".<sup>113</sup> In simple terms, if the phenomenology of a religious experience is what we might reasonably expect to see in an experience of the Holy Spirit then there is a much better chance that this experience is genuinely so. This, in essence, is the philosophy that we will adopt for our doctrinal analysis of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

How, then, can we demonstrate that the phenomenological characteristics of Pentecostal Spirit baptism are characteristics that might reasonably be associated with an experience of the Holy Spirit? As with all such judgements, there must be an inevitable appeal or commitment to certain sources of authority. Indeed, we can only accept or reject judgements and doctrines based on their

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>111</sup> Terry L. Cross, "The Divine-Human Encounter - Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Experience," *Pneuma* 31 (2009): 6.

<sup>112</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations Volume XVI*, 49.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

compatibility (or non-compatibility) with our selected sources of authority. We will identify and justify our chosen sources of authority shortly. By submitting the phenomenological characteristics of Spirit baptism to these sources of authority, we are aiming to establish a plausibility structure for the basic assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit. If this can be achieved we can demonstrate that this assertion can function cognitively, and we also have the basis for a coherent doctrine of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. Such an analysis, though, requires that we first develop a basic phenomenology of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. This could quite reasonably be a research project in its own right, but our phenomenology here will be brief and will rely on the work of others for the gathering and analysis of empirical evidence.

### 3.4.1 Phenomenology:

Although there has been significant psychological study into glossolalia to date,<sup>114</sup> there has been little research into a phenomenology of the initial experience of Spirit baptism.<sup>115</sup> In recognition of this neglect, Williamson and Hood have attempted a phenomenological exploration of Spirit baptism in an attempt to discover what constitutes the experience and how that experience represents the phenomenon of Spirit baptism.<sup>116</sup> Based on their interviews and analysis, six interdependent themes were identified to describe the experience of Spirit baptism: connection with God, physical sensations, magnified feelings, prayer language, certain knowing, and hard to describe.<sup>117</sup> Each of these themes were present in the responses of the majority of participants. They also noted that all participants in their study described their experience of Spirit baptism as being different from all other experiences they had previously had with God. The consensus was that "Spirit baptism is an experience that transcends all attempts to adequately describe with words ... to relate, one has to experience it for oneself".<sup>118</sup> Their phenomenological description of Spirit baptism based on the feedback from all participants was as follows:

*The experience of Spirit baptism begins with immediate awareness of a compelling connection with God as a doubtless reality. This connection is marked by bodily sensations*

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<sup>114</sup> Part of the issue may be that there has been insufficient distinction between the experience of Spirit baptism and the associated phenomenon of glossolalia. For example, Kenneth DeShane sets out to analyze the experience Pentecostals undergo when receiving Spirit baptism, but focuses almost entirely on glossolalia. Kenneth DeShane, "A Morphology for the Pentecostal Experience of Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Western Folklore* 62, no. 4 (2003).

<sup>115</sup> W. Paul Williamson and Ralph W. Hood, "Spirit Baptism: A Phenomenological Study of Religious Experience," *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* (2010): 1.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. These themes are described in more detail in their article but have only been named here.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

*that are variously described as: an aroma of sweetness; a fire that burns from the inside out; a weakness that sometimes leaves the body unable to stand; and a wave of energy. The experience involves an expansion of feelings variously approximated as: an intoxication; an abiding love; a peaceful calm; and exceeding happiness and joy. The experience further involves the speaking of an unknown language – one that signifies Spirit baptism itself, and one that allows for supernatural communication of the inexpressible and unknowable in prayer and praise to God. The magnitude of Spirit baptism is such that it convinces the recipient of salvation and of deeper realities in God, all of which cannot be adequately captured in words.*<sup>119</sup>

Although the sample group for this study was very small, we will demonstrate shortly that the phenomenological themes suggested here do seem to resonate with many first-hand accounts of Spirit baptism.

In another study, Gonti Simanullang has also attempted a phenomenological study of Spirit baptism within the context of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.<sup>120</sup> While it could be argued that a phenomenology in this context may not be immediately relevant for the Pentecostal experience, there is certainly a connection between the Pentecostal movement and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Furthermore, there are some notable similarities between Simanullang's results and those reported above. His primary conclusion is that "the essence or meaning of the phenomenon known as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' is for those interviewed in this study a connectedness with the reality, presence and action of God".<sup>121</sup> This bears an obvious relation to the theme of "connection with God" from the study by Williamson and Hood above. Interestingly, a number of participants identified that the sense of God's loving presence was strong which again relates to "connection with God" and could also relate to "certain knowing". Moreover, there was also a strong relationship between Spirit baptism and bodily and emotional feelings as reported by the participants.<sup>122</sup> As Simanullang notes, "the experience is felt as in intense, distinctive, fascinating, and permeating reality, involving physical, emotional, and spiritual sensations".<sup>123</sup> The physical and emotional sensations were many and varied:

*Physical sensations are varied. The body feels hot and shaky. There seems a loss of power over self until at a certain point they cannot but fall to the ground. In some cases, their*

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Gonti Simanullang, "'Baptism in the Holy Spirit': A Phenomenological and Theological Study" (Melbourne College of Divinity, 2011).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 96-101.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 102.

*heart pulse is sensed as faster and the tongue seems out of control ... Emotional feelings range from tears and sadness to delight, peacefulness, and ease. Some participants cried hysterically. It would seem to be tears of joy, their worries gone. The feelings of joy, peacefulness and ease are dominant ... Spiritual sensations involve the feeling of being truly loved and/or embraced by God, who is sensed as close, present and real.*<sup>124</sup>

These physical, emotional, and spiritual sensations bear an obvious correlation to the themes of “physical sensations” and “magnified feelings” identified by Williamson and Hood. Finally, Simanullang agrees with Williamson and Hood that many participants found their experience hard to describe.<sup>125</sup>

If we use the phenomenological themes from the study by Williamson and Hood (**connection with God, physical sensations, magnified feelings, prayer language, certain knowing, and hard to describe**), bearing in mind that these themes are generally supported by Simanullang’s study, it can easily be demonstrated that various Pentecostal testimonies of Spirit baptism reinforce the presence and commonality of these themes. For example, after noting commonalities in early Pentecostal accounts of Spirit baptism, Grant Wacker explains that there was usually an intensity of physical sensations (associated with the power of God) and the baptism often involved ecstatic experiences closely related to tongues.<sup>126</sup> McMahan also describes Spirit baptism as emotionally and physically overwhelming, and usually accompanied by a flood of emotions or physical manifestations.<sup>127</sup> Reference to a few first-hand testimonies, in which I have highlighted important phrases, will further illustrate the point. While there are numerous testimonies of Spirit baptism available, just a few examples will be included here.<sup>128</sup>

Frank Bartleman, involved in the original Pentecostal assembly at Azusa Street, said of his own baptism that “it is impossible to describe the experience accurately. It must be experienced to be appreciated”.<sup>129</sup> This obviously resonates with the theme “hard to describe”. Bartleman’s diary also recounts another testimony of Spirit baptism:

*The girls in India, so wonderfully wrought upon and baptized with the Spirit, began by terrifically beating themselves, under pungent conviction of their need ... When delivered, they **jumped up and down for joy for hours without fatigue**, In fact, they were stronger for*

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>126</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 38.

<sup>127</sup> Oliver McMahan, "A Living Stream: Spiritual Direction within the Pentecostal/Charismatic Tradition," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 30, no. 4 (2002): 337.

<sup>128</sup> More first-hand accounts of Spirit baptism can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>129</sup> Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (Florida: Bridge-Logos, 1980), 80.

it. They cried out **with the burning that came into and upon them**. Some fell as they saw a great light pass before them, while **the fire of God burned** the members of the body of sin, pride, anger, love of the world, selfishness, uncleanness, etc. They neither ate nor slept until the victory was won. Then **the joy was so great** that for two or three days after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they did not care for food.<sup>130</sup>

Elements of our phenomenology are clearly evident here: connection with God, physical sensations and magnified feelings. Although Bartleman makes no reference here to a prayer language, he states elsewhere that “all who received this ‘baptism’ spoke in ‘tongues’”.<sup>131</sup> When William Seymour, the founder of the Azusa Street congregation, finally received his baptism in the Spirit, he fell on the floor as though dead and then spoke in tongues.<sup>132</sup>

In his history of the Azusa Street mission and revival, Cecil M. Robeck Jr. records several first-hand accounts of Spirit baptism from early Pentecostal Christians:

*And the **power of God came upon me** until I **dropped to the floor**. I was under the power of God for about an hour and a half, and it was there that all pride, and self, and conceit disappeared, and I was really dead to the world, for **I had Christ within in His fullness**. I was baptized with the Holy Ghost and **spoke in a new tongue**.<sup>133</sup>*

Also, along similar lines:

*He finished the work on my vocal organs ... and **spoke through me in unknown tongues**. I arose, perfectly conscious outwardly and inwardly that I was fully baptized in the Holy Ghost, and **the devil can never tempt me to doubt it**. First I was conscious that **a living person had come into me**, and that He possessed even my physical being, in a literal sense, in so much that He could at His will take hold of my vocal organs, and speak any language He chose through me. **Then I had such power on me and in me** as I never had before. And last but not least, **I had a depth of love and sweetness in my soul that I had never dreamed of before, and a holy calm possessed me, and a holy joy and peace**, that is deep and sweet beyond any thing I ever experienced before, even in the sanctified life. And O! Such victory as He gives me all the time.<sup>134</sup>*

Robeck explains of these early testimonials: “when they tried to explain what had happened to them, they began with ordinary words, moved quickly to the word pictures of metaphorical speech,

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>132</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 69.

<sup>133</sup> Adolph Rosa cited in *ibid.*, 178.

<sup>134</sup> William Durham cited in *ibid.*, 180.

and then, as they struggled to express themselves, came to the end of words altogether".<sup>135</sup> It certainly seems that there is an underlying sense of ineffability in a number of these accounts. Further examples could be given (and more testimonies have been included in Appendix A), but the examples already provided are sufficient to make our point. In short, all of the phenomenological themes described by Williamson and Hood can be observed in one or more of these accounts, and therefore these six themes will form the substance of our phenomenology of Spirit baptism moving forward.

Admittedly, developing a phenomenology of an experience like Spirit baptism is difficult because of the varied nature of individual experience and the difficulty in describing the phenomenon itself. This may be why the doctrine of initial evidence was so prominent in early Pentecostalism – one could know for certain that they were baptized in the Spirit because speaking in tongues was the external confirmation of an invisible reality.<sup>136</sup> As we have repeatedly stated, however, we are only seeking verification that Spirit baptism could plausibly and reasonably be considered an experience of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, early Pentecostals firmly believed that their experience was a divine encounter.<sup>137</sup> The sheer magnitude of the experience, the peculiar physical and emotional manifestations, the prayer language, and the strong feeling of connection to and confidence in God all point in this direction. However, in order to further support this assertion, we will now appeal to two sources of authority: the authority of the experience itself and the authority of Scripture. The next section will begin by addressing the question of authority and then explain the selection of the two sources of authority I have just mentioned.

### 3.4.2 The Question of Authority and the Chosen Sources:

It is inevitable, as we will demonstrate below, that in all matters of faith there is a choice to believe in certain sources as authoritative. This does not mean, however, that such a choice based on belief is arbitrary or unreasonable. Ormerod has argued for the "reasonableness" and "intelligibility" of the Christian faith in general insofar as doctrines can be shown to be based on a solid "plausibility structure", and that is the approach we are taking here.<sup>138</sup> Lonergan also demonstrates that belief is an absolutely necessary part of humanity's existence.<sup>139</sup> Through belief we accept knowledge that derives from beyond our own immediate experience:

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>136</sup> Yun, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 145.

<sup>137</sup> Blumhofer, "Pentecost in My Soul", 16.

<sup>138</sup> Ormerod, *The Trinity*, 93.

<sup>139</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 41.

*His [humanity's] understanding rests not only on his own but also on the experience of others, and its development owes little indeed to his personal originality, much to his repeating in himself the acts of understanding first made by others, and most of all to presuppositions that he has taken for granted because they commonly are assumed and, in any case, he has neither the time nor the inclination nor, perhaps, the ability to investigate for himself.<sup>140</sup>*

In this way much of our “knowledge” is not knowledge at all but belief in common assumptions. And, Lonergan argues, it is reasonable belief insofar as it is guided and informed by a process of critical analysis and judgements of value.<sup>141</sup> At any rate, the alternative to belief is a regression to primitivism in which each person must rediscover or relearn all knowledge based on their own personal experiences and observations. Not only is this unnecessary, it is also impossible. Thus, whether we recognize it or not, we are constantly making choices to accept, and believe in, various sources of knowledge as authoritative.

Interestingly, at a later stage, Lonergan expands this notion of belief in general to develop his concept of religious belief in particular. Religious belief, in his mind, involves both an inner word and an outer word. He begins with the recognition that there are two types of knowledge: factual knowledge acquired through experience, understanding, and verification, or knowledge reached “through the discernment of value and the judgements of value of a person in love”.<sup>142</sup> This second type of knowledge is therefore knowledge born of love, and faith is the particular type of knowledge born when “the love is God’s love flooding our hearts”.<sup>143</sup> When this occurs the question of God’s existence and nature is no longer the primary question. Rather, the primary question becomes one of decision in that I must choose what my response to the love of God will be. Clearly, the starting point for faith according to this model is the self-revelation of God in His outpouring of divine love. Faith, which underpins the structure of religious belief, is then our response to this particular type of knowledge, born of religious love.<sup>144</sup> In all this Lonergan is demonstrating that faith and religious belief are not unreasonable, in the sense that they lack reason, but are rather based on a reasonable response to the love of God poured into our hearts. This love of God poured out into our hearts is the inner word of God’s love.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 41-42.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 118.

Obviously, though, this inner word is not based on factual knowledge derived purely from experiencing, understanding, and verifying. By recognizing this we acknowledge that the foundation of religious belief is first and foremost faith in the inner word that is the gift of God's love.<sup>145</sup> Yet there is also the outer word of the religious tradition and doctrine based on this inner word of God's love. This outer word could be described as an expression of our understanding of the experience of God's love poured into our hearts, and is mediated to us through various sources. Furthermore, this outer word, as an expression of the inner word, must be continually analysed and verified to ensure its truthfulness and faithfulness to the inner word. The results of that analysis will determine which mediating sources of this outer word can be accepted as authoritative and which should be rejected. In this way religious belief in this outer word involves fundamental decisions about "revelation and inspiration, scripture and tradition, development and authority, schisms and heresies".<sup>146</sup> Ultimately, therefore, the question of faith in certain doctrines comes down to an informed decision about sources of authority, and making this decision is an unavoidable part of religious belief. Thus it is not a question of whether we need sources of authority, but rather which sources we will choose. With that foundation established, we can now turn to the authorities we have chosen for this study mentioned above: the authority of the experience itself and the authority of Scripture.

The first source of authority, the authority of the experience itself, is often undervalued. But at the risk of sounding overly simplistic, we cannot ignore life. In other words, our experiences and the experiences of our community cannot and should not be ignored. We have already gone to great lengths in the previous chapter to demonstrate that experience can function as a valid source of doctrine. While there is no need to repeat those arguments here, it is important to recognize the role that community context plays in developing and validating doctrines. In that Pentecostal Spirit baptism developed within a community that read the Scriptures in light of their experience and came to a judgement about that experience, Pentecostal Spirit baptism might be called an ecclesial doctrine. If we accept that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, then the authenticity of the believers in a particular ecclesial community provides the objectivity of the judgement they make. This recognition underlines the authority that an experience can hold when it becomes a communal experience. To then separate the experience from the community by appealing exclusively to sources of authority detached from the community is not objectivity at all.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.



In this case, to evaluate the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism based, for example, on Scripture alone is an attempt to arrive at objectivity without subjects. If objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity then such an exercise would be pointless. Rather, we should allow the testimony of the Pentecostal community to play some part as a source of authority in the development of the doctrine. Therefore, the assertion that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, if indeed that is the assertion of the Pentecostal community, carries implicit authority and should be taken seriously. There is certainly still the need to submit this assertion or doctrine to the accumulation of knowledge in the larger world or to sources of authority outside the community. Indeed, that is the very essence of authentic subjectivity and is the reason why Scripture as a source of authority has also been chosen. But this submission cannot happen in isolation without acknowledging the authority of the experience itself. If the Pentecostal community arrives at a doctrine based on their experience, the authority of the experience itself suggests that the default position should be acceptance of the doctrine without compelling evidence to the contrary. This is one of the reasons why cognitive plausibility and coherence is the standard required rather than absolute proof.

Our second source of authority, Scripture, is possibly the one source of authority acknowledged by all the various Christian traditions. This gives Scripture a unique place of authority within Christianity, although the degree of authority given to Scripture may vary. For example, evangelicals since the time of the reformation have often adopted the maxim “sola scriptura”. James Draper and Kenneth Keathley describe this as the belief in “Scripture only as our final, ultimate base of authority and truth”.<sup>147</sup> While this statement on its own may seem quite reasonable, there are two points that warrant mention. Firstly, there is a level of epistemological naivety in the view that Scripture can function as some kind of objective reality independent of subjects. While Scripture may come from outside a particular community (hence its perceived objectivity), it must still be read by that community and its meaning determined. In this way the objectivity of Scripture still relies on the authenticity of the subjects involved in the reading and interpretation. Secondly, what often accompanies the “sola scriptura” adage is a prevailing suspicion or outright rejection of any other potential sources of authority. In such cases Scripture comes to be viewed as the exclusive, rather than the final, source of authority. Those holding this narrow view would certainly question the use of experience as a valid source of authority. On the other hand, others have recognized that accepting the validity and usefulness of various sources of authority does not necessarily negate or undermine the authority of Scripture. Yves Congar, for

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<sup>147</sup> James T. Draper and Kenneth Keathley, *Biblical Authority* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 9.

example, argues that Scripture can still have absolute value in the sense that it is the “supreme guide to which any others there may be are subjected”.<sup>148</sup> But while other sources of authority in contradiction to Scripture should be rejected, Scripture is not the “sole principle” regulating the belief and life of the church.<sup>149</sup> This is certainly the view espoused within this thesis and within this schema it is quite reasonable to speak of both experience and Scripture as sources of authority.

That being said, I do agree with Congar’s view that Scripture remains the supreme source of authority against which others must be evaluated. Therefore, our approach will be to compare a basic phenomenology of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism with the characteristics, derived from Scripture, one might expect an experience of the Holy Spirit to bear. In this way we can acknowledge the authority inherent in the experience itself, yet submit that experience to the authority of Scripture. It should not be assumed that this study will look anything like the majority of biblical studies on Spirit baptism. My approach throughout has been to relate the doctrine of Spirit baptism to the key assertions that are made about the experience. Whilst not ignoring the “classical” Pentecostal assertions, we are positing at the forefront the assertion that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit. Therefore, we will approach Scripture as a source of authority with a very different question in mind to that which has usually been asked. Pentecostal tradition has usually appealed to Scripture to demonstrate that Spirit baptism is an experience subsequent to conversion and evidenced by speaking in tongues. The challenges of this appeal have been well documented throughout this paper. In this instance, we approach Scripture with a much broader question: does the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism meet our scriptural expectations for what an experience of the Spirit should look like? It is important to remember that, at this stage, we are only concerned to establish the plausibility of the doctrinal statement that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit; understanding the experience comes later.

### 3.4.3 Scripture:

Through an appeal to the authority of Scripture we will now attempt to demonstrate that the phenomenological characteristics of Pentecostal Spirit baptism bear the characteristics of biblical experiences of the Holy Spirit. Before we look at any specific biblical examples, however, we must first acknowledge the challenges that we face in this study. Michael Welker has written a thorough analysis of the work of the Spirit from a biblical perspective,<sup>150</sup> but he is quick to recognize that

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<sup>148</sup> Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1964), 100.

<sup>149</sup> This is obviously within the context of his discussion on the importance of tradition.

<sup>150</sup> Welker, *God the Spirit*.

such an analysis is not without difficulty. Firstly, he identifies a prevailing pessimism in Christianity today about the possibility of saying anything concrete or determinate about the Holy Spirit. Rather, theology has tended to emphasize “the abstract transcendence and otherworldliness, the naked supernaturalness, or the mysterious and numinous character of the Holy Spirit”.<sup>151</sup> Badcock confirms that, from a biblical point of view, “experience of the Spirit has from the beginning been regarded as theologically ambiguous”.<sup>152</sup> This issue is still a concern today: “How do we define what authentic experience of the Spirit and authentic spirituality are?”<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, Welker sets out to develop a “realistic theology” of the Holy Spirit that “does not share the mood of resignation in the face of the difficulty in saying something definite about God’s presence in the Spirit”.<sup>154</sup> Rather, he aims to gain theological access to the “recognizable reality” of the Spirit that mediates God’s presence in the midst of our lives.<sup>155</sup>

The goal of his quest, in my opinion, should be shared and embraced by those involved in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Welker acknowledges that the reasons for the success of the Charismatic Movement are “not easily communicated to outsiders” primarily because there is little or no clarity in this communication.<sup>156</sup>

*Conversations with its members and the copious literature on the distinctive contours and the theology of the Charismatic Movement at the very least make common sense suspicious by virtue of the indeterminacy of their statements. More likely they scare common sense away. Obviously the forms of expression and of exposition are lacking that could communicate the defining impressions and underlying experiences to the outside, to another spectrum of forms of thought, experience, and life.*<sup>157</sup>

Perhaps the work that we are doing here, in comparing a basic phenomenology of Pentecostal Spirit baptism with the characteristics of biblical experiences of the Holy Spirit, may be able to provide the genesis of “forms of expression and of exposition” that will allow this communication to happen more effectively.

This brings us to the second challenge of studying experiences of the Spirit from a biblical perspective, namely that we should not expect to develop a final and conclusive theological system to classify or delineate the work of the Spirit. Welker’s realistic theology embraces the diversity of

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>152</sup> Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth & Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 17.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>154</sup> Welker, *God the Spirit*, 51.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

the biblical testimonies of experiences of the Holy Spirit and does not expect to establish continuity or coherence between all these testimonies. In fact, these biblical testimonies “present a highly differentiated and complex interconnection of testimonies to God’s presence and action – an interconnection that has been tested in a diversity of ways for authenticity, continuity, and fruitfulness of differences”.<sup>158</sup> He argues that “the chief difficulty in understanding the Spirit and the Spirit’s action lay in mediating, on the one hand, the undeniable evidence of the Spirit’s action and, on the other hand, the fact that it cannot be predicted, calculated, or controlled”.<sup>159</sup> He also argues against a homogenization of experiences of the Holy Spirit:

*With regard to metaphysical “totalization”, this means that a realistic theology gives up the illusion that a single system of reference could put God and God’s power at our disposal. God acts neither only in those particular structural patterns of life that are “ours”, nor only in abstract generalizations of those structural patterns. God does not fit into metaphysical constructs that we have designed in harmony with important characteristics of our structural patterns of life. Rather God’s vitality and God’s freedom are expressed in a plurality of contexts and structural patterns of life, including ones that are not automatically compatible with each other.*<sup>160</sup>

This is not to say that we should not expect some degree of uniformity within particular communities, but we should resist the temptation to normalize our own experiences for all communities everywhere. This could function as a warning both to any Pentecostals who would seek to impose their experiences on all Christians everywhere, and to any outside Pentecostalism who would seek to prescribe to Pentecostals the way in which the Spirit should be experienced.

Instead, we should search for interconnections between ours and other experiences of the Spirit whilst remaining sensitive to differences and discontinuities. Maintaining this sensitivity is a difficult task, but is imperative if we want to remain faithful to the diversity of experiences of the Holy Spirit recorded in Scripture.

*In our cultures it is still difficult for us to respond to the action of the Spirit in a way that is sensitive to difference. We should and must change the uncontrolled generalizations made from a specific, typical perspective. These generalizations are perhaps subjectively well-intentioned, but objectively they cause distortion. Such generalizations must be corrected by a diversity of experiences, visions, search movements, and expectations of salvation and deliverance.*<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 25.

As we examine selected biblical experiences of the Spirit in light of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, we are certainly looking for interconnections and similarities. But the presence of differences or discontinuities is also to be expected and should not be cause for alarm. To provide a basic structure for our analysis the phenomenological themes arising from the study by Williamson and Hood will be grouped, where possible, into related pairs.

### **Connection with God/Certain Knowing:**

One of the themes that constantly recurs in testimonies of Pentecostal Spirit baptism is that the experience results in a deeper relationship with, or feeling of connection to, God. While this is obviously a descriptive category rather than an expression of metaphysical reality, there is no compelling reason to be inherently suspicious of an individual's description of their own experience. Furthermore, there is often a "certain knowing" in the sense that the experience provides an assurance of salvation and understanding of the reality of God.<sup>162</sup> It is not at all difficult to find Scriptural examples and principles to support the idea that the Holy Spirit connects us to God and provides assurance of our salvation.

Even before we look at any specific examples, in a broad sense one could argue that this feeling of connection to God is to be expected considering that, in Trinitarian terms, the Holy Spirit is God. With this relationship in mind it makes perfect sense to claim that an experience of the Holy Spirit will bring us closer to or connect us with God. Several authors have actually proposed that Spirit baptism could be understood primarily in terms of a divine self-disclosure. Macchia, for example, has referred to the phenomenon of glossolalia as a theophanic encounter within the context of a divine self-disclosure.<sup>163</sup> The divine self-disclosure that provides the context for tongues in this instance is Spirit baptism. As a divine self-disclosure Spirit baptism may therefore be thought of as a revelatory experience of the Holy Spirit. Chan has also argued that revelation, rather than power, is a more basic category for understanding Spirit Baptism.<sup>164</sup> In this way Spirit baptism can be seen as primarily a revelatory encounter with God resulting in an increased closeness with God. We will discuss the Trinitarian implications of Spirit baptism in more detail when we move beyond doctrine to understanding later in this chapter.

Regarding specific examples, there are a number of Scriptures that could be mentioned in support of this phenomenological theme. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 explains that no one knows the deep things

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<sup>162</sup> Williamson and Hood, "Spirit Baptism: A Phenomenological Study of Religious Experience," 552.

<sup>163</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "Sighs Too Deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992).

<sup>164</sup> Chan, "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence," 206.

of God other than the Spirit of God. As Badcock notes, “this is the very Spirit, however, that is given to Paul and to the Corinthian church, in order that divine illumination might be given”.<sup>165</sup> Thus we can expect the Holy Spirit to deepen our understanding of the reality of God. In exegeting this passage Gordon Fee has described the Spirit as the “link between God and humanity, the quality from God himself who makes the knowing possible”.<sup>166</sup> In experiential terms, “in our reception of the Spirit, we are on intimate terms with none other than God himself, personally and powerfully present”.<sup>167</sup> The feeling of connection to God, experienced by many Pentecostals, is certainly what one might reasonably expect to be the result of an experience of the Holy Spirit.

Along similar lines, Terry L. Cross appeals to Romans 8:14-17 in relation to the “inner witness of the Holy Spirit”.<sup>168</sup> This internal testimony of the Spirit gives us a sense of certainty. While Calvin, for example, understands this certainty only in terms of our adoption as sons and daughters of God and the truthfulness of Scripture, Cross also believes this certainty can relate to “whatever else the Sovereign Spirit wishes to do”.<sup>169</sup> Experiences of the Spirit, therefore, are seen as encounters with God made possible through the agency of the Spirit.<sup>170</sup> Finally, according to 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5, there is a strong sense in which the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our promised future and salvation. While this could be understood purely in terms of the reception of the Spirit at the point of salvation, is it not reasonable to infer that a powerful experience of the Spirit at any point in the Christian life may reinforce this guarantee or assurance?

There is one other interesting point that could be made. Throughout the early years of the Pentecostal movement, arising no doubt from roots within the Wesleyan-holiness tradition, holiness was seen as a necessary prerequisite for Spirit baptism.<sup>171</sup> While this understanding has not, for the most part, endured within Pentecostalism, the concept has parallels in the biblical idea that holiness is a prerequisite for knowing God. Badcock suggests that “it is axiomatic for the writers of the New Testament and for the theologians of the early church that it is impossible to know God without holiness”.<sup>172</sup> If Spirit baptism is viewed as an experiential connection with God it should come as no surprise that holiness was perceived to have a prominent place in preparation

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<sup>165</sup> Badcock, *Light of Truth & Fire of Love*, 18.

<sup>166</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 99.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>168</sup> Cross, "The Divine-Human Encounter," 30.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

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

<sup>171</sup> Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 96.

<sup>172</sup> Badcock, *Light of Truth & Fire of Love*, 144.

for the experience. The relative neglect of this theme in more recent times is perhaps something that Pentecostals need to reconsider.

There are many more Scriptural examples that could be used to support the phenomenological expectation that an experience of the Holy Spirit should connect us with God and provide certain knowing, but I believe the point has been made. Based purely on the Holy Spirit's own divine status and place within the Godhead, it would almost seem self-evident that a genuine encounter with the Holy Spirit should bring the subject into closer connection with God. Moltmann explains that "in the charismatic experience of the Spirit, we experience the reciprocal perichoresis of God and ourselves".<sup>173</sup> This connection with God in the Holy Spirit is therefore an intimate communion of reciprocal indwelling. In light of all that we have discussed it seems perfectly reasonable to state that these two phenomenological themes, drawn from the Pentecostal experience, are valid characteristics of an experience of the Holy Spirit based on the biblical evidence.

#### **Physical Sensations/Magnified Feelings:**

The area of physical manifestations or feelings associated with Spirit baptism is the area in which Pentecostals have often been criticized for excess, and certainly some aspects of that criticism may be warranted. But these criticisms should not obscure the fact that the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism is often accompanied by powerful, even overwhelming, physical sensations and emotional feelings. While certain isolated stories, particularly from the book of Acts,<sup>174</sup> could be cited in support of this phenomenon, Fee argues that the New Testament church had a general expectation that experiences of the Spirit would be accompanied by observable and experienced phenomena.

He points to Galatians 3:1-5 as evidence that the Galatians' own experience of the Spirit was accompanied by experiential phenomena.<sup>175</sup> On the basis of these experiential phenomena Paul was able to provide evidence that they had indeed become children of God. Even though the precise nature of these experiential phenomena is not mentioned, the proof of their existence lies in Paul's appeal to their evidential value:

*Even though Paul seldom mentions any of the visible evidences of the Spirit in such contexts as these, here is the demonstration that the experience of the Spirit in the Pauline churches was very much as that described and understood by Luke – as visibly and experientially*

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<sup>173</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 195.

<sup>174</sup> For example, Acts 2 & Acts 9:18.

<sup>175</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 45.

*accompanied by phenomena that gave certain evidence of the presence of the Spirit of God.*<sup>176</sup>

Fee sees the same phenomena referred to in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6, arguing that “the Thessalonians undoubtedly experienced such phenomena, so that the reminder of Paul’s preaching and their conversion as accompanied by the ‘power of the Spirit’ would have brought to mind this whole complex of empowering phenomena”.<sup>177</sup> Thus, in Pauline churches, the Spirit was not only experienced in conversion, but was also experienced in a dynamic, undoubtedly visible, way.

Fee further supports this idea in his analysis of 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. He argues that the expressive metaphors in this passage “imply a much greater experiential and visibly manifest reception of the Spirit than many have tended to experience in subsequent church history”.<sup>178</sup> While Fee is here referring to the reception of the Spirit at conversion, the basic premise, that experiences of the Spirit can be accompanied by physical (and other) manifestations, could certainly have broader applications. Fee further asserts that the Corinthian’s experience of the Spirit was “a lavish and experienced reality”, so that “the experience of the Spirit was therefore accompanied by visible, evidential phenomena”.<sup>179</sup>

It is important to remind ourselves at this point that we are not limiting our Scriptural study to references specifically relating to biblical Spirit baptism. At best we can only affirm that the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is analogous to the biblical experience, and this makes it possible, and indeed necessary, to look more broadly for biblical examples of experiences of the Holy Spirit. Our key doctrinal assertion, that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit, requires that we search for interconnections between Pentecostal Spirit baptism and biblical experiences of the Holy Spirit. Based on Fee’s argument it seems reasonable to identify the presence of physical phenomena or sensations as one example of such an interconnection or similarity. Elsewhere Fee has expressed his belief that “the Pentecostal experience itself can be defended on exegetical grounds as a thoroughly biblical phenomenon”.<sup>180</sup> In this he appeals in a general sense to the powerfully experiential nature of New Testament spirituality.

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>180</sup> ———, *Gospel and Spirit*, 111.



### **Prayer Language:**

Reference to a prayer language within the context of a phenomenology of Spirit baptism certainly refers to the phenomenon of glossolalia or speaking in tongues. The idea that glossolalia witnesses to a powerful experience of the Spirit has already been well established. As Gunkel proposes, “it [glossolalia] witnessed to an experience of God that was overwhelming, empirically felt and inexpressible with articulate speech”.<sup>181</sup> Macchia has also written that “tongues express an overwhelming experience of God through the Holy Spirit”.<sup>182</sup> That this “overwhelming experience of God through the Holy Spirit” is a reference to Pentecostal Spirit baptism is clearly evident from the context. We have already discussed some aspects of the biblical argument for this phenomenon in relation to Spirit baptism, so this section will be simply a brief recap.

From a biblical perspective, that speaking in tongues or glossolalia *can* accompany an experience of the Spirit is seemingly beyond dispute. Welker states that “speaking in tongues as a consequence of the pouring out of the Spirit and of baptism in the Spirit is attested numerous times in the New Testament”.<sup>183</sup> Mark 16:17, Acts 10:44-46 and 19:6, 1 Corinthians 12:30, 1 Corinthians 13:8, 1 Corinthians 12:10 and 12:28, and 1 Corinthians 14 could all be cited in support of this statement. In two of these cases in particular, Acts 10:44-46 and Acts 19:6, there is a direct correlation between an encounter with the Spirit and speaking in tongues. Paul himself lists speaking in tongues as one of the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:10, and speaks positively of this spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 14:18. Fee also links Romans 8:26-27 very strongly with a prayer language arising from our experience of the Spirit. Not only does the Spirit’s presence guarantee our future hope, but “he also takes an active and encouraging role as we await its realization by assisting us in prayer and interceding with God on our behalf”.<sup>184</sup> In fact, Fee goes so far as to suggest that Paul may be referring to glossolalia in this passage, though he clearly points out that his interpretation cannot be definitively proven and therefore should not be insisted upon.<sup>185</sup>

The challenge for Pentecostals does not lie in demonstrating that tongues *can* accompany an experience of the Spirit, but rather in the insistence that tongues *should* accompany the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. This dogmatic insistence on a causal connection is much more difficult, even impossible, to substantiate from Scripture. There are certainly numerous Scriptural examples of encounters with the Holy Spirit where speaking in tongues was not the

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<sup>181</sup> Cited in Macchia, "Sighs Too Deep for Words," 5.

<sup>182</sup> ———, "Groans Too Deep for Words," 2.

<sup>183</sup> Welker, *God the Spirit*, 265.

<sup>184</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 576.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 577.

result.<sup>186</sup> For this reason, Welker is quite critical of the central place given to tongues within the Pentecostal movement, calling it a “mistaken evaluation” of the relative importance of tongues speech.<sup>187</sup> However, we must not forget the authority of the experience itself and, in this regard, a strong connection between Spirit baptism and tongues is demonstrable. Coupled with the biblical references to tongues resulting from an experience of the Spirit, it seems that one could reasonably assert that a prayer language in the form of glossolalia or tongues may follow a genuine encounter with the Holy Spirit. It must be remembered that we are not trying to prove that all spiritual experiences result in a prayer language or tongues speech, but rather that this is a plausible result of an experience of the Holy Spirit.

### **Hard to Describe:**

At this point it may be helpful to remind ourselves of Robeck’s analysis of early Pentecostal testimonials of Spirit baptism: “when they tried to explain what had happened to them, they began with ordinary words, moved quickly to the word pictures of metaphorical speech, and then, as they struggled to express themselves, came to the end of words altogether”.<sup>188</sup> This observation attests to the general ineffability of the Pentecostal experience. Scripturally, it is difficult to observe this specific phenomenon of ineffability in relation to religious experience because we are essentially looking for a description of indescribability. Yet the ineffability of religious experience has long been recognized by Christian tradition as implied in the Scriptures even if not directly attested to.<sup>189</sup>

For example, Clement of Alexandria presented an argument for the ineffability of God based on a combination of philosophy and Scripture.<sup>190</sup> Also, Augustine, in *De Doctrina Christiana*, recognizes the ineffability of God and attests to “the fact that God is unspeakable”.<sup>191</sup> If we accept this general principle it seems quite reasonable to expect that an experience or encounter with an ineffable God would itself be ineffable. This expectation is further drawn out by Rudolf Otto in his classic book, *The Idea of the Holy*. He describes the experience of the “numinous” as a feeling of “*mysterium tremendum*”,<sup>192</sup> then goes on to explain the mental reaction to this “*mysterium*” in terms of the word “stupor” or “an astonishment that strikes us dumb, amazement absolute”.<sup>193</sup> In other words, the mystery of the numinous is “that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual,

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<sup>186</sup> For example, Acts 4:31, 8:17, 9:17, 11:15.

<sup>187</sup> Welker, *God the Spirit*, 268.

<sup>188</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 186.

<sup>189</sup> See, for example, Job 36:26.

<sup>190</sup> *Stromateis* 5,12.

<sup>191</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana* Book 1, Chapter 6.

<sup>192</sup> Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 12.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

the intelligible, and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the ‘canny’, and is contrasted with it, filling the mind with blank wonder and astonishment”.<sup>194</sup> If Pentecostal Spirit baptism is indeed an experience of the Holy Spirit, should we expect anything less than an experience that is ineffable and hard to describe?

To conclude this section, our analysis of Scripture has been necessarily brief in that it constitutes only a small part of our overall study. Nevertheless, based on a standard of plausibility and coherence, I believe that the examples provided are sufficient to support the doctrinal assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit. If we accept the phenomenological themes proposed by Williamson and Hood and supported by other Pentecostal testimonies as generally representative of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, we can appeal to the authority of Scripture to confirm that these phenomenological characteristics are what one might expect to observe when the human spirit encounters the Spirit of God. From a doctrinal standpoint this is sufficient to demonstrate the cognitive plausibility of the basic Pentecostal assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit.

#### 3.4.4 Understanding:

If we accept the plausibility and coherence of the doctrinal assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, we can now attempt to understand what this assertion actually means. It is important to remember that this process is an extension of the doctrine developed in the previous section rather than an attempt to create new doctrine. We have made a doctrinal assertion and demonstrated its plausibility - now that doctrinal assertion must be understood. We are not attempting to understand every aspect of the phenomenology developed in the previous section, just the key assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit. In this quest for understanding the objective is not theological or metaphysical or ontological certainty. Rather, we seek only to better understand the significance and mystery that Pentecostal Spirit baptism, as an encounter with the Holy Spirit, represents. While there are many possible trajectories for this study, this quest for understanding will be developed with two questions in mind. First, how might we understand or explain theologically what actually happens to the person in Spirit baptism and how the Holy Spirit is present?<sup>195</sup> To answer this question we will consider Spirit baptism in Trinitarian context, as well as several models that could be used for understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in the experience. Second, how is Pentecostal Spirit baptism a unique

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> In terms of Lonergan’s realms of meaning, this could be described as a shift to the realm of interiority.

experience of the Spirit? It is clear that, while Pentecostals have usually embraced ongoing experiences of the Spirit, the experience of Spirit baptism was seen as uniquely significant and important in the process of Christian initiation. In this we will consider the Pentecostal use of baptismal language to describe the experience and what that is intended to signify.

#### 3.4.4.1 A Trinitarian Construct of Spirit Baptism:

To claim that an experience involves an encounter with divinity through the Holy Spirit raises several pertinent questions. How might we understand the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the experience? Why is this an experience of the Holy Spirit in particular and not simply an experience of God? How does the Holy Spirit become present to us through the experience? The starting point we will use for answering these questions is a consideration of Spirit baptism within a Trinitarian context.<sup>196</sup> This will certainly not be the first movement in this direction. Macchia, for example, describes baptism in the Spirit as “participation in God” or “baptism into God”.<sup>197</sup> In other words, Spirit baptism includes participation in the very presence of God and, therefore, participation in His redemptive purpose for creation. For Macchia, Spirit baptism involves a movement from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, and then from the Spirit through the Son towards the Father. Thus the “triune life of God is not closed but involved in the openness of self-giving love”.<sup>198</sup>

*Initiation to the life of the Spirit is not dependent on human experience, but the experience of the kingdom of God in power is certainly involved in Spirit baptism as an eschatological gift of ever-new participation in the life and mission of God.*<sup>199</sup>

This idea of “participation in the life of God” gives Spirit baptism significance and validity as more than just a charismatic experience. Along similar lines, Macchia also states that “Spirit baptism is the will of the Father to indwell the creation through the Spirit in order, by the Spirit, to involve creation in the relationship between the Father and the Son”.<sup>200</sup> In this view, instead of being merely a powerful outpouring of the Spirit into the believer, Spirit baptism also incorporates the believer into the Trinitarian life of God. I believe this idea of “participation in the life of God” can be fruitfully developed and we will return to this shortly.

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<sup>196</sup> Indeed, it is impossible to talk about the Holy Spirit outside of this context.

<sup>197</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 117.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

If this is the case, that Spirit baptism draws us into the Trinitarian life of God, it becomes critically important that we understand, at least as far as is possible, what we mean when we speak of this life. If we are incorporated into and participate in the Trinitarian relationships, we can't possibly understand this until we attempt to understand the relationships between the Spirit and the Father and the Son. In all this it could be said that we are trying to answer a basic question: what do we mean when we talk about the Holy Spirit? We could answer that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, defined in terms of relationship to the other persons of the Trinity. But how do we understand these relationships and how might they inform our understanding of Spirit baptism? In short, we have to develop a set of categories that will allow us to gain insight into the role of the Spirit in the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism.

As indicated above, Macchia has made some effort in this direction and his exploration of Spirit baptism in Trinitarian perspective is certainly an attempt to explain the work of the Spirit in the experience of Spirit baptism. But there is a hint that Macchia relies on the categories of immanence and transcendence as his framework for his model of Trinitarian involvement in Spirit baptism. He suggests both that "the Father does not act directly in the world but remains transcendent", and "the Father acts in the world through the Son and the Spirit as the left and right hands of God".<sup>201</sup> In other words, the Father may be viewed as eternally transcendent while the Holy Spirit is viewed as immanent. This distinction between immanence and transcendence is a philosophical distinction that can easily become the controlling metaphor for talking about the Holy Spirit. In this case, the transcendent Father indwells the creation through the immanent Spirit (in Spirit baptism) in order to involve the creation in the relationship between the transcendent Father and the Son. Yet this model is an inadequate construct because, by virtue of their oneness, the whole Trinity is immanent and the whole Trinity is transcendent. To suggest otherwise would be to undermine the unity of the Godhead and to create an unnecessary chasm between the Father and His creation. While I am in no way suggesting that this is the actual consequence of Macchia's work, there are always dangers associated with the categories of immanence and transcendence in terms of Trinitarian action. So, if this immanent/transcendent construct is inadequate for understanding God's involvement in Spirit baptism, is there another model or analogy that might prove more useful?

I suggest that there is great potential for understanding the inner-Trinitarian relations through Augustine's psychological analogy of the Trinity. Using his psychological analogy, Augustine is trying to understand the basic elements of Trinitarian theology by searching for comparable models

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 119.

in human existence. In simple terms, the Trinity could be described as one God, three persons, and two processions.<sup>202</sup> Augustine's psychological analogy seeks to understand this description, particularly the processions, by looking at the operations of knowing and loving within a single subject.<sup>203</sup> Within this single subject, the operation of knowing produces an inner word which is developed in the process of understanding something and forming a definition. Anyone can repeat a definition without understanding, but this inner word develops when you understand something and can define it in your own terms. When this occurs, there is an interior movement from the moment of understanding to being able to express it. Thus, before there is any sort of expression there is an inner word.

This inner word, Augustine argues, is like the procession of the word in God.<sup>204</sup> There is a movement from understanding to an inner word and to a judgement. In this sense the Father is the act of understanding and the Son is the inner word. The procession of the Son from the Father is analogous to the procession of the inner word from the unrestricted act of understanding. Within a single consciousness, the inner word proceeds from the act of understanding but is distinct from it, in the same way that the Son proceeds from yet it also distinct from the Father within the unity of the Trinity. But how, one might ask, can a word be from God and still be God? Well, under perfect circumstances, the inner word can be a perfect representation of the act of understanding. In this analogy, therefore, the unity between Father and Son is maintained in that, within God, the inner word is a perfect expression of, and therefore equal to, the act of understanding. In Trinitarian terms, the Son is the perfect expression of the Father and therefore equal to the Father.

If the Son is thus understood in terms of the operation of knowing, then the Spirit is understood in terms of the operation of loving. This is not love between the Father and the Son, but love generated by the Father and the Son. If the Son proceeds from the Father in the sense that an inner word proceeds from the operation of knowing, then the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in the sense that love proceeds from knowledge. Augustine is concerned here with a particular type of inner word. The word that he is interested in is the word that breathes forth love. What sort of word is that? It is a word that leads to a judgement of value that says this reality being understood is good and worthy of being loved. Furthermore, Augustine argues that nothing can be loved unless it is truly known. This type of love is grounded in knowledge or, in Trinitarian

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<sup>202</sup> The two processions are the procession of the Son from the Father, and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Because of his understanding of the *filioque*, Augustine saw the Holy Spirit as proceeding from both the Father and the Son.

<sup>203</sup> Ormerod, *The Trinity*, 67-69.

<sup>204</sup> *De Trinitate*, Book 9, Chapters 3-5.

terms, this love is grounded in the Father and the Son. The knowledge of the Son leads to a judgement of value that the Father is worthy of being loved. From that judgement flows an act of love and that act of love is the Holy Spirit. In this way the Holy Spirit proceeds from and is the love of both the Father and the Son.

The strength of this psychological analogy is that it contains a threefold distinction (act of understanding, inner word, act of love), and two processions (word and love) within a single subject (God). While this psychological analogy has been heavily criticised,<sup>205</sup> Ormerod argues that “embedded within it is a wealth of philosophical stances which challenge every age to raise itself to the height of these great minds [of Augustine and Aquinas]”.<sup>206</sup> The critics of this analogy have been, for the most part, those who were “not equal to its challenge”.<sup>207</sup> For our present study, this analogy may provide some insight into understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in the experience of Spirit baptism within a Trinitarian context. Obviously as an analogy it can only be pushed so far, but the image of the Holy Spirit as an act of love proceeding from the Father and the Son may help us when we consider Spirit baptism.

If the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as an act of love, in Spirit baptism it could be said that we are encountering the perfect love of the Father and the Son. It is not that the Holy Spirit mediates the love of the Father and Son to us, as is sometimes implied by the categories of immanence and transcendence, but rather that the Holy Spirit is the very love of God poured into our hearts.<sup>208</sup> In this way the triune God becomes present to us. It is interesting to note that the participants in Simanullang’s phenomenological study reported that the sense of God’s loving presence was strong during their experience of Spirit baptism.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, if the Spirit is the procession of love from the Father and the Son, it is not surprising that love was often seen as the “evidence” of Spirit baptism rather than tongues, particularly in the early days of the movement.<sup>210</sup> Summarily, the Holy Spirit as the procession of love from the Father and Son is a powerful image that may provide some understanding of the experience of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

There are certainly those who would argue that this understanding of the Holy Spirit cannot be limited to Spirit baptism, and with that assertion I wholeheartedly agree. I am not making the claim

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<sup>205</sup> Ormerod, *The Trinity*, 12.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> Romans 5:5.

<sup>209</sup> Simanullang, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, 97ff.

<sup>210</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 178.

here that the Holy Spirit as the procession of love from the Father and the Son can only be experienced through Pentecostal Spirit baptism. But as a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit, it is certainly reasonable to expect that Spirit baptism may be one such way in which this procession of love can be experienced and embraced. In terms of understanding what we mean when we assert that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, an experience of the love of God proceeding from the Father and the Son and poured into our hearts is an encouraging place to start.

#### 3.4.4.2 Created Participations of the Divine Nature:

In the previous section we noted Macchia's view of Spirit baptism as "participation in the life of God". While this is a striking image, it lacks the theological specificity that understanding requires. How might we understand Spirit baptism in terms of inclusion into Trinitarian life and relations through the Spirit? I propose there may be potential for developing and expanding this concept through Lonergan's notion of "created participations of the divine nature".<sup>211</sup> He proposes this construct to explain the supernatural mysteries of beatific vision, grace, and the Incarnation in correlation to the inner-Trinitarian relations. According to Ormerod, "the supernatural realities of beatific vision, incarnation and grace are related to the four inner-Trinitarian relations as four created participations of the divine nature".<sup>212</sup> The four inner-Trinitarian relations employed by Lonergan are paternity, filiation, active spiration and passive spiration. As Doran explains, "the three divine persons are relations, and so the Father is paternity, the Son is filiation, and the Holy Spirit is passive spiration".<sup>213</sup> The Father and Son together then form the active spiration from which the Holy Spirit proceeds. Lonergan associates these divine relations to the supernatural mysteries as follows: the Incarnation is a created participation in and imitation of divine paternity in that the Son, as a created human being, imitates the Father (John 14:9); sanctifying grace, or the dynamic state of being in love in an unqualified way, is a created participation in or imitation of the active spiration of Father and Son lovingly breathing the Holy Spirit<sup>214</sup>; the habit of charity is a created participation in the passive spiration that is the Holy Spirit because we imitate the divine Love itself that proceeds from the Father and the Son; the beatific vision is a created participation

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<sup>211</sup> Neil Ormerod, "Two Points or Four? - Rahner and Lonergan on Trinity, Incarnation, Grace, and Beatific Vision," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007): 661.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Robert Doran, "Summarizing "Imitating the Divine Relations: A Theological Contribution to Mimetic Theory", " *Contagion* 14 (2007): 27.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 28.



in filiation as the children of adoption are led back to the Father<sup>215</sup>. These created participations of the divine nature thus “extend the relationship between Creator and creature by drawing the creature into the inner divine relations”.<sup>216</sup> Most importantly for us here, they also provide some categories for talking about the Christian’s participation in the divine relations.

In what way, then, could the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism relate to these created participations in the divine nature? If Spirit baptism invites the believer to participate in the Trinitarian life of God, can this be understood in relation to the theological categories described above? In Spirit baptism, it could be argued that there is a new relationship established between the experiencing subject and God. Chan, in fact, suggests that Spirit baptism is a revelation or theophany of God resulting in a new relationship with God through the Spirit.<sup>217</sup> We have already spoken of Spirit baptism in relation to the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as the love of God poured into our hearts. This procession implies both the relation of the Father and Son breathing the Love that is the Holy Spirit (active spiration), and the reciprocal relation between that Love and the Father and Son (passive spiration).<sup>218</sup> Inasmuch as Spirit baptism establishes a created relationship to the Holy Spirit, I believe there may be the possibility for viewing Spirit baptism as a created participation in the active spiration by the Father and Son of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, inasmuch as the Love poured out in Spirit baptism establishes a created relationship with the principle of that Love, the Father and Son, I believe there may also be the possibility for viewing Spirit baptism as a created participation in passive spiration. Both of these created participations provide a theological explanation of “participation in the life of God”, so let us explore and develop each of these ideas in turn, beginning with passive spiration.

### **Passive Spiration:**

According to Doran, created participation in the relation of passive spiration should involve the establishment of a “created relation to the Father and the Son”.<sup>219</sup> As we have already mentioned, Lonergan associates this with the habit of charity whereby, as Doran explains, “God is loved in return”.<sup>220</sup> Few would dispute that Pentecostal Spirit baptism fosters in the experiencing subject a loving orientation towards God. In this way the love of God poured into our hearts through the

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>216</sup> Ormerod, "Two Points or Four?," 673.

<sup>217</sup> Chan, "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence," 207.

<sup>218</sup> Robert Doran, "Essays in Systematic Theology 39: The Theological Virtues and Participation in Active and Passive Spiration," (2011), <http://www.lonerganresource.com/pdf/books/1/39%20-%20The%20Theological%20Virtues%20and%20Participation%20in%20Active%20and%20Passive%20Spiration.pdf>.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 5.

Holy Spirit directs us back towards the source of that love, namely the Father and the Son. This loving of God in return, or the habit of charity, is then outworked as “the habitual orientation to enacting God’s love in the world”.<sup>221</sup> In other words, we are related to the Father and Son as they are “one principle breathing the Spirit, an action which extends out into the mission of the Spirit in the world”.<sup>222</sup> We therefore participate in this divine relation in solidarity with the Holy Spirit who is charged with a mission. Indeed, Ormerod explains this created participation of the divine nature as “sharing in the common work of the Father and Son, to build the Kingdom of God”.<sup>223</sup>

It is this vocational or missiological aspect of this created participation that may transpose well into Pentecostal categories. There is an obvious parallel between the habit of charity, understood in terms of working with the Holy Spirit in mission to build the Kingdom of God, and the Pentecostal conviction that their powerful experience of the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism was somehow related to empowerment for mission or ministry. I have been critical of the concept of empowerment for mission as a key assertion that has been made about Pentecostal Spirit baptism, but this criticism relates mainly to the way in which this concept has been explained. My argument throughout has been that a narrow view of charismatic empowerment as the primary purpose of Spirit baptism fails to function cognitively, but this does not mean that empowerment for mission or ministry has nothing to do with Spirit baptism. In fact, we will have much to say on this subject in our next chapter on the effective function of meaning. For now, though, it is sufficient to note that locating the concept of empowerment for ministry within the context of a created participation in the divine relation of passive spiration gives the concept a much broader and stronger theological foundation. As we encounter the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism and are drawn into divine relation with the Father and the Son, we are also empowered to participate in the mission of the Holy Spirit to enact the love of God in the world and build God’s Kingdom. This further reinforces our theological proposals from the previous section and affirms that, in Spirit baptism, we are sharing in the Trinitarian relations when the Spirit indwells us. If this is the case, then Spirit baptism, as a reflection of and participation in this inner-Trinitarian relationship, is a truly significant experience.

**Active Spiration:**

The second created participation that we are concerned with involves Lonergan’s correlation between the relation of active spiration and the concept of sanctifying grace. Doran explains that sanctifying grace relates to created participation in active spiration because sanctifying grace

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<sup>221</sup> Neil Ormerod, "The Metaphysics of Holiness," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2014): 76.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

“reflects the Father and Son lovingly breathing the Holy Spirit”.<sup>224</sup> This arises from Lonergan’s understanding of sanctifying grace as the state of being in love in an unqualified way. By relating active spiration to sanctifying grace, from a Catholic perspective at least, this situates created participation in active spiration within the context of Christian initiation. With this in mind, exploring how this created participation might relate to Pentecostal Spirit baptism could help us to deal with the ongoing debate around the place of Spirit baptism in the process of Christian initiation. If we view Spirit baptism as another example of created participation in active spiration, there may also be the opportunity to situate this Pentecostal experience, theologically at least, within the same initiatory context.

Firstly, however, this requires some transposition of the Catholic idea of “sanctifying grace” into terms that Pentecostals can relate to. In simple terms, sanctifying grace for the Catholic is seen as the state of justification and is the cause of the process of justification. As a part of the long-running formal dialogue between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, it was explained that “in baptism one receives the grace of justification, that is, sanctifying grace that inwardly transforms the person”.<sup>225</sup> It could be argued that the corresponding concept within the Pentecostal understanding of Christian initiation is the concept of “conversion”. For the Pentecostal, it is at the point of conversion that they are justified and become part of the Christian community and the body of Christ. It is interesting, however, that the Catholic doctrine of sanctifying grace also plays a part in the initiation process beyond baptism. The sacrament of confirmation is also seen to result in an increase in sanctifying grace.<sup>226</sup> Thus, given the role of sanctifying grace in each, it could be suggested that both baptism and confirmation in some capacity represent created participation in active spiration.

There is an obvious parallel here between the Catholic conversion-initiation process, involving the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, and the Pentecostal conversion-initiation paradigm, involving conversion and Spirit baptism. Indeed, within the Catholic Charismatic renewal, many have proposed that Spirit baptism is essentially a sacramental grace.<sup>227</sup> Although the experiences of confirmation and Spirit baptism may be quite different phenomenologically, they give rise to an analogous set of problems. As we will shortly see, the theological difficulties that Pentecostals encounter are analogous to the difficulties that Catholics encounter when distinguishing between

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<sup>224</sup> Doran, "Summarizing "Imitating the Divine Relations", " 27.

<sup>225</sup> "On Becoming a Christian: Insights from Scripture and the Patristic Writings with Some Contemporary Reflections," in *Report of the Fifth Phase of the International Dialogue Between Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders and the Catholic Church* (1998-2006), Item 162.

<sup>226</sup> CCC, #1303.

<sup>227</sup> McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 337.

their two sets of experiences. It may be helpful, therefore, to explore this parallel between Spirit baptism and the Catholic sacrament of confirmation. If both Catholic baptism and confirmation are created participations in active spiration by virtue of their association with sanctifying grace, is there the possibility that Pentecostal conversion and Spirit baptism could be understood in a similar way? We will briefly discuss the connection between Spirit baptism and confirmation before concluding this section.

#### 3.4.4.3 Spirit Baptism and Confirmation:

The role of the Holy Spirit in Christian initiation as the distinguishing mark of conversion has been convincingly demonstrated by James Dunn.<sup>228</sup> Yet Pentecostals have consistently held that there is the possibility of a definite moment or moments of Spirit-filling subsequent to conversion.<sup>229</sup> On both sides these arguments are based on a punctiliar notion of conversion as a single event that can be located at a specific point in time. Yet many would argue that this is an over-simplification or a narrow approach to the process of Christian initiation. In fact, there has been the recognition amongst some Pentecostal scholars that a broader approach to Christian initiation may be required. Amos Yong has argued for a pneumatological concept of salvation that is “dynamic and eschatological”.<sup>230</sup> In describing his proposal for a broader concept of Christian salvation, he urges that “we retrieve this metaphor of baptism of the Holy Spirit to capture the dynamic and full experience of Christian salvation not only in terms of dying with Christ but also in terms of being raised with him to do the things that he did”.<sup>231</sup> We have also previously mentioned Chan’s assertion that the Pentecostal idea of a multi-stage conversion process is not only important but a crucial part of a developed spirituality.<sup>232</sup>

As we have just observed, Pentecostals are not the first to wrestle with explaining the complexities of Christian initiation. Because there is often a lengthy interval between infant baptism and confirmation in Catholic circles, there has been similar controversy regarding when the Spirit is bestowed. At the beginning of his book on Catholic confirmation, Gerard Austin poses the following question: Is the Holy Spirit given at baptism? If so, what is the difference between that bestowal and the gift of the Spirit at confirmation?<sup>233</sup> Because Pentecostals find themselves asking a similar

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<sup>228</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

<sup>229</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 154.

<sup>230</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh*, 99.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>232</sup> Chan, "Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence," 210.

<sup>233</sup> Gerard Austin, *Anointing with the Spirit: The Rite of Confirmation: The Use of Oil and Chrism* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), ix.

question about conversion and Spirit baptism, is there an opportunity here for Pentecostals to draw inspiration from Catholic theological reflection?

Parallels between Spirit baptism and confirmation have already been noted by several authors. Williams suggests that the Roman Catholic view is compatible with the Pentecostal view on Spirit baptism because, among other reasons, “throughout Catholic history there has been sensitivity to a special implementing work of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, a rite that in the fifth century came to be known as confirmation”.<sup>234</sup> Frank D. Macchia, after suggesting that even some Pentecostals would identify Spirit baptism as an experience of sacramental grace, also recognizes the similarities between the Pentecostal concept of Spirit baptism and the Catholic rite of confirmation.<sup>235</sup> In his own words, “both views distinguish baptismal initiation and the reception of the charismatic Spirit for Christian vocation”.<sup>236</sup> Finally, James Dunn confirms that Pentecostals have followed Catholics by making the gift of the Spirit an event that follows after conversion.<sup>237</sup> As an evangelical Dunn sees this in an entirely negative light, but that is understandable given his contention that there is no post-conversion baptism in the Spirit.

From a Catholic charismatic perspective, McDonnell and Montague have also sought to understand Spirit baptism in relation to the sacramental rites of initiation. Their study of the first eight centuries leads them to assert that Spirit baptism is integral to Christian initiation and therefore should be “taken with ultimate seriousness” and as normative to the Christian faith.<sup>238</sup> They conclude that Spirit baptism is the whole rite of initiation and is therefore integrally linked to the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.<sup>239</sup> Yet they do suggest the possibility that confirmation “could be a particularly important occasion” for awakening believers to the gift they have received in Spirit baptism.<sup>240</sup> It must be admitted that the concept of Spirit baptism propagated by McDonnell and Montague is somewhat different to the Pentecostal concept. Nevertheless, the link between confirmation and Spirit baptism is still recognized.

Certainly, there are remarkable similarities in the language often used to describe Pentecostal Spirit baptism and Catholic confirmation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that “the effect

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<sup>234</sup> Williams, *The Pentecostal Reality*, 25.

<sup>235</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 35, 72.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>237</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 226.

<sup>238</sup> McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 337. They do not claim that Spirit baptism is part of the essence of Christian initiation, but rather a property which flows from its essence and is therefore not a minor appendage but “the full flowering of the sacramental grace” (315).

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost".<sup>241</sup> Furthermore, when reading the effects of confirmation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the similarities with the supposed effects of Spirit baptism are striking:

*From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace: it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry "Abba! Father!"; it unites us more firmly to Christ; it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us; it renders our bond with the Church more perfect; it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.*<sup>242</sup>

Similarly, an early explanation of confirmation by Faustus, Bishop of Riez, explains that "In baptism we are regenerated to life; after baptism we are confirmed to battle. In baptism we are washed; after baptism we are strengthened".<sup>243</sup> This bears a resemblance to the Pentecostal notion that Spirit baptism is, among other things, the source of the believer's empowerment for ministry. Even the Second Vatican Council described confirmation as endowing the believer with "the special strength of the Holy Spirit".<sup>244</sup>

In the same vein, Osborne asserts that much Catholic theologizing on confirmation has sought to determine the precise effect of confirmation so that it can be seen as a sacrament in its own right.<sup>245</sup>

*Confirmation, then, in contrast to baptism, which is more personally oriented, has a social dimension, empowering a Christian to profess the faith boldly and publicly, particularly when faced by adversaries of the faith.*<sup>246</sup>

Pentecostals have often expressed the experience of Spirit baptism in much the same way, as an endowment of power enabling the individual and/or community to witness for Jesus.<sup>247</sup> As Wyckoff explains, "the need for supernatural power to witness and serve is the reason a distinctive experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is important".<sup>248</sup> Austin also claims that, for some scholars, the distinction between Lukan pneumatology and Pauline pneumatology provides the

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<sup>241</sup> CCC, #1302

<sup>242</sup> CCC, #1303.

<sup>243</sup> Austin, *Anointing with the Spirit*, 14.

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

<sup>245</sup> Kenan Osborne, *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1987), 126.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> Williams, *The Pentecostal Reality*, 69. This is usually based primarily on Acts 1:8.

<sup>248</sup> John W. Wyckoff, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *Systematic Theology*, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield: Logion Press, 1994), 451.

basis for the distinction between baptism and confirmation.<sup>249</sup> Whereas Paul and John emphasize a “life-giving Spirit”, for Luke the Spirit is the release of a new prophetic force. Relating these two pneumatological emphases to sacraments of initiation results in two separate sacraments:

*Two complementary sacraments would be needed to account for the two complementary aspects of Christology and pneumatology in the one mystery of salvation expressed in the New Testament: life-giving Spirit and prophetic Spirit.*<sup>250</sup>

It is extremely interesting to observe that the differences between Pauline and Lukan pneumatologies in the New Testament have also been used in almost exactly the same way by Pentecostals to justify a distinction between conversion and Spirit baptism.<sup>251</sup> If nothing else, these correlations suggest the potential for further discussion between Catholic and Pentecostal theologians.

Ultimately, Austin urges that baptism and confirmation should be far more closely related than present practice suggests. In his own words, “confirmation has been so disconnected from baptism that both sacraments have become the poorer”.<sup>252</sup> We should therefore resist the attempt to equate baptism with the Easter mystery and confirmation with the Pentecost mystery. Perhaps this is a timely reminder to Pentecostals that a more expansive view of Christian initiation may help to validate the importance of Spirit baptism. In the same way that confirmation cannot and should not be separated from the other sacraments of initiation, so Spirit baptism must be understood within the context of the Spirit’s work in the whole process of Christian initiation. Otherwise, whether in confirmation or Spirit baptism, we may focus too narrowly on the work of the Spirit in a single moment:

*Viewing the sacrament as a unique and isolated moment in the Christian life can create a letdown later on, or even worse, a failure to recognize continued gifts of the Spirit. The Christian life is one of mission to the world, and this involves frequent moments of commitment and even more frequent movements of the Spirit.*<sup>253</sup>

If Pentecostals view Spirit baptism as the apex of Christian initiation or the only way in which the Spirit interacts with us, this may imply that the gifts of the Spirit are absent prior to Spirit baptism and are not a part of our Christian initiation. Although a sacrament of initiation, confirmation has never been described as “necessary to salvation”, and the same may be said, at least in more recent

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<sup>249</sup> Austin, *Anointing with the Spirit*, 8.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> See, for example, Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*.

<sup>252</sup> Austin, *Anointing with the Spirit*, 137.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 155.

times, of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.<sup>254</sup> Spirit baptism only makes sense within the larger context of the Christian life which is, first and foremost, a life of the Spirit. Once again, such a view of Spirit baptism imbues the Pentecostal experience with theological significance beyond the classical Pentecostal explanations.

In conclusion, this entire section has been concerned with building a theological understanding of our doctrinal assertion that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit. We have looked to Augustine and Lonergan to provide the framework for an explanation of Spirit baptism in Trinitarian terms, and to elaborate on “participation in the life of God”. In Spirit baptism we are participating in the divine nature and the inner Trinitarian relations, in particular the active spiration of the Spirit by the Father and the Son, and the reciprocal relation of passive spiration. Thus we experience the Holy Spirit as the love of God poured into our hearts as a created participation in active spiration, and we also enact that love of God in the world as a created participation in passive spiration. Obvious parallels to the Catholic sacrament of confirmation, linked with the notion of sanctifying grace as created participation in active spiration, provide the building blocks for developing a Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism grounded in a broader theological tradition. Overall, if we agree in a doctrinal sense that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Spirit, then these theological concepts are intended to help us to understand the meaning and significance of that experience. However, there is still one more question that needs to be answered which we have hinted at in this section. If we encounter the Holy Spirit at both conversion and Spirit baptism, what is unique about the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism that calls for an experience distinct to conversion? Even if we view both experiences as part of the Pentecostal paradigm of Christian initiation, why is there a need for two experiences at all?

#### 3.4.4.4 Spirit Baptism is a “baptismal” Experience:

I suggested earlier that there was something important in the Pentecostal assertion that Spirit baptism is a “baptismal” experience, and I will now expand on that importance in two areas. Firstly, the metaphor of baptism communicates something of the overwhelming and saturating nature of the encounter with the Holy Spirit. As Macchia explains, “Spirit baptism implies a ‘baptism’ in or with the very breath or Spirit of God, indicating a participatory metaphor of our relationship with God that is to have a significant experiential effect”.<sup>255</sup> If baptism can be understood in terms of

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<sup>254</sup> Osborne, *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation*, 116.

<sup>255</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 32.



immersion or submersion,<sup>256</sup> then baptism in the Holy Spirit implies immersion in the presence of the Holy Spirit. J. Rodman Williams captures this well in his description of Spirit baptism:

*It depicts vividly the idea of being enveloped in the reality of the Holy Spirit. Since to be baptized in water means literally to be immersed in, plunged under, and even drenched or soaked with, then to be baptized in the Holy Spirit can mean no less than that. In immersion no part of the body is left untouched; everything goes under. So with Spirit baptism the whole being of a person – body, soul, and spirit – is embued with the Spirit of God. Likewise, the community of those who are so baptized is profoundly affected in its total life. Both individual and community are touched in every area by the presence and power of the living God.*<sup>257</sup>

This description captures something of the magnitude of the experience of Spirit baptism, and the focus is clearly on the relationship with God and the transformation that comes about as a result.

Unfortunately, it seems that sometimes the overwhelming and transformational nature of the experience itself has been obscured by a dominant focus on the characteristics of the experience that we have called “common assertions” above. However, we have urged throughout that the underlying experience of Spirit baptism should still be recognized as the source experience from which the characteristics flow. In agreement with this, Simanullang concludes that:

*The experience in relation to God [Spirit baptism] is an intense immersion into the presence and action of God. All other things such as praying in tongues, “resting in the Spirit”, bodily and emotional sensations are viewed as expressions of this encounter with the Lord.*<sup>258</sup>

Simanullang’s language of “intense immersion” in this context bears obvious relation to the metaphor of baptism. Others have also recognized the primacy of the experience of Spirit baptism, arguing that the spiritual experience itself is far more significant than the so-called “evidence” of tongues speech. Hudson states that “what is clear from these earliest testimonies is that the individuals had experienced intense spiritual encounters in which speaking in tongues was a part, but was not necessarily the most significant aspect of the experience”.<sup>259</sup> Thomas Barratt, the man who inspired Alexander Boddy to bring the Pentecostal message to Great Britain, said that “we do not make the talking in tongues the chief thing. The chief thing is the unveiling of the Holy Ghost. The other comes as the outward sign”.<sup>260</sup> Hudson has also noted that “in a series of leaflets edited

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<sup>256</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (McLean: Macdonald Publishing Company), 98.

<sup>257</sup> J. Rodman Williams, “Renewal Theology: Volume Two,” in *Renewal Theology: Three Volumes in One* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 199-200.

<sup>258</sup> Simanullang, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, 106.

<sup>259</sup> Hudson, “Strange Words and Their Impact on Early Pentecostals,” 58.

<sup>260</sup> Thomas Barratt cited in *ibid.*, 59.

by Alexander Boddy, explaining how the gift of tongues was being experienced, it was the stress on the believer's mystical encounter with Jesus that was most pronounced."<sup>261</sup> For the earliest Pentecostals, their experience of Spirit baptism resulted in a heightened awareness of Jesus' presence in their lives and the extent of his work on the cross.<sup>262</sup>

Secondly, part of the importance of the baptismal metaphor also lies in the uniqueness of the experience implied by this language. The metaphor of baptism describes initiation into a new relationship with God. When applied to Pentecostal Spirit baptism, that new relationship is instigated by the love of God, the Holy Spirit, poured into our hearts. Blumhofer reminds us that "many early Pentecostals ... emphasized another dimension in their descriptions of the function of Spirit baptism, regarding 'endowment with power for service' as secondary to Spirit baptism's primary purpose of bringing the believer into a new dimension of constant, conscious fellowship with Christ".<sup>263</sup> Based on a Pauline theology of water baptism, Richard P. Carlson has suggested that something unique happens in baptism that leads to a "decisive alteration in the reality of the believer".<sup>264</sup> In general terms this highlights the uniqueness of the experience of water baptism as a rite of initiation. It could also be argued that the use of baptismal language and metaphor in relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism reveals the Pentecostal appreciation for the uniqueness of their own particular experience in the process of initiation. While Pentecostals may expect regular encounters with the Holy Spirit, these would not usually be given the same significance as the initial experience of Spirit baptism. This argument, however, does need to be tempered by the recognition that initiation as a rite or metaphor is not as prominent in Pentecostalism as in other Christian traditions.

Overall, if Spirit baptism is understood as a unique and overwhelming experience of the Holy Spirit resulting in a new relationship with God, this provides some insight into why the use of baptismal language was deemed appropriate. However, in line with our methodology of judgement and understanding, there is still one question left to answer. If the Pentecostal use of the baptism metaphor points to the uniqueness of the experience of Spirit baptism, how might we understand this uniqueness theologically? While it could be argued that the uniqueness of Pentecostal Spirit baptism is phenomenologically self-evident, it is still important to provide a cognitive rationale for this uniqueness.

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Blumhofer, "Pentecost in My Soul", 24.

<sup>264</sup> Richard P. Carlson, "The Role of Baptism in Paul's Thought," *Interpretation* 47, no. 3 (1993): 262.

#### 3.4.4.5 The Uniqueness of the Experience of Spirit Baptism:

As has been discussed on several occasions, the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Spirit baptism has often been understood in terms of a unique empowerment for ministry or speaking in tongues. However, I would argue that this is a significant devaluing of the theological significance of the experience. While empowerment for ministry may certainly be a result of the experience, the core importance of the experience itself lies in the revelational and transformational encounter with the Holy Spirit. In a previous section we suggested that this encounter could be understood in Trinitarian terms as a created participation in the active and passive spiration of the Holy Spirit. This provides both a framework for understanding the essence of the experience, and a foundation for recognizing its importance and value. While this framework and foundation may hint at the uniqueness of the experience of Spirit baptism, further comment is required. How might we understand the *distinctiveness* of the experience theologically? I will make one suggestion in relation to this.

Although the overall process of Christian initiation must be understood in Trinitarian terms, many Pentecostals and evangelicals have usually understood the moment of conversion in primarily Christological terms. It is often explained as an acceptance or appropriation of Christ's work on the cross, and the involvement of the Father or the Holy Spirit in this process is incidental or peripheral. Whether or not this is theologically correct is not our concern here, but one could argue that it is appropriate to speak of conversion in this way based on the numerous biblical references to Christ and salvation. In this way conversion is focused mainly on our relationship with Christ.

With this in mind, and in relation to the uniqueness of the experience of Spirit baptism, I suggest that Spirit baptism involves an appropriation of the relationship with the Spirit that does not happen at conversion. While the Holy Spirit may be received at conversion, in Spirit baptism there is a conscious awareness of relationship with the Spirit when one knows the Spirit as the Spirit. It is at this point that the Spirit illuminates itself to us as a distinct person or enters our awareness as distinct. Thus Spirit baptism could be seen as an appropriation of the relationship with the Spirit; a relationship that was already there but was focused on Christ. The strength of this understanding of the distinct experience of Spirit baptism is that it relies primarily on the concepts of relationship and encounter with the Spirit, and only secondarily incorporates the concept of empowerment. The revelation of the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism, which leads to a relationship with the Spirit as the Spirit, then results in empowerment and charisms. While there is certainly room to develop this proposal further, as it stands this suggestion may provide a useful theological foundation for understanding and embracing the uniqueness of the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

### 3.5 Concluding Remarks:

This chapter began with the stated goal of developing a meaningful cognitive framework for understanding and affirming the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. We looked firstly at the common assertions about Pentecostal Spirit baptism and highlighted the cognitive challenges posed by these traditional doctrinal statements and affirmations. We then attempted to identify the key assertions about Pentecostal Spirit baptism based on the language used to name the experience itself. My conclusion was that the key assertion that Pentecostals make about Spirit baptism, albeit implicitly, is that this experience is most importantly an experience of the Holy Spirit. This is, therefore, the core assertion or judgement about Pentecostal Spirit baptism that requires both doctrinal assent and theological understanding.

With this in mind, we moved from this basic assertion to the theological process of affirming doctrine and developing understanding. That Pentecostal Spirit baptism is plausibly an experience of the Spirit was confirmed by an appeal to Scripture and to the experience itself as sources of authority. This appeal took the form of a basic comparison between the phenomenological aspects of Pentecostal Spirit baptism (identified as connection with God, physical sensations, magnified feelings, prayer language, certain knowing, and hard to describe), and biblical experiences of or statements about the Holy Spirit. It was concluded that, based on these sources of authority, the phenomenological characteristics of the Pentecostal experience were consistent with what one might expect to see in an experience of the Holy Spirit.

Having affirmed this doctrinal premise, we were then able to begin to develop an understanding of this doctrine in terms of the Holy Spirit's role in this experience and the uniqueness of the experience itself. Drawing from Augustine's psychological analogy, I proposed that this encounter with the Holy Spirit could be understood in Trinitarian terms as the procession of love, the Holy Spirit, poured into our hearts from the Father and the Son. Moreover, there is the possibility at least that this experience of Spirit baptism could be understood as created participation in the divine relationships of active and passive spiration. As such, Spirit baptism can be viewed as an invitation to participate in the work of the Holy Spirit in building the Kingdom of God and enacting the love of God in the world. Furthermore, this experience can be situated within the process of Christian initiation if we are able to move beyond a punctiliar notion of conversion and embrace a multi-stage conversion process. Given that the connection between conversion and Spirit baptism presents us with an analogous set of problems to those resulting from the Catholic connection between baptism and confirmation, I have drawn from Catholic reflection on sanctifying grace to

suggest ways in which Pentecostals might understand and explain a multi-stage conversion process.

Finally, I have attempted to provide some theological justification for the uniqueness and the importance of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. The unique and overwhelming nature of the experience is implied in the use of baptismal language, and could be understood as a conscious appropriation of one's relationship with the Holy Spirit when one comes to know the Spirit as Spirit. This entire process has been aimed at developing a theology of Spirit baptism that functions cognitively in that it can be plausibly asserted as truthful. The doctrinal assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, and the consequent suggestion for understanding this assertion, provides us with a meaningful cognitive framework that forms the foundation for the rest of our study.

## Chapter 4: The Effective Function

The second function of meaning that we will consider in relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism is the effective function of meaning. Throughout this paper we have assumed a basic distinction between the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism and the meaning derived from that experience. While they are inextricably linked, the point is that meaning is not automatically known or self-evident, but is developed through a process of experiencing, understanding, and judging. To explicate this developed meaning further, we are also differentiating this meaning according to the way in which it functions. Thus in the previous chapter we identified that the primary meaningful assertion derived from the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism is that it is an experience of the Holy Spirit. We were then able to examine that meaningful assertion in order to determine its truthfulness or, in technical terms, its cognitive function.

But meaning is always multi-faceted and does not need to be limited to one derived meaning or one function. While the nature of Spirit baptism as an experience of the Holy Spirit may be the essential cognitive assertion about the experience, there are other aspects of meaning that can be derived. If we accept that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, we can then ask ourselves what does this experience require or compel us to do? How can we or should we respond practically to the meaning derived from this experience? This brings us to the effective function of meaning.

To understand the historical way in which the experience of Spirit baptism has functioned effectively within Pentecostalism, we will begin by exploring the relationship between Spirit baptism and eschatology. It was an eschatological interpretation of Spirit baptism that provided the impetus for early Pentecostals to actively engage in evangelism and missions. It also provided the context for the popularization of a practical understanding of Spirit baptism focused around empowerment for ministry. However, this dependence on eschatology for the effective meaning of Spirit baptism poses some challenges in light of recent eschatological shifts within Pentecostalism and concomitant changes in effective meaning. Whereas early Pentecostals lived in earnest expectation of the imminent return of Christ and evangelized accordingly, for the most part contemporary Pentecostalism does not share that eschatological urgency. It is my proposition, therefore, that the effective meaning derived from the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism needs to be reassessed and refocused for the contemporary Pentecostal context. While the emphasis on missions remains important, effective meaning grounded in the powerful and transformative experience of the Holy Spirit that is at the core of Pentecostal Spirit baptism also

opens up other possibilities. In particular, we will consider the implications for effective meaning arising from the recognition that in Spirit baptism we are invited to encounter the Holy Spirit and thus experience an outpouring of the divine love of God.

#### **4.1 The Effective Function of Meaning Revisited:**

To expound the effective function of meaning, Lonergan explains that our actions are not mindless, rather they are the result of acts of meaning:

*We imagine, we plan, we investigate possibilities, we weigh pros and cons, we enter into contracts, we have countless orders given and executed. From the beginning to the end of the process, we are engaged in acts of meaning; and without them the process would not occur or the end be achieved.*<sup>1</sup>

In this way meaning performs an effective function in human living. It has the capacity to be productive and effective, or to bring about or initiate change. It may instigate, encourage, or even demand action.

In relation to religious experience, where faith is not simply known but must also be lived, this is a particularly important function of meaning. Using the Johannine writings, Anthony Kelly demonstrates the centrality of the effective dimension of meaning to the point that “the three other dimensions of divine meaning would collapse if the meaning of faith is not effective”.<sup>2</sup> He urges that “Jesus Christ, and the God revealed through him, means Christians to transform the world in new and hopeful ways”.<sup>3</sup> In simple terms, this could be explained by reference to James 2:17: “So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless”.<sup>4</sup> As Lonergan acknowledges, it is not enough to just mean, rather meaning should encourage and direct doing.<sup>5</sup>

As we engage with this second function of meaning it is also important to reaffirm our introductory comments about the manifold nature of meaning in general. We have tackled the cognitive function of meaning by identifying and supporting the basic assertion that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit. However, the effective function of meaning does not necessarily need to be limited to this trajectory. The richness of meaning embodied in an

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<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, "The Exegete and the Theologian," 74.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> New Living Translation.

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 109.

experience allows for multiple facets of meaning that are interwoven. In fact, the functions of meaning are being employed here as a framework for recognizing and explicating this multi-faceted meaning. This chapter is therefore not simply a reworking of the previous chapter with a different focus, but rather builds upon the progress we have already made. If we accept that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit, there are still questions that require answers. Put simply: what do we do now?

## 4.2 Spirit Baptism and Eschatology:

To understand the effective interpretation of Spirit baptism that encouraged action in early Pentecostals it is necessary to first highlight the relationship between Pentecostal Spirit baptism and eschatology. While eschatology was not the only contributing factor to the effective meaning of Spirit baptism, its importance should be clearly evident by the end of this section. That Pentecostalism was birthed in an environment of eschatological expectation is seemingly beyond question. Larry McQueen has studied early Pentecostal eschatology as expressed in the earliest newsletters published about the Azusa Street Mission.<sup>6</sup> He states that “eschatology played a major role in the formation and development of early Pentecostal thought”.<sup>7</sup> While it was not usually a clearly formulated doctrine, eschatology “permeates the personal testimonies, poems, letters, reports of tongues-speech, and articles as a constant reminder that ‘Jesus is coming soon’”.<sup>8</sup> This emphasis has similarly been highlighted by Matthew Thompson, who observes that “Pentecostalism is a movement fired by the eschatological imagination, an apocalyptic revival looking to the soon return of the Lord”.<sup>9</sup> In a relatively early Pentecostal statement of belief, Sarah Jane Lancaster also declared an “earnest expectation that our Lord will soon return for His church”.<sup>10</sup>

All of these statements affirm the importance of eschatology in early Pentecostal spirituality. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that some scholars have recently attempted to establish eschatology as the central defining characteristic of Pentecostalism.<sup>11</sup> This trend can be observed

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<sup>6</sup> Larry McQueen, "Early Pentecostal Eschatology in the Light of *the Apostolic Faith*, 1906-1908," in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew K. Thompson, "Eschatology as Soteriology," in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 189.

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Jane Lancaster, "What We Believe," *Good News* 1924, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 38-49.



particularly in the work of Stephen Land, who has argued that the eschatological shift towards premillennialism is far more important to Pentecostalism than Spirit baptism.<sup>12</sup> While he recognizes the function of Spirit baptism as a sign of the last days for early Pentecostals, he maintains the primacy of eschatology in that “everything was determined by the overall expectation of the imminent parousia of Jesus Christ”.<sup>13</sup> Land is, in fact, building upon the earlier work of D. William Faupel, whose thesis is that “American Pentecostalism can best be understood as the emergence of a millenarian belief system that resulted from a paradigm shift which took place within nineteenth-century Perfectionism”.<sup>14</sup> Faupel’s study of the early Pentecostal revival and its precedents leads him to conclude that Pentecostalism was primarily an eschatological movement focused on preparing the church for an imminent parousia and warning the world of impending judgement.<sup>15</sup> Faupel and Land, in particular, place much more importance on eschatology as a formative factor in Pentecostal spirituality than they do on Spirit baptism.

Without disagreeing with these acknowledgements of eschatology as a key element of early Pentecostal spirituality, I believe it would be a mistake to view Spirit baptism as merely the result of a prevailing eschatology and thereby overlook the importance of Spirit baptism as a determinative factor in that eschatology. To do so would be to underestimate the contribution of Spirit baptism to the development of Pentecostal thought in other areas. Furthermore, any attempt to define Pentecostalism in terms of its one “essence”, whether eschatology or Spirit baptism, at the expense of all others, may be a reflection of the reductionistic trend in modern theology, a trend that is not necessarily helpful.<sup>16</sup> I would argue that eschatology and Spirit baptism are in fact mutually reinforcing theological themes, at least within the Pentecostal psyche, and it is not helpful or necessary to preference one over the other. The Pentecostals’ experience of Spirit baptism reinforced their eschatological orientation while their eschatological orientation influenced their understanding of the meaning of the Spirit baptism experience. Even Land has to acknowledge the role that Spirit baptism played in shaping Pentecostal eschatological thought. Speaking of the Pentecostal passion for the Kingdom of God arising from eschatology, Land states that “the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the gateway into this eschatologically oriented vocation of witness”.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 63.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>16</sup> Steven M. Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2012), 26.

<sup>17</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 66.

This close connection between Pentecostal Spirit baptism and eschatology has been consistently recognized by theologians writing in this area. Simon Chan, for example, highlights the link between the Holy Spirit and eschatology, which he emphasizes as a crucial understanding for Pentecostal ecclesiology and spirituality.<sup>18</sup> Tak-Ming Cheung has argued that, from a biblical perspective, the Pentecostal interpretation of Spirit baptism as an eschatological event is in keeping with the intention of Luke.<sup>19</sup> Frank D. Macchia recognizes that Pentecostals have a “radical eschatological orientation in which experiences of empowerment are not viewed as realizations of capacities already possessed – merely welling up from within – but as radically new possibilities called forth by the eschatological Spirit of God”.<sup>20</sup> Through Spirit baptism, “the Spirit liberates creation from within history toward new possibilities for free, eschatological existence”.<sup>21</sup> Macchia has also posited a strong connection between Spirit baptism and eschatology based on the connection between Spirit baptism and the Kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup> While I have previously mentioned that some Pentecostals may find it difficult to reconcile Macchia’s broad and ecumenical concept of Spirit baptism with their own experience, his association of Spirit baptism with a kingdom-focused eschatology at least is entirely congruent with the early Pentecostal understanding of their experience.

Finally, Larry McQueen further reinforces the interrelatedness of Spirit baptism and eschatology through reference to early Pentecostal publications:

*Within the holistic worldview presented in The Apostolic Faith, the new understanding of, and experience in, the Holy Spirit was linked closely with eschatology. The present work of the Spirit was understood to be the fulfilment of the “latter rain”, characterized as the last days when He is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh.*<sup>23</sup>

And further:

*The experience of baptism in the Spirit had personal eschatological significance. Moreover, the apocalyptic nature of Spirit baptism had multiple ramifications. Being viewed as a foretaste of Christ’s coming kingdom, it also meant that the kingdom was near. Thus, the time was short to do the work of global evangelism.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 109.

<sup>19</sup> Tak-Ming Cheung, "Understandings of Spirit Baptism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (1996): 126.

<sup>20</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Peterson (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 15.

<sup>21</sup> ———, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 97.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-110.

<sup>23</sup> McQueen, "Early Pentecostal Eschatology," 142.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

Overall, there can be little doubt that early Pentecostals viewed their own experiences of Spirit baptism as eschatologically significant. With the relationship between Spirit baptism and eschatology from a Pentecostal perspective thus established, we can now consider how this experience of Spirit baptism, understood eschatologically, functioned effectively for early Pentecostals. As the above quote hinted, this effective function was primarily outworked through a focus on evangelism and missions.

### 4.3 Spirit Baptism as a Catalyst for Evangelism and Missions:

It is easily demonstrated that the interpreted meaning of Spirit baptism as an eschatological event provided the impetus for the evangelistic and missiological work of early Pentecostals. In this way the meaning of Spirit baptism functioned effectively:

*At the heart of the early Pentecostals' missiology was their personal experience with the Holy Spirit found around an altar of prayer with fellow seekers. This profound experience was integrated with an eschatological urgency and a passion for souls. Apparently, their earliest understandings of the experience that came to be known as the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" was that it produced a missiological fervor and ministry and it provided the empowerment for the same.<sup>25</sup>*

This statement references both the early Pentecostal focus on missions and the related understanding of Spirit baptism in terms of empowerment for ministry. In his study of the missionary nature of early Pentecostalism, Allan Anderson explains that "one of the prominent convictions of early Pentecostals ... was that their experience of Spirit baptism was a 'fire' that would spread all over the world, a last-days universal revival to precede the soon second coming of Christ".<sup>26</sup> In this way Pentecostalism could be described as a "missionary movement of the Spirit from the start".<sup>27</sup> The eschatological connotations here are obvious. Andy Lord also confirms that "the earliest understanding of the experience that became known as the Spirit baptism was that it produced a 'missiological fervour' and empowered people in mission and ministry".<sup>28</sup> In this Lord acknowledges both the role that the Pentecostal community played in interpreting and understanding the meaning of the experience of Spirit baptism, and also that early interpretations

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<sup>25</sup> L. Grant McClung, Jr., "'Try to Get People Saved'," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Peterson (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 36.

<sup>26</sup> Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires - the Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Andy Lord, "Mission-Driven Pentecostal Ecclesiology," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 11, no. 4 (2011): 279.

were oriented towards an effective outworking of the meaning of the experience in mission and ministry.

The close connection between Spirit baptism and evangelism or missions has also been highlighted by a number of other authors. A few references here should suffice to make the point. Dempster recognizes that "Pentecostals typically make a connection between the empowerment of Spirit baptism and eschatological urgency for the church's global mission to spread the gospel".<sup>29</sup> This connection has usually been grounded in an understanding of Spirit baptism as the "latter rain" spoken of in Joel 2:23.<sup>30</sup> Palmer confirms that "the eschatological emphasis of Pentecostal pneumatology in relation to the Acts 2 model and Joel 2 prophecy provides the defining principle in Pentecostal mission".<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the newsletter of the Azusa Street Mission, *The Apostolic Faith*, commenced its second volume with the heading: "The Promised Latter Rain Now Being Poured Out on God's Humble People".<sup>32</sup> These early Pentecostal newsletters are replete with testimonies and stories of missionary efforts and individual salvations and Spirit baptisms. All of these testify to the fact that the "belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ coupled with the experience of Spirit baptism for empowerment of believers to 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation' (Mark 16:15) combined to forge a potent motivational force for world evangelism".<sup>33</sup> Clearly, Spirit baptism functioned effectively as a catalyst for evangelism and missions in early Pentecostalism.<sup>34</sup>

In light of this intimate connection between Spirit baptism and missional or evangelistic efforts, it becomes easy to understand why empowerment for ministry or witness was the motif most commonly identified as the result of Spirit baptism. As Palmer has recognized, "for Pentecostals the primary function of Spirit baptism is empowerment for witness".<sup>35</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen goes so far as to describe baptism in the Holy Spirit, resulting in empowerment for witness and service,

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<sup>29</sup> Murray W. Dempster, "Eschatology, Spirit Baptism, and Inclusiveness," in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 156.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Palmer, "Mission: The True Pentecostal Heritage as Illustrated in Early British AOG Thinking," *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 2 (2010): 42.

<sup>32</sup> "The Pentecostal Baptism Restored," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (1906).

<sup>33</sup> Dempster, "Eschatology, Spirit Baptism, and Inclusiveness," 157.

<sup>34</sup> Opoku Onyinah explains Pentecostal missiology in this way: "Once people experience baptism in the Holy Spirit, initially evidenced by speaking in tongues, they are expected to bear witness of Christ to others. Thus people baptized in the Holy Spirit are missionaries wherever they are ... Pentecostal Christians believe that it is the Spirit who enables believers to perform effectively the tasks assigned to each believer in Christian ministry. Performance of these tasks is urgent, since Pentecostals believe that the second coming of Christ is imminent. The Holy Spirit gives supernatural ability to Christians to witness, including power to preach, power to cast out evil spirits, power to heal the sick, and protection from evil forces" (Opoku Onyinah, "Pneumatological Foundations for Mission," *International Review of Mission* 101, no. 2 [2012]: 331).

<sup>35</sup> Palmer, "Mission," 40.

as “the primary mission strategy” of Pentecostals.<sup>36</sup> Kowalski has also noted that early Pentecostal women “considered the baptism in the Holy Spirit a significant part of their call, permission to minister, and empowerment for missionary evangelism”.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Byron Klaus states that “early records of the Pentecostal revival would lead to the observation that a very close relationship was forged between baptism of the Spirit as empowerment for service (Acts 1:8), a keen hope in the soon return of Christ (1 Thess 4:16), and Christ's command to evangelize to the uttermost (Matt 28:19-20)”.<sup>38</sup> Because the experience of Spirit baptism was understood eschatologically and interpreted effectively as related to worldwide mission and evangelism, Pentecostals saw this as a fulfilment of Acts 1:8. Spirit baptism, then, was the means of providing the “power” that Jesus promised His disciples in this verse.

Anderson’s study on the missiological focus of early Pentecostalism, to which we have already referred, is also relevant. He believes that, from the outset, “Pentecostalism, in common with other Christian revivalist movements at the time, held that their ecstatic manifestations were evidence of the end-time outpouring of the Spirit given to evangelize the world within the shortest possible time”.<sup>39</sup> In fact, it was this conviction that gave rise to an early belief in tongues as *xenolalia*<sup>40</sup> for the purpose of evangelizing foreign lands without the need to learn the language first.<sup>41</sup> Although this understanding soon proved to be untenable, this did not sever the connection between Spirit baptism and missions. Rather, Anderson believes that the “theological link between Spirit baptism and missions has always been made in the Pentecostal movement”.<sup>42</sup> Early Pentecostals believed that they were given gifts of the Spirit “in order to engage in service to others” so that the “fundamental and inseparable link between Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts and missions remained the central plank of the whole structure of Pentecostalism in its first decade”.<sup>43</sup> Anderson’s conclusion is that, “for early Pentecostals, the baptism in the Spirit was both the primary motivation for and only essential prerequisite for missions”.<sup>44</sup>

This conclusion is supported by even a cursory survey of early Pentecostal publications. Once again, the connection between Spirit baptism and missions is clear:

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<sup>36</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Theology of Mission in the Making," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 25, no. 2 (2004): 169.

<sup>37</sup> Rosemarie Daher Kowalski, "The Missions Theology of Early Pentecost: Call, Challenge, and Opportunity," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19 (2010): 269-270.

<sup>38</sup> Byron Klaus, "The Holy Spirit and Mission in Eschatological Perspective," *Pneuma* 27, no. 2 (2005): 329.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 46.

<sup>40</sup> The ability to speak in a language that one has not learned.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 58-59.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

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

*Pentecost has stirred our hearts on behalf of the heathen. Their cries have been heard, and out from Pentecostal centers everywhere comes a hearty response, a real offering up of their lives for the Gospel; and missionaries are hastening away to the ends of the earth with the true Bread of Life for hungry souls. Beloved, this work is laid on us. This mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost is too great a fire to be bound by a narrow range, it must burn its way into every nation. We must hasten the work that God has given us to do before He comes.*<sup>45</sup>

And along similar lines:

*If the Baptism in the Holy Spirit means anything it means a reaching out unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*<sup>46</sup>

While there are numerous other examples available, I believe that for the purposes of this discussion the effective function of Pentecostal Spirit baptism as a catalyst for evangelism and missions has been established.

Historically, therefore, the primary way in which the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism has functioned effectively can be easily recognized and explained by reference to the countless examples of missionary and evangelistic efforts. These efforts were given particular urgency by the eschatological belief that Christ could return at any moment, and Spirit baptism was seen as both a validation of the Pentecostal church's eschatological expectation and an empowerment for the fulfillment of their mission. While this construct of effective meaning made sense as long as this eschatological expectation endured, the challenge that Pentecostals are now facing is to explicate the effective meaning of Spirit baptism in light of recent eschatological shifts and the concomitant shifts in effective meaning. Before we proceed further, let us examine these shifts in more detail.

#### 4.4 Shifting Eschatology:

While Pentecostalism was birthed in an environment of eschatological urgency and expectation, there have been suggestions more recently that the focus of Pentecostal eschatology may have shifted. The context of early Pentecostal believers was one of eschatological expectation and this provided a rationale for missionary and social efforts. It could be argued that this context endured until near the end of the last century or even longer. However, at least in certain parts of the world, Pentecostals are no longer living in the same context of eschatological expectation. While there was a spike in eschatological fervour just prior to the turn of the millennium in the late 1990s,

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<sup>45</sup> The Bridegroom's Messenger, 1910, cited in *ibid.*, 46.

<sup>46</sup> "Redemption Tidings," 1, no. 4 (1925).

arising at least in part from a dispensationalist view of Christian history, several scholars have noted an eschatological shift in the years immediately following this millennial turn. Thus Daniel Castelo can write that “contemporary Pentecostals now live in a time when eschatological fervor has diminished ... reference is rarely made to Jesus’ Second Coming in today’s Pentecostal contexts”.<sup>47</sup> Speaking of the Assemblies of God in Australia, Clifton believes that, in recent years, the eschatological focus has shifted so that the primary concern is with the manifestation of the Kingdom now, and its material as well as spiritual implications.<sup>48</sup> Based on these observations, it would seem that Pentecostal eschatology has largely transitioned from a future-focused eschatology to a “realized” eschatology with a focus on the present. There may be several reasons for this shift.

Firstly, it is difficult if not impossible to sustain an urgent expectation of Christ’s imminent return over a long period of time. Eventually, Pentecostals had to come to terms with the reality that they may have been “mistaken” about their confidence in the closeness of Christ’s return.<sup>49</sup> After prolonged delay the expectation of an imminent parousia ceases to make cognitive sense. Blind adherence to an eschatological system that fails to function cognitively leads either to disappointment or a disjunction between belief and praxis. Simon Chan has suggested that, after a century, classical Pentecostalism began to suffer “spiritual fatigue” and signs attested to “the waning of zeal and missionary vision”.<sup>50</sup> Castelo writes that “Pentecostal eschatological expectancy is in tatters, especially in those contexts in which Pentecostalism has settled for an extended period of time”.<sup>51</sup> He even suggests that this long-term impatience for the return of Christ has shifted the Pentecostal hope from fervency to cynicism in relation to eschatology.<sup>52</sup> It is not surprising that the long-term deferral of their hope for Christ’s return eventually compelled Pentecostals to rethink their eschatology.

Secondly, there has been an improvement in the socio-economic situation of many Pentecostals since the beginning of the movement, particularly in the west. It is generally accepted that the earliest Pentecostals were the “oppressed, marginalized, poor working classes of society”.<sup>53</sup> Even in 1936, Hollenweger notes that members of Pentecostal churches in the USA still had a lower

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<sup>47</sup> Daniel Castelo, "Patience as a Theological Virtue - a Challenge to Pentecostal Eschatology," in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 234.

<sup>48</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 263.

<sup>49</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 269.

<sup>50</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Castelo, "Patience as a Theological Virtue," 234.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>53</sup> Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 28.

average income than members of American churches as a whole.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, there were more women than men in Pentecostal churches, and the proportion of African-Americans was greater in Pentecostal churches than in the population as a whole.<sup>55</sup> Within this sociological context, it is not surprising that Pentecostals embraced a futuristic eschatology characterized by eager expectation for the return of Christ. For the marginalized and poor in this world the world-to-come represented hope and promise of something better. But Steven Land observes that “today, upward social mobility is clearly affecting the apocalyptic fervor and urgency as the world looks a little better to contemporary, more affluent North American Pentecostals”.<sup>56</sup> Along very similar lines, Macchia suggests that the eschatological waning mentioned earlier is especially noticeable among middle class Pentecostals “who are becoming increasingly comfortable with this world”.<sup>57</sup> While some sectors of Pentecostalism in the developing world may still retain this early eschatological expectancy and fervour<sup>58</sup>, it is certainly no longer as prominent as it once was.

Obviously the factors mentioned above are only two possible reasons for the aforementioned eschatological shift within Pentecostalism, and there could certainly be many others. Whatever the reason, though, there can be little doubt about the actuality of the shift. Consequently, we are now faced with an eschatological context that is very different to that of early Pentecostalism. Thus Brian Houston, the pastor of the largest Pentecostal church in Australia, has stated that “I’ve never been in a particular hurry for a Rapture because I want to live my life to the full”.<sup>59</sup> This statement certainly represents a stark contrast to the eschatological yearning of early Pentecostals for the return of Christ. Referring to Houston’s writings, Clifton suggests that early Pentecostal emphasis on evangelism in light of the future Kingdom has been replaced by the rhetoric of building the present Kingdom and impacting future generations.<sup>60</sup> In light of this shift, the challenge for Pentecostals today is to recast their theology accordingly. How can we develop theology that does not rely on the one-sided eschatology of early Pentecostalism, an eschatology that no longer makes cognitive sense? Castelo frames the issue well when he asks: “How should Pentecostals live in the ‘already-not yet’ tension now that the sense of the eschatological immediacy has dissipated with time?”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press, 1988), 56.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>56</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 71.

<sup>57</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 272.

<sup>58</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 71.

<sup>59</sup> Brian Houston, *You Can Change the Future* (Castle Hill: Maximized Leadership, 2000), 95.

<sup>60</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 289.

<sup>61</sup> Castelo, "Patience as a Theological Virtue," 235.



From a theological point of view, the most common concept used to answer this question is the inaugurated eschatology of the Kingdom of God. While this has been a relatively recent discovery for many Pentecostal theologians, recognizing that the Kingdom of God is both present and future<sup>62</sup> provides a rationale and a theological grounding for the eschatological shift that has occurred within Pentecostalism. Whereas early Pentecostals exhibited a passion for the Kingdom<sup>63</sup>, their view of the Kingdom was apocalyptic and oriented towards what Ladd would call the future Kingdom. In light of the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God this orientation is one-sided. Recently, however, several authors have attempted to reframe Pentecostal spirituality by couching it within a more holistic view of the Kingdom of God that takes into account both the present and future aspects. The result is usually a more balanced approach to eschatology.

A prime example of this approach can be found in the work of Frank D. Macchia.<sup>64</sup> Macchia expounds a vision of the Kingdom of God that recognizes the otherworldly nature of the Kingdom but also acknowledges that the Kingdom involves “human witness, fellowship, and justice in and through the church and even outside the context of the church”.<sup>65</sup> Thus the Kingdom of God is a redemptive presence that is “presently liberating and transformative in all dimensions of life”.<sup>66</sup> In this there is acknowledgement of both the present and future aspects of the Kingdom of God. With this view of the Kingdom of God as a vision of renewal and life for the world, Macchia then makes a connection between Spirit baptism and the Kingdom. If the eschatological goal of the Kingdom of God is for creation to become the dwelling place of God’s Holy Spirit, then in Spirit baptism we have a foreshadowing of the divine indwelling in all of creation.<sup>67</sup> As such, “Spirit baptism is a liberating force that reorders our lives according to the loving reign of God in the world”.<sup>68</sup> Basically, Macchia has attempted to situate the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism “within a broader pneumatological setting that accounts for all of the nuances of Spirit baptism throughout the New Testament”.<sup>69</sup> He argues that such an interpretation is best achieved by viewing Spirit baptism within the context of the Kingdom of God.

Whether he realizes it or not, Macchia uses his concept of Spirit baptism in relation to the Kingdom of God as a foundation for reframing the constitutive and effective function of Spirit baptism. While

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<sup>62</sup> This is a well known theological concept and will not be expanded here. For more detail, see George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

<sup>63</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 66.

<sup>64</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-104.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

the constitutive function must wait for the next chapter, it is interesting to note the effective implications he identifies for Pentecostal spirituality as a result of his broader view of Spirit baptism. His chapter on *The Spirit-Baptized Life* contains several elements of effective meaning, even though they are not necessarily referred to as such. He starts with the thesis that “Spirit baptism gave rise to the global church and remains the very substance of the church’s life in the Spirit, including its charismatic life and mission”.<sup>70</sup> There is an obvious link in his thinking between the experience of Spirit baptism and the practical, effective life of the church. From this starting point, he then sets about developing the effective meaning of Spirit baptism based primarily on a Trinitarian understanding of Spirit baptism, the essence of which is divine love.<sup>71</sup> Spirit baptism, therefore, is a baptism into divine love.

This recognition of divine love as the substance of Spirit baptism consequently forms the basis of Macchia’s analysis of what Spirit baptism compels us to do. In technical terms, divine love forms the basis for his explanation of the effective function of Spirit baptism. In his own words, “the integration of purity and power is facilitated by the Spirit’s role in imparting God’s love as a redemptive force in the world”.<sup>72</sup> This, then, is the mission for the church and the believer arising from Spirit baptism: to realize the Kingdom of God on earth through the power of the Holy Spirit that fills us to overflowing with the love of God. It is because of this love that God’s kingdom is “liberating rather than dominating”, and “why mercy cannot tolerate the oppression and indignity caused by injustice”.<sup>73</sup>

*God’s people are carried by Spirit baptism on the winds of God’s holy breath to bear witness to Christ. They come to know that divine freedom as their own when they lay down their limited imaginations and are overtaken by God’s missionary passion for the world. The self-giving God of Spirit baptism produces a self-giving people in mission. The God who seeks to save the lost produces a people who do the same. To love God is to be shaped by that love so as to share its affections and passions.*<sup>74</sup>

Thus, through divine love, we arrive at an effective function of Spirit baptism that is still focused towards missions. But moreover, by viewing Spirit baptism as a baptism of divine love, Macchia has also provided us with a justification for including social concern in the effective function of

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 264.

Spirit baptism.<sup>75</sup> We will examine the possibilities of divine love as a basis for the effective meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism in more detail shortly.

While I positively affirm Macchia's contribution to our understanding of Spirit baptism, it is necessary to mention again that I have reservations about certain aspects of his theological construct. The main challenge that I see is his control of meaning in relation to Spirit baptism. In some cases there is obvious reference to the unique Pentecostal experience as "a powerful experience received with or at a moment distinct from Christian initiation".<sup>76</sup> But Macchia also understands Spirit baptism "as a metaphor of life in the Spirit" which means his view of what Spirit baptism encompasses is quite broad.<sup>77</sup> How the two relate to each other or are to be understood distinctly is not, in my opinion, made clear. For this reason, in contrast to my own use of the term, I have not used the designation "Pentecostal" in relation to Macchia's concept of Spirit baptism. While I do not wish to claim that Macchia's concept of Spirit baptism is not Pentecostal, I believe that we may not always have the same idea in mind. Nevertheless, there is definitely value in his effective framework for Spirit baptism, particularly in the fact that mission is viewed more holistically as a combination of evangelism and social concern. This connection between Spirit baptism and social action warrants brief comment before we continue.

#### 4.5 Spirit Baptism and Social Action:

Because of their eschatological expectation for an imminent return of Christ, Pentecostals have often been accused of neglecting social action and social justice in favour of evangelism and missions. Shane Clifton has stated that, while a Pentecostal eschatology grounded in premillennial pessimism acts as a motivating force for missional activity, it has also "been blamed for the tendency of twentieth century Pentecostalism to ignore the social responsibility of the church".<sup>78</sup> Dwight Wilson observes of Pentecostals historically: "since the end is near, they are indifferent to social change and have rejected the reformist methods of the optimistic postmillennialists and have concentrated on 'snatching brands from the fire' and letting social reforms result from humankind being born again".<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 278-280.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>78</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 91.

<sup>79</sup> Dwight J. Wilson, "Pentecostal Perspectives on Eschatology," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 605.

While many would agree with this critique in a general sense, there are certainly examples historically of Pentecostal interest in social concern. For example, the Good News Hall, the first Pentecostal assembly in Australia, “responded to the social needs in Australia” and provided hundreds of free lunches and free clothing every week.<sup>80</sup> In contemporary Pentecostalism, Douglas Petersen claims that “expressions of social concern are found in all types of Pentecostal churches”, leading him to conclude that Pentecostals are “not on a ‘social strike’ and that a vibrant social dynamic plays an integral part in Pentecostal expressions”.<sup>81</sup> Kärkkäinen is also positive about the contribution of Pentecostals in areas of social concern:

*Theologically, how do the twin themes of Spirit-empowerment and eschatological fervor play into the Pentecostal understanding of mission? Obviously, there is the danger of eschatology removing concern for today’s challenges. Especially with regard to social concern, early Pentecostals could surmise, why bother about the injustices of today when we expect the dawning of the New Day of the eschaton? Many Pentecostals worked with such a mindset, there is no question about that. Yet it is amazing that in the midst of reliance on the supernatural power of the Spirit and enthusiastic expectation of the Day, so much energy was devoted not only to evangelizing but also to working for social improvement. From early on, Pentecostals invested money and energy on building schools, hospitals, orphanages. While giving priority to evangelism and individual conversion, Pentecostals were never oblivious to social concern, even though that myth exists among outside observers of Pentecostalism.*<sup>82</sup>

While this recognizes that there has been at least some awareness of the social responsibility of the church in Pentecostalism, the point still has to be made that social work and social action usually took a secondary place to what was considered to be the more urgent task of evangelism and missions. The situation was almost certainly a reflection of Pentecostal eschatology in that transforming the social condition of a temporal world was seen as less important than preparing people for the imminent return of Christ.

However, in view of the eschatological shift mentioned in the previous section, it is to be expected that such a shift would have implications for a Pentecostal view of social work and social justice and that already seems to be the case. Very recently, Murray W. Dempster has argued extensively that Spirit baptism, understood in relationship to the Kingdom of God, can provide a rationale for

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<sup>80</sup> Angelo Ulisse Cettolin, "AOG Pentecostal Spirituality in Australia" (Australian College of Theology, 2006), 57.

<sup>81</sup> Douglas Petersen, "A Moral Imagination," [http://www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty\\_publications/klaus/dmiss/moral\\_imagination.pdf](http://www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/klaus/dmiss/moral_imagination.pdf).

<sup>82</sup> Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Theology of Mission in the Making," 170.

a social and moral mission as well as an evangelistic mission.<sup>83</sup> He explores the relationship between Spirit baptism and eschatology with a view to developing a holistic Pentecostal rationale for ministry.<sup>84</sup> After acknowledging that evangelization is still seen by many Pentecostals as the church's primary task, he argues that the mission of the Pentecostal church should involve "blending together the tasks of evangelism, strengthening the church's own congregational life in worship and *koinonia*, and creating social ministries for people both inside and outside the church, which promote human welfare, social justice, and personal dignity".<sup>85</sup>

*Spirit baptism empowered the believing community to walk its talk, to put creed into conduct, to confirm proclamation with practice. Spirit baptism, for Luke, did not simply empower individual disciples to witness in verbal proclamation. Spirit baptism empowered the church in its corporate life to witness to the moral dynamic of the gospel to transform people, change deep-seated prejudices, and restructure relationships so the participants incorporated into the inclusive believing community possessed an equally valued status in Christ.*<sup>86</sup>

While Dempster has argued effectively from a biblical concept of Spirit baptism, his treatment of the actual Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is limited to a couple of paragraphs. As with Macchia, his theological rationale for a social ethic relies heavily on a broad concept of Spirit baptism interpreted within the inaugurated eschatology of the Kingdom of God. While this is useful as a theological and biblical foundation, the limited attention given to the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism itself raises some concerns. Our next section will detail these concerns and suggest a way forward.

#### 4.6 Changes in Effective Meaning:

The point of this chapter thus far has been to demonstrate that the effective function of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism has usually been derived from an eschatological interpretation of the experience. This is true firstly of early Pentecostals who interpreted their experience in light of their belief in an imminent return of Christ and, therefore, derived an eschatological significance from the experience which gave impetus to evangelism and other missional efforts. But this is also true of more recent attempts to develop a holistic approach to outreach in terms of a balance between evangelism and social action. For both Dempster and

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<sup>83</sup> Dempster, "Eschatology, Spirit Baptism, and Inclusiveness," 155ff.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

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

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

Macchia above, the rationale for a focus on social action is provided by a broad interpretation of Spirit baptism within the inaugurated eschatology of the Kingdom of God. In either case, therefore, eschatology is key to understanding the effective function of Spirit baptism. Furthermore, where Dempster and Macchia are concerned, their concept of Spirit baptism relies heavily on the biblical concept with only occasional references to the Pentecostal experience. I believe this poses two challenges that have not been adequately addressed.

Firstly, while I appreciate the contribution of both Macchia and Dempster towards explicating an effective meaning of Spirit baptism that makes sense within our contemporary context, I would suggest that the basis for their effective meaning relies too heavily on eschatology. This presents a challenge in relation to the changeable and contextual nature of eschatological thought. Not only has our current eschatological perspective shifted since the early days of Pentecostalism, but the eschatological perspective of Pentecostals worldwide is not always consistent. The challenge then is to understand how the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism may function effectively in view of these changes and inconsistencies. When we refer to a change or a shift in effective meaning, we are suggesting that what is moving people and how they are being moved has changed. For Pentecostals, the sense of eschatological urgency that propelled them into the world with an urgent gospel message has been replaced by other motivating factors. We quoted Castelo earlier when he asked: "How should Pentecostals live in the 'already-not yet' tension now that the sense of the eschatological immediacy has dissipated with time?"<sup>87</sup> I believe that this question, slightly modified, expresses the challenge of capturing the effective meaning of the experience of Spirit baptism. Given that the effective meaning of Spirit baptism was so intricately linked to missions within the context of eschatological urgency, how should Pentecostals interpret the effective meaning of Spirit baptism now that the sense of eschatological immediacy has dissipated with time?

Secondly, there is also a challenge presented by the fact that an effective function of Spirit baptism grounded in Kingdom eschatology is usually derived almost entirely from the biblical concept of Spirit baptism with very little reference to the actual Pentecostal experience. Thus the Pentecostal experience itself is not allowed to function effectively without a strong dependence on other, much broader, theological categories. While we do not wish to separate Pentecostal Spirit baptism from a biblical foundation, a theological explanation of the Pentecostal experience with scant reference to the actual experience makes little sense. Is the Kingdom of God, a theological concept relatively unfamiliar to many Pentecostals, the only option for extracting effective meaning from the

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<sup>87</sup> Castelo, "Patience as a Theological Virtue," 235.

Pentecostal experience? Or, is there effective meaning that can be derived from the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism itself? If we recognize that Spirit baptism is first and foremost an experience of the Holy Spirit, can Spirit baptism carry its own effective meaning apart from eschatology?

#### **4.7 The Effective Function of Spirit Baptism Today:**

In light of this there are basically two options available for understanding how the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism may function effectively today. Either we attempt to reconstruct the Pentecostal concept of Spirit baptism to preserve effective meaning in light of recent eschatological changes, or we attempt to derive effective meaning from the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism without direct reference to or dependence upon a particular eschatological orientation. Whereas Macchia and Dempster have chosen the first trajectory, in this paper I am particularly interested in the second possibility and exploring how the experience of Spirit baptism may still be able to function effectively as a catalyst for evangelism and social action independent of eschatology. This is also consistent with my commitment throughout to emphasize the actual Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism rather than doctrinal constructs that do not adequately reference the experience. In my view, there is certainly potential inherent within the Pentecostal experience, understood primarily as a powerful experience of the Holy Spirit, for developing effective meaning for the contemporary Pentecostal context. There are three main areas in which I see potential for development along these lines.

##### **4.7.1 Created Participation in Passive Spiration:**

In the previous chapter we spent considerable time building a cognitive defense and understanding of the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism as first and foremost an experience of the Holy Spirit. If we view Spirit baptism in this way, this paves the way for explaining our experience of Spirit baptism in Trinitarian terms as participation in the life of God. One possibility that we then identified for further understanding what this actually implies was to view Spirit baptism as a created participation of the divine nature. While this is a theological proposal rather than an established doctrine, it is worth revisiting in relation to the effective function of meaning. In particular, Spirit baptism may be viewed as a created participation in the divine relationship of passive spiration which Lonergan has related to the habit of charity. The habit of charity is

outworked as “the habitual orientation to enacting God’s love in the world”<sup>88</sup>, which in practical terms suggests that we join with the Holy Spirit in the Spirit’s mission to the world.

The effective implications of this theological proposal should be obvious. As we encounter the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism and are drawn into divine relation with the Father and the Son, we are also empowered to participate in the mission of the Holy Spirit to enact the love of God in the world. This provides a direct connection between the experience of Spirit baptism itself and its effective function. While I understand that a theological construct like “created participations of the divine nature” is unlikely to gain widespread acceptance within Pentecostal circles, this nonetheless confirms the possibility of deriving effective meaning from the experience of Spirit baptism without reference to eschatology. This construct also provides the technical or theoretical grounding for what is to come in the next sections. Is there, though, a better way to communicate this theoretical construct that may be more readily embraced by Pentecostals?<sup>89</sup> In line with Macchia’s approach mentioned earlier, and building on the Trinitarian understanding of Spirit baptism from the previous chapter, we will now explore a basis for effective meaning that Pentecostals may more easily identify in their experience of Spirit baptism, namely an outpouring of divine love.

#### 4.7.2 An Outpouring of Divine Love:

As part of our Trinitarian analysis of Spirit baptism in the previous chapter, we used Augustine’s psychological analogy of the Trinity to suggest that the Holy Spirit could be understood not as the love between the Father and the Son, but as the love generated by the Father and the Son. Then, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as an act of love, in Spirit baptism it could be said that we are encountering the perfect love of the Father and the Son. This resonates with Romans 5:5 which tells us that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit”.<sup>90</sup> Referring once again to the previous chapter, we also noted that early Pentecostal leaders like Alexander Boddy and Gerrit Polman believed that love was the evidence of Spirit baptism rather than tongues.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, William Seymour came to the conclusion that tongues could only be viewed as the evidence of Spirit baptism if they were accompanied by “divinely-given” love.<sup>92</sup> His newsletter, *The Apostolic Faith*, contains the following testimony:

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<sup>88</sup> Ormerod, "The Metaphysics of Holiness," 76.

<sup>89</sup> In terms of the realms of meaning, a move from the realm of theory into the realm of common-sense.

<sup>90</sup> New International Version.

<sup>91</sup> Hudson, "Strange Words and Their Impact on Early Pentecostals," 65.

<sup>92</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 178.



*A Nazarene brother who received the baptism with the Holy Ghost in his own home in family worship, in trying to tell about it, said, "It was a baptism of love. Such abounding love! Such compassion seemed to almost kill me with its sweetness! People do not know what they are doing when they stand out against it. The devil never gave me a sweet thing; he was always trying to get me to censuring people. This baptism fills us with divine love".<sup>93</sup>*

All of this suggests that Spirit baptism as an outpouring of divine love fits well with the Pentecostals' understanding of their experience.

With this in mind, it behoves us to consider what implications this understanding may have for the effective meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. In relation to the primary outworking of effective meaning discussed in this chapter, namely mission and social action, the obvious question to ask is in what way divine love can function as a foundation for these tasks? J. Roswell Flower, writing in his newsletter *The Pentecost* in 1908, demonstrated this interpretive framework when he used love, rather than eschatology, as a motivation for missions:

*The baptism in the Holy Ghost does not consist in simply speaking in tongues. No, it has much more grand and deeper meaning than that. It fills our souls with the love of God for lost humanity. When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, the missionary spirit comes in with it: they are inseparable. Carrying the gospel to hungry souls in this and other lands is but a natural result of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.<sup>94</sup>*

It seems natural, therefore, to state that divine love can function effectively as a catalyst for missions and social action. Inasmuch as Spirit baptism may be viewed as an outpouring of God's divine love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, I submit that Spirit baptism can still play an important part in the missionary zeal and socially motivated impulse of Pentecostals.

This theological and practical association between Spirit baptism and divine love has recently been illuminated by Amos Yong. Yong recognizes that power has usually trumped love in Pentecostal consciousness and proclamation.<sup>95</sup> Yet, he argues, there was an awareness present in the earliest years of Pentecostalism that "the Pentecostal baptism with the Spirit was also a baptism of, in, and through the love of God".<sup>96</sup> While this awareness was gradually suppressed as the theme of power came to the fore, Yong nevertheless sees this baptism of divine love as critical to early Pentecostal emphases on unity in fellowship, love-empowered witness, and gracious love towards others

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<sup>93</sup> "The Pentecostal Baptism Restored."

<sup>94</sup> J. Roswell Flower, "The Pentecost," 1, no. 1 (1908): 4.

<sup>95</sup> Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), 40.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

outworked through pacifism.<sup>97</sup> As we are doing in this chapter, Yong further develops this theological connection between Spirit baptism and divine love in terms of its performative and ethical implications. Most relevant for our study here, Yong makes an explicit connection between the outpouring of divine love in Spirit baptism and the witness of the church. This witness involves “the introduction of the gift of God’s love in Christ to the world, so that the world may also come to experience and participate in the love of the Father and the Son”.<sup>98</sup> Thus Spirit baptism, understood as an outpouring of divine love, has the capacity to function effectively because “those who have been caught up in the baptism of love want others to experience that love for themselves”.<sup>99</sup>

As was mentioned earlier, the other Pentecostal theologian to thoroughly explore the connection between Spirit baptism and divine love has been Frank D. Macchia. He has argued that divine love must be at the essence of Spirit baptism because “Spirit baptism involves God’s love rising up within in fresh and renewed passion”.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, “the Trinitarian structure of Spirit baptism is the structure of the love mediated by the Spirit between the Father and the Son”.<sup>101</sup> While I prefer to view the love poured out in Spirit baptism as the love generated by the Father and the Son (rather than the love between the Father and the Son), we nevertheless agree that Spirit baptism is a baptism into divine love. Macchia boldly states that “there is nothing more important to theological reflection on Spirit baptism than divine love”.<sup>102</sup>

He then builds upon this foundation of divine love to develop a picture of a Spirit-baptized life. In his view, divine love is essential for focusing the empowerment of Spirit baptism towards Kingdom ends:

*Spirit baptism is not mere empowerment for mission in Pentecostal interpretation, even though it definitely has that focus. If it were, there would be no way of accounting for the equally important Pentecostal stress on the greater intimacy with God and fervency in eschatological expectation that characterize Pentecostal testimonies of Spirit baptism. Spirit baptism is akin to a prophetic call that draws believers close to his heart in deeper love and empathy in order to help them catch a glimpse of the divine love for the world. It is this love that is at the substance of the power for mission.*<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 64-74.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 269. He also states that “Pentecostals view our experience of God’s love in Spirit baptism in lavish terms” (Ibid., 280.).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 271.

He describes the flame of revival as “the flame of love rekindled and enhanced, for both God and the world”.<sup>104</sup> Spirit baptism, therefore, functions for Pentecostals “as a renewal in the experience and power of God’s love in our lives so that the fires of hope and faithfulness might burn more brightly”.<sup>105</sup>

While we may take different paths to arrive at our conclusion, both Macchia and myself agree that there is great potential for developing the effective meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism in terms of divine love. From my perspective, viewing Pentecostal Spirit baptism as an experience of the Holy Spirit in which the divine love of God is poured into our hearts is a very reasonable view that may be derived from the experience itself. The strength of this view as a basis for the effective function of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is that it does not rely on a particular eschatological orientation or context. Divine love can be equally as compelling in our contemporary context as it was for the early Pentecostals in their context of eschatological expectation. Macchia captures this beautifully:

*It is in the realm of the Spirit that I participate in the koinonia of divine love with others ... It is in the realm of the Spirit that I join my heart with the one who so loves the world and sent the divine Son to seek and to save the lost. It is on the winds of the Spirit that we are consecrated and called for a holy task and empowered to go forth as a vessel for the salvation of others, burning with the love of God for them. It is in the Spirit and the love of Christ that we confront injustice with a passion for the liberty and dignity of those who are oppressed as well as the transformation of those who benefit intentionally or blindly from that oppression.*<sup>106</sup>

This appeal to divine love as a motivating factor for both evangelism and social justice could easily provide a solid rationale for a balanced Pentecostal approach to mission.

As a final thought in this section, it is worth mentioning that an effective meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism grounded in divine love does not have to be solely interpersonal in the sense of missions or social action. While these may be the primary ways in which Spirit baptism has been interpreted effectively, there is also a personal element in that Spirit baptism functions effectively to direct us back to God in worship, prayer, and adoration. While the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the love generated by them, there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit returns that love in relationship with the Father and Son. In the same way, while Spirit baptism involves an

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 269.

outpouring of the love of God into our hearts, we return the love that God has given us in heartfelt worship and prayer. In fact, this is often how the gift of tongues has been understood and utilized. Whereas tongues were initially understood to be evidence of the empowerment that Spirit baptism signified, over time the experience of tongues as an in-depth prayer language or expression of worship began to influence the Pentecostal understanding. As evidence of this, Simon Chan refers to the following early Pentecostal testimony:

*I have never heard such praise, such love and adoration to the Lord Jesus. Indeed "tongues" were largely an expression, an overflow, of the worship ... there was an intense recognition of the Lordship of Christ, and of His absolute rights over their lives (1 Cor.12:3), a deep gratitude for His precious blood, shed for their sin on Calvary's Cross, a yearning for His return.<sup>107</sup>*

Clearly there was an appreciation of the value of tongues in worship and their role in expressing "love and adoration to the Lord Jesus". While space does not permit a more detailed examination of this personal aspect of the effective meaning of Spirit baptism understood in terms of divine love, it would be a mistake to overlook it. We will revisit the gift of tongues in our final chapter.

#### 4.7.3 A Broader Concept of Empowerment:

Finally, if we argue for divine love as the key that unlocks and explains the effective meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, how might this relate to the historical explanation of the effective meaning of Spirit baptism, namely *empowerment* for mission? While I may have been critical of this empowerment aspect as a sole or primary facet of meaning to be derived from the experience of Spirit baptism, this does not mean it should be dismissed altogether. Rather, I would argue that empowerment for mission is a valuable and meaningful concept when it is grounded by and builds upon the primary assertion that Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit.

While many Pentecostals would acknowledge that we are all dependent on the Holy Spirit for empowerment for mission, the question is how do we understand that empowerment? In a classical Pentecostal sense, I suggest that empowerment for mission has been narrowly viewed on two fronts. Firstly, it has been narrowly construed as the primary purpose of Spirit baptism. But, as Chan recognizes, explaining Spirit baptism primarily in terms of power for service "is manifestly inadequate as it does not encompass the actual experience of Pentecostals themselves".<sup>108</sup> There was and is much more to the experience than simply empowerment for mission. Secondly, the

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<sup>107</sup> Chan, "The Language Game of Glossolalia," 85.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

nature of this empowerment has been narrowly construed in terms of charismatic empowerment for mission. In fact, empowerment for mission is often viewed almost exclusively in charismatic terms. But, in line with Macchia's argument highlighted in the previous section, there is great potential in understanding divine love as the substance of this divine empowerment that comes through Spirit baptism.

Such a view would certainly allow us to broaden our perception of empowerment to incorporate a more holistic view of missions and ministry. Empowerment understood exclusively in charismatic terms tends to restrict our view of the Spirit's work to dramatic, remarkable, or miraculous instances of salvation or social change. But is there potential for understanding Spirit-given empowerment for mission in more practical terms? Douglas Petersen, for example, discusses a definition of empowerment that is much broader than the traditional Pentecostal understanding:

*I define empowerment on the first level as the acquisition of personal and interpersonal skills that equip a person to function effectively and have capacity to access available resources in civil society ... On a second and more corporate level, when addressing unjust social and structural dimensions, agencies, participants, or networks are empowered not only when they are able to take advantage of existing structures, but also when they demonstrate the capacity to change or transform those structures or create new alternatives to them.<sup>109</sup>*

His is basically a practical challenge to Pentecostals to demonstrate how their understanding of empowerment relates to moral and ethical responsibility. In his own words, "if the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is basically one for empowerment, then, the task of a Pentecostal theology is to demonstrate the centrality of the experience as a key pattern to open the way to discuss how these ethical demands are actualized and become operative in the power of the Spirit".<sup>110</sup> I believe that a concept of empowerment undergirded by an emphasis on divine love could provide the practical connection that Petersen is looking for.

Positively, then, the relationship between Spirit baptism and empowerment for mission may still be preserved if that empowerment is understood more broadly within the context of a balanced and practical concept of outreach and social responsibility. In this sense, "Spirit baptism as an experience of empowerment is not just renewed energy to do things for God ... It is rather the self-transcending, self-giving love".<sup>111</sup> Such a concept of empowerment is not beholden to a particular eschatological orientation, but draws its rationale from the eternal love of God. Thus divine love

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<sup>109</sup> Petersen, "A Moral Imagination."

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>111</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 281.

provides a powerful link between the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism and empowerment for mission:

*Spirit baptism fills us with the love of God so that we transcend ourselves and cross boundaries. We find the power to transcend limitations through divine infilling to pour ourselves out for others ... Jesus pours out the Spirit so that the Spirit may pour forth in our empowered love for others.<sup>112</sup>*

#### 4.8 Concluding Remarks:

The goal of this chapter has been to suggest how the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism may carry effective meaning for contemporary Pentecostals. For early Pentecostals, the effective meaning of Spirit baptism as a catalyst for evangelism and missions was tied to their eschatological expectation that the return of Christ was imminent. However, as the eschatological perspective of many Pentecostals has shifted in recent years, the effective meaning of Spirit baptism understood in this way no longer makes sense. Furthermore, the changing and contextual nature of eschatology in general presents some challenges when constructing effective meaning with an eschatological foundation. With this in mind, this chapter focused our attention on the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism in an effort to reframe the effective meaning of the experience without reference to a particular eschatological orientation.

Our suggestions along these lines rely heavily on the key assertion, established in the previous chapter, that Pentecostal Spirit baptism is first and foremost an experience of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is understood in Trinitarian terms as the love generated by the Father and the Son, this allows the proposition that in Spirit baptism that love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). The divine love of God that is central to the experience of Spirit baptism can then function as a basis for deriving effective meaning from the experience. The love of God both motivates and empowers us to join with the Holy Spirit in God's work of missions, evangelism, and social action. This theological connection between the divine love poured out in Spirit baptism and the mission of the church provides an effective understanding of Pentecostal Spirit baptism that does not rely on a particular context to make cognitive sense. People from any time and any place can be compelled by the love of God to reach out to their fellow human beings. If, in Spirit baptism, Pentecostals experience a powerful outpouring of God's divine love, outreach focused action is precisely what we should expect the result of such an experience to be.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 5: The Constitutive Function

The third function of meaning that we will consider in relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism is the constitutive function of meaning. This function of meaning, as we shall see below, relates to the role that meaning plays in constituting a community. For Pentecostals, constitutive meaning is the self-understanding that coalesces or unites a diverse collection of churches under the banner of Pentecostalism. The reader may recall that this thesis commenced with the assertion that Spirit baptism, as an experience and a doctrine, has been central to the self-identity of the Pentecostal community. In other words it could be said that Pentecostal Spirit baptism has fulfilled a constitutive function. How this has occurred, and the degree to which it continues to occur, will be the subject of this chapter.

We will begin with a re-examination of the constitutive function of meaning, particularly as it might relate to experiences within a Christian community. We will then suggest how the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism has fulfilled this function, at least historically, within the Pentecostal community. The key question that inevitably follows is to what degree, if at all, Spirit baptism remains constitutive for the Pentecostal community? While this chapter may not arrive at a final and definitive answer to this question, we will nevertheless be able to make some interesting observations and comments, and suggest some methodological considerations and challenges. Finally, we will demonstrate that the experience of Spirit baptism, understood as a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit, at least retains the capacity to function constitutively. Whether or not it does so will depend upon the Pentecostal community itself.

### 5.1 The Constitutive Function of Meaning Revisited:

In addition to the cognitive and effective functions of meaning which we have already examined, there is also the constitutive function of meaning. As Lonergan explains, “social institutions and human cultures have meaning as intrinsic components”.<sup>1</sup> Meaning is constitutive, therefore, in the sense that it functions as an intrinsic component of social institutions and human cultures and thereby constitutes them. Put simply, constitutive meaning is that which constitutes a community as a community. This relates to the self-understanding of the community and the common meaning that draws together and integrates the individuals in the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 78.

It is worth noting that, as well as this communal aspect, the constitutive function of meaning can also have a personal aspect. Meaning is personally constitutive in the sense that “it constitutes part of the reality of the one that means: his horizon, his assimilative powers, his knowledge, his value, his character”.<sup>2</sup> However when meaning becomes common meaning, such that it is shared by a group of individuals in community, it takes on a doubly constitutive role. According to Lonergan: “In each individual it is constitutive of the individual as a member of the community. In the group of individuals it is constitutive of the community”.<sup>3</sup> While our concern in this chapter will be primarily with the communal aspect of constitutive meaning in relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism, this personal aspect should not be ignored.

For our discussion here, there are several salient characteristics of constitutive meaning that bear particular relevance. Firstly, Lonergan highlights the lived reality of constitutive meaning in a Christian context. He suggests that “without living the Christian message one does not possess its constitutive meaning; and one cannot lead another to share what oneself does not possess”.<sup>4</sup> This implies that constitutive meaning is not a purely theoretical concern, but must also be an empirical or practical reality. Thus it makes no sense to discuss the constitutive meaning of Pentecostalism without reference to the actual experiences and practices of the Pentecostal community. As Clifton acknowledges, “doctrine does not arise out of propositional statements, but out of ecclesially constitutive experiences of the Spirit of Christ, reflected upon firstly in the Scriptures and also other texts of various sorts, judged and developed in specific historical contexts”.<sup>5</sup> The importance of this will become clear as the chapter progresses.

Secondly, constitutive meaning is not static but can change, and as meaning changes the individual or the community shaped by this constitutive meaning inevitably changes.

*The family, the state, the law, the economy are not fixed and immutable entities. They adapt to changing circumstances; they can be reconceived in the light of new ideas; they can be subjected to revolutionary change. But all such change involves change of meaning – a change of idea or concept, a change of judgement or evaluation, a change of the order or request.*<sup>6</sup>

Changes in the constitutive meaning of Pentecostal communities may have significant implications for the place given to Spirit baptism within those communities. Conversely, changes in Pentecostal

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 356.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 362.

<sup>5</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 11.

<sup>6</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 78.



attitudes towards Spirit baptism may also hint at changes in constitutive meaning and allow us to shed some light on these changes. For this reason the present chapter will consider the constitutive function of Pentecostal Spirit baptism both historically and presently. It is not a foregone conclusion that the result will be the same in both eras. Whatever the case, explicating the way in which Pentecostal Spirit baptism functions as a meaningful experience within the Pentecostal community requires that we give due consideration to possible changes in constitutive meaning.

Finally, the recognition that constitutive meaning has the potential to change leads to an obvious question: how do we measure changes in constitutive meaning? Herein lies the real challenge. Because constitutive meaning derives from the self-understanding of a community, this can be extremely difficult to identify and explicate. As Neil Ormerod explains:

*Human communities, particularly intentional communities such as the Church, are grounded in shared meanings and values. The most important changes in the life of any community are shifts in those meanings and values. But such changes cannot be measured; meaning has no "metric" that would allow us to measure its changes as continuous or discontinuous over time.<sup>7</sup>*

While some changes in meanings and values may be made explicit in doctrinal statements or creeds, others may only be observed implicitly in the spiritual experiences and practices of a community. To illustrate this reality, Lonergan uses the example of a country's constitution. While the written content of a constitution may not change, constitutive meaning can still change through a reinterpretation of that constitution or "by working on men's minds and hearts to change the objects that command their respect, hold their allegiance, fire their loyalty".<sup>8</sup> Such changes in meaning would be much harder to identify and to do so would require direct engagement with the community itself.

Explicating changes in the self-understanding of a church community, therefore, is an exercise involving more than just theological reflection. There is an obvious sociological component in that we are dealing with human social behaviour. Lonergan himself argues that theology requires the use of both religious categories and general categories drawn from philosophy and the human sciences.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, some appeal to sociology is essential if we are to understand social and cultural change. For Christian communities, there may on occasion exist a tension between empirical identity implicit in the practices of a community and the normative identity of a community as

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<sup>7</sup> Neil Ormerod, "Vatican II - Continuity or Discontinuity? Toward an Ontology of Meaning," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 611-612.

<sup>8</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 78.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-291.

specified in their doctrinal statements. This reinforces the fact that constitutive meaning is both a sociological and a theological concern, and if sociology and theology do not work together this tension will never be understood or resolved. While you might expect that the constitutive meaning of a Christian community would contain at least some theological content, explicating that content requires first that the constitutive meaning be identified. In other words, the self-understanding of the community must first be brought to light. This is the sociological challenge and will be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

This brief discussion of constitutive meaning thus sets the agenda for the remainder of this chapter. While we can, and will, reflect on the potential theological meaning that may be derived from Pentecostal Spirit baptism and its constitutive applications, there is a broader question that must first be addressed. Specifically, how has Spirit baptism fulfilled a constitutive function within Pentecostalism historically, and does that function persist within contemporary Pentecostalism? To this question we now turn.

## **5.2 The Constitutive Function of Pentecostal Spirit Baptism:**

So how did or does the experience of Spirit baptism function constitutively in Pentecostalism? As we have mentioned several times, the focus here is the self-understanding, often unreflective, of the Pentecostal community. Before we can continue, the source of this self-understanding warrants brief comment. Because Pentecostalism is a movement without central governance or universally accepted doctrinal statements, it could be argued that there is no *institutionally* constitutive element within Pentecostalism. Indeed, Clifton attests to the “ecclesial diversity within the movement”.<sup>10</sup> The unity of Pentecostal churches, often loosely held, is therefore certainly not an institutional unity. Rather, it would seem that shared experiences provide the means for maintaining a loose-knit community despite cultural, geographical, and doctrinal disparity. Thus it is to be expected that the source of Pentecostal self-understanding is to be found primarily in the experiences and practical spirituality of the community. This expectation is exemplified in the Pentecostal adage that “the person with an experience ... is never at the mercy of one who has only an argument”.<sup>11</sup> That Pentecostals often refer to experience rather than doctrine to inform their self-understanding has already been highlighted numerous times in this thesis. This will guide our discussion as we move forward.

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<sup>10</sup> Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal for a Diverse Movement," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 2 (2007): 214.

<sup>11</sup> Chant, "The Spirit of Pentecost", 41.

### 5.2.1 Historically:

As a powerful experience shared by the Pentecostal community, a strong argument can be made that the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism was a key constitutive element for early Pentecostals. The experience played a unifying role in establishing a new community comprised of new converts and people from a number of different Christian traditions.<sup>12</sup> After designating baptism in the Holy Spirit as *the* “Pentecostal experience”, Blumhofer notes of early Pentecostals that “their experience initiated them into a community (which, though it had no geographical boundaries, had well-defined behavioural norms and cultural expectations) and fostered an ongoing sense of community obligation, meaning, and purpose”.<sup>13</sup> This portrays Spirit baptism as the primary doorway into the Pentecostal community. Stuebaker is even more explicit:

*From this standpoint, Spirit baptism can be understood as a constitutive experience within Pentecostalism. Even granting the varied interpretations of Spirit baptism among Pentecostals, Spirit baptism is a biblical metaphor for an experience that many Pentecostals have in common and as such is an experience that characterizes the movement and not just certain individuals within it.*<sup>14</sup>

Even a cursory glance at early Pentecostal literature highlights the fact that early Pentecostals understood their own identity to be closely linked to Spirit baptism. In fact, Andrew Lord argues that the “essence of early Pentecostal ecclesiology deriving from Azusa focuses on experiences of Spirit baptism”.<sup>15</sup>

This constitutive function of Spirit baptism has been confirmed by other authors. Clifton affirms that the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism in the Spirit is central to Pentecostal self-identity and “has played a prominent role in the unity among Pentecostal churches”.<sup>16</sup>

*Throughout our study we have noted the extent to which the experience and understanding of baptism in the Spirit is central to Pentecostal identity ... At the cultural level, it is symbolically representative of Pentecostal identity, and functions dialectically as both an operator and integrator ... At the social level, baptism in the Spirit is a shared experience that grounds Pentecostal fellowship.*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Andrew Michael Lord, "Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission" (University of Birmingham, 2010), 64.

<sup>13</sup> Blumhofer, "Pentecost in My Soul", 34.

<sup>14</sup> Stuebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Lord, "Network Church", 63.

<sup>16</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 266.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

Clifton also explains that Spirit baptism constituted Pentecostal community in that “there developed a sense of ‘movement’ which transcended institutional boundaries, and which was associated with the shared experience and theology of baptism in the Spirit”.<sup>18</sup> Poloma notes the unifying capacity of Spirit baptism, claiming that the “single-mindedness” of the Pentecostal movement emerged from a common experience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> While recognizing the diversity of views on Spirit baptism within Pentecostalism, Studebaker still believes that Spirit baptism, as a theological category, “best captures the nature of the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit”.<sup>20</sup> Speaking specifically of his own context in North America, he argues that, for Pentecostals, “Spirit baptism has been a primary doctrine and term used to describe their experience”.<sup>21</sup> Thus Spirit baptism has constituted a unity in Pentecostalism even where there may be no ecclesiological or institutional unity.

There is also a sense in which the phenomena associated with the experience of Spirit baptism, particularly glossolalia, came to be viewed as identifying marks of the Pentecostal community. Simon Chan argues that glossolalia, as “a response from the depth of the human spirit to the reality of God felt as an immediate presence” (in Spirit baptism), is a “commitment act signalling a person’s initiation into the Pentecostal community”.<sup>22</sup> Speaking of Pentecostalism in Australia, Barry Chant has stated that “the ‘evidence’ of glossolalia was embedded in the movement as a non-negotiable practice”.<sup>23</sup> There was therefore a strong sense of Pentecostal identity associated with glossolalia and Spirit baptism. Insofar as glossolalia became a point of demarcation between Pentecostals and other Christian traditions it contributed to the constitutive meaning of the Pentecostal community.

While the consensus seems to be that Pentecostal Spirit baptism has functioned constitutively for the Pentecostal movement historically and was central to the community’s self-understanding, there is a very real question mark over the place of Spirit baptism in contemporary Pentecostalism. One could well ask how Spirit baptism can be seen as constitutive of the contemporary Pentecostal church given its supposed neglect in recent times. For example, we have already noted the trend towards viewing eschatology rather than Spirit baptism as the unifying core or constitutive centre of the Pentecostal movement. With this question in mind, it is now time to examine the place and function of Spirit baptism in contemporary Pentecostalism.

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<sup>18</sup> ———, “The Spirit and Doctrinal Development,” 14.

<sup>19</sup> Poloma, “Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God,” 6.

<sup>20</sup> Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God*, 46.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>22</sup> Chan, “Evidential Glossolalia and the Doctrine of Subsequence,” 201.

<sup>23</sup> Chant, “The Spirit of Pentecost”, 524.

### 5.2.2 Presently:

For Spirit baptism to be viewed as a constitutive reality within the contemporary Pentecostal community, it must make a significant contribution to the self-understanding of that community. Only recently, Shane Clifton argued that “baptism in the Spirit continues to be foundational to traditional Pentecostal identity, and this remains the primary reason that denominational leaders continue to insist upon adherence (through institutional mechanisms such as the requirements of ordination)”.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Chan believes that if we were to ask what the self-understanding of Pentecostals might be, “without question it has to do with what early Pentecostals called baptism in the Spirit”.<sup>25</sup> But some are beginning to question whether this doctrinal adherence is reflected in the practical spirituality of Pentecostal churches. Or, as mentioned above, is there a tension between empirical identity implicit in the practices of the Pentecostal community and the normative identity of the community as specified in their doctrinal statements? We have already observed that constitutive meaning must be a lived reality, and the capacity of Pentecostal Spirit baptism to function constitutively depends on the degree to which it remains a lived reality in Pentecostal communities.

Those who bemoan the current neglect of Spirit baptism within Pentecostalism often appeal to the statistical decline in those reporting experiences of Spirit baptism. Warrington points out that, in recent years, while the number of converts has increased in AOG churches in the USA, for every five of these converts there is only one Spirit baptism experience.<sup>26</sup> In an article for *Christianity Today*, Abby Stocker notes that the Assemblies of God in America “may be losing one of its defining characteristics – even as it continues to grow and diversify at an enviable rate”.<sup>27</sup> Whereas membership in the Assemblies of God in America continues to increase, in 2012 Spirit baptisms decreased 2.9% to less than 82,000 – the lowest total since 1995.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, statistics published by the movement list 453,496 conversions in the same period.<sup>29</sup> In support of Warrington, this equates to roughly 1 in 5 converts reporting an experience of Spirit baptism. If these statistics accurately reflect a shift in the self-understanding of the Pentecostal community, it is difficult to see how an experience like Spirit baptism can remain constitutive, in a personal or communal sense, if a large number of Pentecostals have no first-hand knowledge of that

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<sup>24</sup> Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development," 16.

<sup>25</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2011), 94.

<sup>26</sup> Warrington, "The Challenge of the Spirit Facing Pentecostal and Charismatic Believers," 9.

<sup>27</sup> Abby Stocker, "Assemblies of God Surge, but Speaking in Tongues Slumps," *Christianity Today* 2013.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> USA Assemblies of God, "Statistics of the Assemblies of God (USA)," (2012).

experience. As we mentioned above, constitutive meaning must be a lived reality. But what conclusions can be reliably drawn from these statistics?

Firstly, we must be careful not to reduce the complex sociological realities of a religious community to statistical analysis. We have already referred to the sociological challenge of explicating constitutive meaning, and we will develop this in more detail shortly. Furthermore, whether or not these statistics paint an accurate picture of trends in the Pentecostal community is open to question. Appendix B compares the number of reported conversions in the Assemblies of God in the USA between 1979 and 2003 with the number of reported Spirit baptisms in the same period. While there has been a slow decline in this ratio over several decades, there has actually been a slight increase in recent years. Furthermore, the ratio of conversions to Spirit baptisms has never been much over 1 in 3, which moderates the perceived severity of a reduction to 1 in 5.<sup>30</sup> There is also the question of how conversions are measured and reported. Whereas people may make a conversion decision in a Pentecostal church, there is no data provided to indicate how many of these converts remain in the church and participate in what might be called an initiation process beyond that first decision.

With this in mind, it may be helpful to compare the number of water baptisms to Spirit baptisms from roughly the same period. The assumption could be made that the number of people who are water baptised gives a more reliable indication of ongoing participation in the Pentecostal community. This comparison, in relation to the Assemblies of God in the USA, is provided in Appendix C. By this measure the ratio of Spirit baptisms to water baptisms has been as high as 9 in 10 (1987), but in more recent years has declined slowly to just over 6 in 10 in 2012. Once again a decline is present, but if 60% of the Pentecostal community are still embracing the experience of Spirit baptism, this paints a very different picture to the figures quoted by Warrington above. Even this comparison, though, must come with a caveat. There is no indication of the criteria used to identify an occurrence of Spirit baptism, nor is there information on how these statistics were reported. Furthermore, these statistics are from one Pentecostal movement in one part of the world and should not necessarily be taken as representative of the worldwide Pentecostal movement. That being said, the Assemblies of God in the USA claims over 3 million adherents as of 2012, and that significant a number of Pentecostal believers must at least have their say.

In my own Australian context, much has also been made of recent changes to the “What We Believe” statement of Hillsong, the country’s largest church. This concise statement of belief

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<sup>30</sup> It would be all too easy to assume that the decline in reported Spirit baptism to 1 in 5 (or 20%) is in relation to a starting point of 100% (instead of the real starting point of around 33%).

provided on their website no longer makes any reference to Spirit baptism. Instead, they state that "We believe that in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us, we need to be baptised in water and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues".<sup>31</sup> Omission of any reference to Spirit baptism has led some to conclude that Spirit baptism is no longer considered an important part of the community's self-identity. Furthermore, while there is still a reference to speaking in tongues, this spiritual gift is not given the status of an identifying characteristic of Pentecostalism. But whether or not these conclusions, about the attitude of Hillsong towards Spirit baptism, may be reasonably drawn is not immediately clear. My suspicion is that the reality is significantly more complex, and the degree to which these creedal statements inform or reflect the actual self-understanding of the community is very much open to question.

Finally, I would like to mention two other sets of data related to Australian Pentecostalism. The first is a comparison of "Salvations" and "Baptisms in the Holy Spirit" as reported by Australian Christian Churches (ACC), the country's largest Pentecostal denomination, in their 2013 census. The percentage of Spirit baptisms to conversions is even lower than the USA data, with an average of 15.9% of converts being baptized in the Spirit over the last nine years.<sup>32</sup> While this paints a negative picture regarding the constitutive value of Spirit baptism, there is still the question of how "Salvations" are recorded, whether each salvation is actually a unique person, and how many of these remain in the church after this initial decision? To replicate the exercise from above, when the number of Spirit baptisms is compared with the number of water baptisms from the same period, the average ratio over the last nine years is 75%.<sup>33</sup> So for every 4 water baptisms there were 3 baptisms in the Holy Spirit. Once again there is a limit to the conclusions that can be drawn from these statistics and in this case the period which these statistics cover is a relatively short span of time.

The second set of data comes from the National Church Life Survey (NCLS), a survey of Australian churches conducted every 5 years.<sup>34</sup> While this survey does not include a specific question about Spirit baptism, there is a question related to speaking in tongues. Given the close association between Spirit baptism and tongues within Pentecostalism, there is still value in considering the data. Interestingly, the percentage of Pentecostal respondents who approve of tongues and have

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<sup>31</sup> <http://myhillsong.com/what-we-believe>. Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>34</sup> "National Church Life Survey," (1991-2011).

spoken in tongues has actually increased from 57.2% in 1991 to 63.2% in 2011.<sup>35</sup> What has drastically declined, however, is the percentage of Pentecostal respondents who believe that tongues is necessary for all Christians (from 24.5% in 1991 to 15% in 2011). These statistics suggest that, while the Pentecostal attitude towards tongues may be changing, the actual usage and practice of tongues is still widespread within Australian Pentecostalism. At the very least, this calls into question the assumption that tongues, and Spirit baptism by association, are in a rapid state of decline.

Ultimately, I would question the reliability of the statistics that are often used to paint a very dire picture of the neglect of Spirit baptism, not in the sense of their statistical accuracy, but in their capacity to reliably represent the self-understanding of the Pentecostal community. In order to explicate this self-understanding, more must be done than simply statistical research. It is therefore understandable that there is some confusion over the constitutive function of Pentecostal Spirit baptism in contemporary Pentecostalism. While there is some statistical and doctrinal evidence to suggest that the centrality of Spirit baptism is under threat, whether or not this evidence illuminates or obfuscates the actual self-understanding of Pentecostal Christians is yet to be determined. How, then, do we proceed? How can we analyse or explicate the self-understanding of the Pentecostal community?

This is a more difficult question than it may at first appear. It is one thing to find evidence of change within a community. It is another thing entirely to make a theological or sociological judgement about the significance of that change. Given the evidence we currently have available I am not sure that we are in a position to make any such judgement. Furthermore, it could be suggested that Pentecostalism is still undergoing change in relation to Spirit baptism and the final outcomes have not yet been realized. While one's first instinct may be to press for further sociological study into the self-understanding of Pentecostals on this topic, any such study would face several challenges including the global diversity of the movement and the frequent lack of self-reflection on the part of Pentecostals. But these difficulties should not discourage us from moving forward. Instead, our forward movement should be cautious and acutely aware of the difficulties presented by the questions. Ultimately, the question at hand is this: does the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism still function constitutively in contemporary Pentecostalism? We will now consider a possible approach to accessing the self-understanding of the Pentecostal community and answering the question we have just posed.

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendix F.



### 5.3 Concrete Ecclesiology and the Challenge of Constitutive Meaning:

If the substance of constitutive meaning is the self-understanding that constitutes a community, to understand constitutive meaning within Pentecostalism we must understand how Pentecostals have understood their own community. To this end, Clifton has suggested one possible means of accessing the self-understanding of a church community is through a concrete ecclesiology.<sup>36</sup> We will explore this concept of a “concrete” ecclesiology in more detail shortly, but some preliminary comments on Pentecostal ecclesiology are necessary before we continue. Our starting point is to agree with Clifton when he states that “the theology and experience of Baptism in the Spirit ... shapes Pentecostal ecclesiology”.<sup>37</sup> This is because the shared experience of Spirit baptism allowed Pentecostalism to retain cohesion as a movement despite structural divisions and diversity. This ecclesiological significance of Spirit baptism is also evidenced by the prominence of the topic in ecumenical discussions between Pentecostals and other ecclesial traditions.<sup>38</sup> Is there a way, then, in which this relationship between Spirit baptism and ecclesiology may provide an access point to help us explicate the self-understanding of the Pentecostal movement in relation to Spirit baptism?

Firstly, it has commonly been remarked that “Pentecostals do not own a distinctively Pentecostal theology of the church”.<sup>39</sup> But such a view does not give due consideration to recent work in Pentecostal ecclesiology by scholars like Peter Althouse, Wolfgang Vondey, Simon Chan, Frank D. Macchia, Amos Yong, and Shane Clifton, among others. It might be more accurate to say that Pentecostal ecclesiology, at least in terms of theological exposition, is still in the early stages of development. For the purposes of our study, it is not necessary to comprehensively outline all aspects of Pentecostal ecclesiology. Such a study would touch on numerous areas that do not concern us here. What is of interest, though, is to understand the way in which various scholars have approached the question of Pentecostal ecclesiology. The various methodologies may provide some insight into how we might attempt to identify the key constitutive meanings of Pentecostal communities.

Along these lines, Tommy Davidsson provides a very useful taxonomy for classifying contemporary efforts in Pentecostal ecclesiology according to four broad categories derived from the

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<sup>36</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 217.

<sup>37</sup> ———, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 74.

<sup>38</sup> For a collection of documents relating to Pentecostal participation in ecumenical conversations see: Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Volume One* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010). ———, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Volume Two* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 131.

radical/moderate and above/below polarities.<sup>40</sup> The first category is “a radical ecclesiology from above which almost completely ignores contextual issues and discusses Pentecostal ecclesiology in purely theological terms”.<sup>41</sup> A prime example of this approach is Peter Althouse who states that he is “unconcerned with descriptive accounts of Pentecostal ecclesiologies as they have developed to date”.<sup>42</sup> Davidsson is carefully critical of this approach because of its disconnection with the values, diversity, and historical development of the Pentecostal movement. The second category, a moderate ecclesiology from above, may pay some brief attention to concrete realities, in particular undesirable characteristics of practical Pentecostalism, but quickly returns to an ecclesiology from above as a critique and remedy for these undesirable characteristics. According to Davidsson, in this category sit Simon Chan<sup>43</sup>, Miroslav Volf, Frank D. Macchia and Amos Yong. Once again, there is a problem with the dichotomy created between an idealized ecclesiology from above and the concrete reality of the Pentecostal church. In many cases the result is a “blueprint ecclesiology” rather than a “practically oriented ecclesiology”.<sup>44</sup> The third category is a moderate ecclesiology from below, “which pays attention to formative contexts and tries to understand the concrete reality of Pentecostal ecclesiology before employing a normative analysis”.<sup>45</sup> Davidsson puts forward David Morgan, Steven Land, and Mark J. Cartledge as exponents of this approach. The fourth and final category, a radical ecclesiology from below, focuses on Pentecostal ecclesiology as it is with little or no normative analysis. While Davidsson suggests that no radical Pentecostal ecclesiology from below currently exists, Shane Clifton’s work may be considered a “mild expression” of it.<sup>46</sup> Significantly, Davidsson argues that only ecclesiologies from below are useful for defining or explicating Pentecostal self-identity.

To illustrate this point, we will briefly consider the ecclesiology of Frank D. Macchia. Of all the theologians surveyed by Davidsson, Macchia is of particular interest because of his attempt to forge a direct connection between Spirit baptism and Pentecostal ecclesiology.<sup>47</sup> He begins by urging a return to the “central Pentecostal distinctive” of Spirit baptism. This exhortation for a “return” contains an implicit assumption that the constitutive meaning of Pentecostalism, traditionally

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<sup>40</sup> Tommy Henrik Davidsson, "Lewi Pethrus' Ecclesiological Thought 1911-1974: A Transdenominational Pentecostal Ecclesiology" (University of Birmingham, 2012), 286.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Althouse, "Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Participation in the Missional Life of the Triune God," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2009): 231.

<sup>43</sup> Simon Chan, "Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology," *Pneuma* 22, no. 2 (2000).

<sup>44</sup> Davidsson, "Lewi Pethrus' Ecclesiological Thought", 293.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>47</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*; ———, "The Spirit-Baptised Church," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 11, no. 4 (2011).

grounded in the experience of Spirit baptism, has been gradually shifting or changing. He claims that "Pentecostals have not been in agreement as to the precise meaning of Spirit baptism for the life of the church".<sup>48</sup> His chapter on a Spirit-baptized ecclesiology could therefore be viewed as an attempt to shift the constitutive meaning of the Pentecostal community back to Spirit baptism by appealing to an "ideal" ecclesiology arising from his theological construct of Spirit baptism.

Macchia essentially builds upon the Spirit's role in constituting the church to develop an ecclesiology with a strong pneumatological emphasis. He considers Spirit baptism as a basis for communion in that it leads to "a shared love, a shared meal, a shared mission, and the proliferation/enhancement of an interactive charismatic life".<sup>49</sup> In particular, he highlights the Spirit's role in shaping and constituting community, a role that is effected in the Pentecostal church through the experience of Spirit baptism:

*The Spirit-baptized church is constituted by the Spirit according to the substance and pattern of the Trinitarian life. Spirit baptism as a relational experience explains how Spirit baptism birthed the church and continues to renew and empower the church in its diverse and vibrant charismatic life.*<sup>50</sup>

His Spirit-baptized ecclesiology seems to be an attempt to integrate a pneumatological emphasis with traditional ecclesiological categories in what might be called an idealized ecclesiology for the Pentecostal church.

I have noted previously that the foundation of Macchia's work is his attempt to shift the use of the term Spirit baptism beyond the particular Pentecostal experience and incorporate the whole spectrum of life in the Spirit. This shift is very evident when he describes Spirit baptism as "the biblical metaphor for God's self-donation to humanity in the outpouring of the Spirit to indwell them, to take them up into the divine life, and to enable them to participate in the divine mission".<sup>51</sup> Macchia therefore sees the Spirit as constituting the church through Spirit baptism in a very broad sense. However, echoing concerns I have raised throughout, Davidsson asks whether "the fact that he [Macchia] extends the boundaries of Spirit baptism beyond their recognisable form for most Pentecostals casts doubts on its usefulness for shaping concrete Pentecostal ecclesiologies".<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, his point of reference for developing his ecclesiology is almost solely the biblical record with very little reference to Pentecostal experience. While this may be intentional on his

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<sup>48</sup> ———, "The Spirit-Baptised Church," 256.

<sup>49</sup> ———, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 156.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>51</sup> ———, "The Spirit-Baptised Church," 256.

<sup>52</sup> Davidsson, "Lewi Pethrus' Ecclesiological Thought", 294.

part, it raises a methodological question about the use and efficacy of an ecclesiology that does not reference or incorporate the sociological aspects of the Pentecostal community.

This brings us back to Davidsson's analysis of methodological approaches to Pentecostal ecclesiology and, importantly, his endorsement of ecclesiologies from below. It can be observed that most attempts at Pentecostal ecclesiology, including Macchia, rely primarily on theological sources like biblical literature. In this we can see a clear and often deliberate starting point in ecclesiologies from above. Simon Chan, for example, suggests that a sociological understanding of the church leads to an individualistic and humanistic concept of church.<sup>53</sup> Over against this "very weak" sociological concept of church, Chan suggests that "the church is a transcendent reality" and should be considered as such.<sup>54</sup> However, as has already been mentioned, this approach can lead to a disconnection between an idealized ecclesiology, derived from biblical and other literature, and the practical reality of the Pentecostal church. Mark J. Cartledge notes that "insights from empirical congregational studies ... have been noticeable by their absence" from efforts in Pentecostal ecclesiology.<sup>55</sup> In response to this absence he appeals to Nicholas Healy who wrote "Ecclesiology is not a doctrine theory that can be worked out without close attention to the concrete life of the church".<sup>56</sup>

This recognition is also at the heart of Clifton's concept of a concrete ecclesiology as a means to access the self-understanding of the Pentecostal community. He affirms that, "since the Church is both a divine and human institution, ecclesiology will need to appropriate the human sciences if it is properly to understand its object".<sup>57</sup> This does not mean that the theological aspect of ecclesiology is not important, rather that both theology and sociology must work together:

*Concrete ecclesiology will include the ideal, insofar as that ideal can be shown to be central to the symbols that constitute the church. It will also include an explicit analysis of the church's self-understanding, institution and praxis.*<sup>58</sup>

Such a concrete ecclesiology will have a narrative structure in that it will need to tell the story of the church under consideration, and include analysis of the way in which the church has understood its own story.<sup>59</sup> From a Pentecostal perspective, this will include "the way in which baptism in the Spirit has framed and been framed by Pentecostal movements during the course of their history".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Chan, "Mother Church," 179.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>55</sup> Mark J. Cartledge, "Renewal Ecclesiology in Empirical Perspective," *Pneuma* 36 (2014): 15.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>57</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 219.

<sup>58</sup> ———, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 49.

<sup>59</sup> ———, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 218.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

A concrete ecclesiology will also consider the church's history of explicit or implicit ecclesial reflection, historical judgement, and theological and sociological explanation and assessment.<sup>61</sup>

Concerning the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology, Neil Ormerod has argued along similar lines to Clifton in his recent book. He suggests that "one cannot develop an ecclesiology simply using religious categories. To fail to introduce social and historical analysis is to fail to understand the one reality that is the Church".<sup>62</sup> He argues persuasively that sociology and theology must work together to understand church communities. From a methodological perspective, "the goal of ecclesiology is the bringing together of an upper blade which incorporates the social sciences with the lower blade of a narrative of the history of the church".<sup>63</sup> In this context the "upper blade" is "a set of heuristic anticipations for the patterns into which data will fit", drawn from the social sciences, and the "lower blade" is the collection of relevant empirical data.<sup>64</sup> Ormerod posits that "at the very least one might conclude that it is no longer theologically responsible to attempt a systematic ecclesiology without paying some attention to the social sciences".<sup>65</sup> He does not hold a naïve view that somehow the social sciences as they currently exist are inherently compatible with theology, but rather "theologians must actively engage with and reorient the social sciences".<sup>66</sup>

In many ways this drastically complicates the task of identifying and explicating the self-understanding of the Pentecostal movement. Firstly, the sources available for developing a concrete Pentecostal ecclesiology are likely to be "subjective, pragmatic, and sporadic".<sup>67</sup> Secondly, the contextual and historical nature of a concrete ecclesiology suggests that different Pentecostal churches situated in different historical contexts and geographical locations must be considered separately. Thus we may not be able to refer to Pentecostal ecclesiology in a one-size-fits-all sense, but rather Pentecostal ecclesiologies that are historically, socially, and geographically unique. Finally, engagement with the social sciences requires that theologians make an effort to understand the multifaceted discipline of sociology so that they can select and reorient the most appropriate methodologies. As with theology, "the discipline of sociology itself is not a simple, unified science" that lends itself to easy engagement.<sup>68</sup> Despite these difficulties, though, it is naïve

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<sup>61</sup> ———, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 50.

<sup>62</sup> Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic Historical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 23.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>67</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 218.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

to think that the self-understanding of the Pentecostal community, comprised as it is of millions of different people from around the world, will be anything other than highly complex. As Clifton observes, "if the church is understood to be more than a theological construct and is, as we have argued, a concrete reality, it is readily apparent that it is a social reality".<sup>69</sup> Recognizing this will avoid a simplistic and abstract theological assessment of the constitutive function of Spirit baptism for contemporary Pentecostalism.

My conclusion arising from all of this discussion is that further sociological analysis of the Pentecostal community is required before we can speak confidently about what is currently constituting Pentecostalism. It would also be misleading for me to make definitive claims about the self-understanding of the contemporary Pentecostal movement in relation to Spirit baptism. At the risk of disappointing the reader, I cannot do everything and such detailed sociological analysis lies beyond the scope of this thesis and must be left to someone else to carry out. While there have been an increasing number of sociological studies looking at Pentecostals in a variety of different contexts, I am not currently aware of a study specifically concerned with the self-understanding of Pentecostals concerning Spirit baptism. Barry Chant recognizes the existence of a number of sociological analyses of the Pentecostal movement and Pentecostal phenomena, but these have sometimes been "treated with disdain" by Pentecostals who are uncomfortable subjecting the work of the Holy Spirit to psychological or sociological analysis.<sup>70</sup> I do believe that the need for Pentecostalism to explicate its self-identity and self-understanding makes this task somewhat urgent. Whether or not the experience of Spirit baptism continues to play an essentially constitutive role remains to be seen. There is always the possibility that Spirit baptism may be constitutive as an aspiration but no longer constitutive empirically.

#### **5.4 A Way Forward:**

While it may not be possible, for the reasons described above, to tackle all of the issues relating to the constitutive function of Spirit baptism in a contemporary Pentecostal context, the goal at least is to point a way forward. We will attempt this in two ways. Firstly, by proposing some categories for understanding changes in constitutive meaning. These categories, which effectively represent a theological "upper blade" for dealing with the data, will be helpful in conjunction with the sociological studies suggested in the previous section. Secondly, even without making a definitive statement about the constitutive meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, we can at least affirm the

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<sup>69</sup> — — —, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 60.

<sup>70</sup> Chant, "The Spirit of Pentecost", 62.

theological *capacity* of the experience of Spirit baptism to function constitutively. While such an idealized theological exercise may seem at odds with a concrete ecclesiology, it is not intended to stand alone. If, and only if, it can be demonstrated that the experience of Spirit baptism continues to function constitutively for contemporary Pentecostals, the theological content of that constitutive meaning becomes important. In the final section of this chapter we will consider what that theological content might look like.

#### **5.4.1 Institution and Charisma:**

One category of ecclesiological transition pertinent to the question at hand is the institutionalization or organization of the Pentecostal movement. This trend towards increased organization is sometimes used to explain ecclesiological, sociological and spiritual changes occurring within the movement, and may therefore have some implications for constitutive meaning. In his analysis of the developing ecclesiology of the AOG in Australia, Clifton observes developments in the self-understanding of the movement towards organization and leadership structures.<sup>71</sup> Wolfgang Vondey also says this of Pentecostalism in general:

*The "creative chaos" of the early Pentecostal revivals has made room for an increasing structuralization and routinization of the movement submitted to the orthodox ideals of performance, purpose, order, and meaning. Pentecostal denominations, churches, and ministries have become characterized by an increasing systemization and differentiation of rules, processes, and goals dominated by calculation and competition. The increasing complexity of structures demands logic and systematization following the principles of accommodation, imitation, and adaptation. In contrast to the origins of the movement, Pentecostalism in North America has become a task- and goal-oriented set of institutions governed by the matrix of productivity, efficiency, usefulness, and welfare.*<sup>72</sup>

All of this attests to the shift from a voluntarist movement with a largely ad-hoc structure, as early Pentecostalism is usually characterized, towards a contemporary Pentecostal church with its own defined ecclesial structure and organization.

Within this new organizational structure, it has been suggested that some of the charismatic emphases of the movement, including Spirit baptism, have struggled to find a place. Poloma has argued that "the fear of falling into the abyss of 'carnal' unregulated religious experience has

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<sup>71</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 75.

<sup>72</sup> Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 190.

commonly caused established Pentecostalism to quench charisma as it sought to protect its emergent structure".<sup>73</sup> This occurred, according to Poloma, as early as 1960 when there were signs that charisma "was losing her charm for many within Pentecostalism as pastors and members alike strove to become more like successful non-Pentecostal churches".<sup>74</sup> In his study of the megachurch phenomenon within Pentecostalism, a phenomenon that perhaps represents the pinnacle of this organizational focus, Sam Hey has recognized that such organizations, because of a commitment to rapid organizational change and development, may "lose their connection to rich traditions of the past and their original purposes and identity".<sup>75</sup> The result can be a destabilization of the religious community through a war with their own roots. It could be argued that such a war can be attributed to a failure to understand and engage with communal shifts in constitutive meaning.

It could also be argued that with institutionalization comes increased doctrinal pressure. In his discussion focused on the institutionalization of classical Pentecostalism, Wolfgang Vondey traces the Pentecostal church's movement from a revival to an institution. He suggests that "the institutionalization of Pentecostal revivals was a gradual process in response to the pressures of initial persecution and eventual socialization".<sup>76</sup> Although initial persecution targeted the practices and experiences of Pentecostalism, the second phase focused less on experiential manifestations and attacked the rationality, or lack thereof, of Pentecostal doctrine.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, "this theological pressure on early Pentecostals shaped the direction of their own teachings in response to the doctrinal accusations".<sup>78</sup> Because Spirit baptism gave Pentecostals a doctrine that allowed them to reflect the key dimensions of the movement, this became the substance of their doctrinal apologetics. However, this may have been a curse rather than a blessing. Intense scrutiny focused on the doctrine of Spirit baptism highlighted several cognitive deficiencies in the way the doctrine was often presented by Pentecostals.<sup>79</sup> One could well ask whether, as a result of this intense scrutiny and criticism, Pentecostals lost confidence in their own doctrine of Spirit baptism and, consequently, the experience itself ceased to function constitutively. As highlighted earlier, that is a question yet to be definitively answered.

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<sup>73</sup> Poloma, "Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God," 3.

<sup>74</sup> ———, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 243.

<sup>75</sup> Sam Hey, "God in the Suburbs and Beyond: The Emergence of an Australian Megachurch and Denomination" (Griffith University, 2010), 30.

<sup>76</sup> Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 186.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>79</sup> See chapter 1 and chapter 3.



This explanation of ecclesiological transition in terms of the movement from charisma to institution does carry an inherent risk. In relation to social or communal change, the explanatory power of this model derives from Max Weber's analysis into the sociology of religion in which "social structures are determined by the interplay between charismatic, traditional and bureaucratic authority".<sup>80</sup> According to his schema there is an inevitable movement from a radical religious society to a bureaucratic organization.<sup>81</sup> It is not difficult to see that the application of his schema to the history of the Pentecostal movement, exemplified particularly in Poloma's work, may provide some insight into shifts in the self-understanding or constitutive meaning of Pentecostals. However, while this polarization of charisma and institution may provide some explanation for certain transitions within Pentecostalism, there is a sense in which this polarity tends to idealize charisma and demonise institutionalization. This is evident in Poloma's use of language when she worries that "clouds of institutionalization threaten to quench the sparks of charisma".<sup>82</sup> This caricature has also been recognized by Clifton who reminds us that "we should be able to assert that institutionalization is a valuable and constructive component of human social development".<sup>83</sup> It is not, therefore, inherently evil as some Pentecostal critiques have suggested. Both structure and charisma can function as important elements of a mature church. With this in mind, we will move to consider another alternative for understanding social change and changes in constitutive meaning.

#### **5.4.2 Operators and Integrators:**

This second framework that may help us understand and explicate changes in constitutive meaning can be found in the concept of human social development as a tension between limitation and transcendence.<sup>84</sup> These forces function dialectically in the process of social change and can be explained as integrators and operators.<sup>85</sup> Integrators are those principles that encourage integration and harmony, whereas operators are those principles that stimulate change and development. In terms of the functions of meaning, integrators may be related to the constitutive function of meaning, and operators may be related to the effective function of meaning. Along

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<sup>80</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 224.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 243.

<sup>83</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 225.

<sup>84</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 497-499.

<sup>85</sup> Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church*, 66-67.

these lines, Ormerod calls the mission of the church the “ecclesial operator”, and the self-identity of the church is the “ecclesial integrator”.<sup>86</sup>

Social development, then, occurs through a process in which the operators transform the integrators. Harmonious social development occurs when operators “transform existing symbols and structures of integration and harmony or, conversely, where symbols of integration moderate agents of change”.<sup>87</sup> For example, Clifton explains that “needs that arise within the community [Church], due primarily to changing context, stimulate developments in ecclesial social structure. This requires a requisite development in the culture of the Church, which in turn transforms personal and even religious values”.<sup>88</sup> In this case, the dialectic tension of operator and integrator can be reconciled into a higher synthesis in what Robert Doran has designated a dialectic of contraries.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, there is always the potential that operators can destroy the social harmony generated by integrators, or conversely integrators “restrict operative forces and entrench the status quo, thereby preventing society from responding to social needs and changing environments”.<sup>90</sup> When this occurs, the dialectic tension of operator and integrator develops in a distorted manner in what Doran has designated a dialectic of contradictories.<sup>91</sup>

Regarding Spirit baptism, Clifton believes that this experience has functioned as both an integrator and an operator for Pentecostals:

*The notion of baptism in the Spirit as universally available, and universally empowering for people regardless of gender, race, class and intelligence is a powerful symbol of unity. At the same time, since the Spirit is understood as a sign of the end-times, as facilitating personal holiness, and as empowering for mission, it also acts as a transcendent force for change.*<sup>92</sup>

Thus, as we have argued in chapter 4 and also this chapter, Spirit baptism has functioned as a force for unity but also for transformation and change. The question that could be asked of contemporary Pentecostalism, though, is whether there are other operators or forces for change that have transformed or subjugated the role of Spirit baptism as an integrator or force for unity?

Attention to the operators and integrators in Pentecostal social and ecclesial development, whether or not they are framed in those terms, will be an important part of the concrete

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>87</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 69.

<sup>88</sup> ———, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 229.

<sup>89</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 242.

<sup>90</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 70.

<sup>91</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 242.

<sup>92</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 288.

Pentecostal ecclesiology that we have promoted in this chapter. If it can be verified that Spirit baptism no longer fulfils a constitutive function for contemporary Pentecostals, it will be extremely useful for Pentecostal self-understanding to identify and explicate the operators or principles for change that have effected this change in the integrator. Failure to attend to this task can easily result in a breakdown of the tension between limitation and transcendence that fosters harmonious social development. There may be a temptation to suppress the operator function in favour of maintaining the current state of things and thereby avoiding the risks that come with change (although this is an unlikely scenario within Pentecostalism). On the other hand, an over-emphasis on change through the operator function can lead to the false conclusion that all change is good and should be embraced regardless of the potential impact on the integration or unity of a community. For the Pentecostal church, with its pragmatic and change-driven approach to ministry, there is the ever-present risk that those key constitutive or integrative elements of the church will be under-appreciated and abandoned for the sake of forward movement and perceived progress. As Lonergan notes, the “operator is relentless in transforming the integrator”.<sup>93</sup> Whatever the empirical reality, these principles of operator and integrator may be able to provide useful explanatory categories for various changes in meaning, constitutive and otherwise, that have occurred throughout the history of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>94</sup> When utilised as part of a concrete Pentecostal ecclesiology, the potential for illuminating and informing the self-understanding of the Pentecostal movement is significant.

### **5.4.3 The Capacity for Spirit Baptism to Function Constitutively:**

Having suggested two possible sets of categories for understanding and explicating changes in Pentecostal constitutive meanings, our final task here is to briefly explore the theological capacity

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<sup>93</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 501.

<sup>94</sup> In his recent book, Neil Ormerod has also made a further differentiation in relation to the dialectic of limitation and transcendence that underpins the concept of operator and integrator (Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church*, 87-92.). He suggests that this dialectic has both social and cultural dimensions so that socio-cultural bodies, like the church, can be loosely classified according to their positioning within the two dialectics. He therefore proposes a typology including the classical conservative (a distortion of both the social and cultural dialectics in the direction of limitation), the neo-conservative (a distortion of the cultural dialectic in the direction of limitation and the social dialectic in the direction of transcendence), the semi-progressive (a distortion of the cultural dialectic in the direction of transcendence and the social dialectic in the direction of limitation), and the totally progressive (a distortion of both the social and cultural dialectics in the direction of transcendence). While further explanation can be found in his own work, it is interesting to note that he classifies the Pentecostal movement mainly as neo-conservative in that they have a conservative theology joined to an innovative community life. Yet, he argues, this position is not stable as there is an inevitable tension between social innovation and cultural conservatism. It would certainly be interesting to explore the application of these categories further within the context of a concrete ecclesiology of the Pentecostal movement.

of the experience of Spirit baptism to function constitutively. As we have done several times throughout this chapter, we will begin by reaffirming that the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism, as a unifying element within Pentecostalism, can only function constitutively insofar as it plays a prominent role in the common meaning and self-understanding of the Pentecostal community. While the task of determining the empirical reality of this must fall to someone else, there is something that can be said theologically in support of Spirit baptism as a source of constitutive meaning.

Firstly, Pentecostal ecclesialogists who endorse an ecclesiology from above, to utilize Davidsson's taxonomy again, often begin with an appeal to the Trinity as a model or a blueprint for ecclesial life. Clifton notes that "one of the more prominent theological conceptions of the church today is 'communio ecclesiology', an approach which conceives of the church in terms of Trinitarian communion, and which has found currency with theologians from almost all church traditions".<sup>95</sup> This is evident, for example, in the ecclesiology developed by Frank D. Macchia that we have already given some attention to. Miroslav Volf goes so far as to say that "the thesis that ecclesial communion should correspond to trinitarian communion enjoys the status of an almost self-evident proposition".<sup>96</sup> While this concept of *communio* ecclesiology is not without its problems<sup>97</sup>, there is certainly some value in an appreciation of the social and relational nature of ecclesial life based on the inner-Trinitarian relations.

One aspect of this value relevant to our discussion here is that there is usually a strong link made, within *communio* ecclesiology, between the church and the Spirit's constitutive role. Volf draws this out through an analysis of water baptism which leads him to state that "the Spirit of God leads believers simultaneously into both Trinitarian and ecclesial communion".<sup>98</sup> He further explains:

*Because the Son indwells human beings through the Spirit ... the unity of the church is grounded in the interiority of the Spirit – and with the Spirit also in the interiority of the other divine persons – in Christians. The Holy Spirit is the one person in many persons. It is not the mutual perichoresis of human beings, but rather the indwelling of the Spirit common to everyone that makes the church into a communion corresponding to the Trinity.*<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 21.

<sup>96</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 191.

<sup>97</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 21-40.

<sup>98</sup> Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 195.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

Similarly, Simon Chan has recognized that “the constitutive work of the Spirit corresponds to the constitutive core practices of the church”.<sup>100</sup> He elaborates:

*To call the church Pentecostal is to affirm the special relation that the church bears to the Spirit in the Pentecost event which is part of the story of the triune God. This relationship involves a personal indwelling in which the Spirit’s own particularity is revealed. Through his indwelling the church is ontologically united to Christ and participates in the Trinitarian life and becomes the communion of the Holy Spirit.*<sup>101</sup>

Finally, Amos Yong uses Acts 2 to demonstrate that the Pentecost event inaugurated a new community characterised as a fellowship of the Holy Spirit.<sup>102</sup> All of these statements clearly affirm the essential role that the Holy Spirit plays in constituting the church. Within this pneumatological framework, points of connection between Spirit baptism and ecclesiology are not difficult to find.

We proposed in chapter 3 that Spirit baptism, understood as an encounter with divinity through the Holy Spirit, draws us into participation in the Trinitarian life of God. If we accept the centrality of the Spirit’s role in constituting the church, it may then follow that in Spirit baptism we are actually encountering the core constitutive meaning of the church itself. Pentecostal Spirit baptism, therefore, may be one way in which the Trinitarian participation and ecclesial or communal life made possible by the Holy Spirit can be appreciated and appropriated by Pentecostal Christians. In this sense it is possible to establish a direct theological relationship between Pentecostal Spirit baptism and the core constitutive meaning of the church understood pneumatologically. Indeed, Macchia states that “the church is not incidental to Spirit baptism but is rather its integral outcome”<sup>103</sup>, and Simon Chan has suggested that “the primary focus of Spirit baptism is to actualize our communal life”.<sup>104</sup> Macchia further explains that “Spirit baptism is not a super-additum but is essential to the life of the church. As a relational dynamic, Spirit baptism not only empowers and renews the people of God, it has birthed the people of God as the sign of grace in an increasingly graceless world”.<sup>105</sup> In this Macchia is obviously attempting to relate Spirit baptism, albeit his particular interpretation of Spirit baptism, directly to the constitution of the church.

While I may differ on some points with Macchia’s construct of Spirit baptism, I agree with Macchia and Chan in suggesting the possibility of a theological link between Spirit baptism and ecclesiology

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<sup>100</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, 47.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>102</sup> Amos Yong, *Who Is the Holy Spirit? A Walk with the Apostles* (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2011), 18.

<sup>103</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 156.

<sup>104</sup> Chan, "Mother Church," 180.

<sup>105</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 156.

or community. If we recognize Spirit baptism as primarily a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit, as proposed in chapter 3, such an experience certainly has the potential to function constitutively within Pentecostalism. On a personal level this experience of Spirit baptism, in which one comes to know the Spirit as the Spirit, constitutes the person in terms of their orientation towards the Holy Spirit and shapes their pneumatological horizon. Furthermore, this experiential encounter with the Holy Spirit can provide a tangible means of identification with a church united and constituted by the Holy Spirit that indwells us all. In a community integrated and united by this shared experience of Spirit baptism, there is great potential for maintaining constitutive meaning strongly grounded in pneumatology.

With all of this in mind, it could be argued that the potential for Pentecostal Spirit baptism to function constitutively has suffered from a narrow construal of the experience. If Spirit baptism is seen as primarily a means of empowerment to continue the work of the church, then the church becomes the primary reality to which Spirit baptism simply lends assistance. But if Spirit baptism is seen as a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit as the primary integrator of the church, such an encounter may also function to constitute the individual as part of the church. As many individuals find this same source of constitutive meaning, the common meaning that results then constitutes the community of Pentecostal Christians. Furthermore, if Spirit baptism is an experience of divine love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit in line with Romans 5:5, a corollary of this is that Spirit baptism can also provide a touchpoint for mediating the divine love of God as a constitutive reality for the church that can be appropriated both individually and corporately. All of this to say that Pentecostal Spirit baptism at least has the capacity to remain constitutive of the Pentecostal movement in a theological sense.

As a final note in this chapter, one might question whether a church can be considered Pentecostal at all if Spirit baptism does not function constitutively. According to Clifton, the shared experience of Spirit baptism is “the one thing that enables Pentecostalism to be considered a ‘movement’, rather than a bewilderingly diverse and sectarian group of churches”.<sup>106</sup> If Spirit baptism fades out of focus, can a church still be considered Pentecostal? The answer to this question relates directly to the focus of this chapter, namely constitutive meaning. If constitutive meaning is not a lived reality then it can no longer be constitutive. If Spirit baptism is shown to no longer function constitutively for Pentecostalism, then this suggests that what constitutes Pentecostalism has

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<sup>106</sup> Clifton, "Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia", 288.

shifted. In this case, the question is not whether Pentecostalism exists without Spirit baptism, but rather what has taken its place as a source of constitutive meaning for the Pentecostal movement?

### **5.5 Concluding Remarks:**

Our analysis of the constitutive meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism has highlighted the fact that the experience of Spirit baptism fulfilled a constitutive function for early Pentecostals and facilitated the general unity of the movement. However, in any context, constitutive meaning has the capacity to change and can only remain constitutive insofar as it is a lived reality. For the Pentecostal movement, there are genuine questions about the degree to which Spirit baptism is actively endorsed and practiced within the movement globally. While certain statistics and doctrinal statements suggest that the perceived importance of Spirit baptism may be in decline, there is not yet enough empirical evidence to make a definitive statement on the self-understanding of Pentecostals in this area. For this reason, we have suggested that some attention needs to be given to the development of a concrete ecclesiology (or ecclesiologies) for the Pentecostal movement that takes seriously both theological and sociological factors. Only then will we be able to make a confident judgement about the constitutive function of Spirit baptism, or lack thereof, in the contemporary Pentecostal context. In developing this concrete ecclesiology, a set of categories to understand and explicate changes in constitutive meaning, like operators and integrators, will be important and helpful. Finally, we proposed that the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism has, at the very least, the capacity to provide for Pentecostals a theological foundation for constitutive meaning through pneumatological links with ecclesiology and the Holy Spirit's role in constituting the church. Whether or not this capacity is utilized is not primarily a theological question but a sociological one, and depends on the evolving self-understanding of Pentecostal Christians around the world.

## Chapter 6: The Communicative Function

The fourth and final function of meaning that we will use to explicate the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is the communicative function of meaning. This relates to the way in which the experience of Spirit baptism, and the meaning derived from that experience, has been communicated. To analyse this communicated meaning of Spirit baptism, we will consider two aspects. Firstly, we will propose that the gift of tongues may function as a means of communicating the elemental meaning that is inherent in the experience of Spirit baptism. This proposition reinforces the close relationship between Spirit baptism and tongues without necessitating a rigid doctrine of initial evidence. Secondly, there is usually a natural progression from elemental meaning to the conceptualization of that meaning, which is then communicated linguistically through dialogue and doctrine. While the doctrine of Spirit baptism has been in focus throughout this thesis, in this chapter we are particularly concerned with its communication. Therefore, an examination of Spirit baptism as it has featured in ecumenical dialogue between Pentecostalism and other Christian traditions will be utilized as a case study to highlight some of the challenges and limitations of communicative meaning on this subject. Finally, in the interests of further developing and encouraging this communication, we will conclude with a suggestive attempt at rewording or reformulating the classical Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism in light of all that this thesis has covered.

### 6.1 The Communicative Function of Meaning Revisited:

In addition to the cognitive, effective and constitutive functions of meaning, there is also the communicative function. While Lonergan is less elaborative on this function than the other three, the communicative function of meaning is evident “in the actual communication of one person to another”.<sup>1</sup> Meaning can both communicate and be communicated, and this can occur through a number of different carriers of meaning:

*What one man means is communicated to another intersubjectively, artistically, symbolically, linguistically, incarnately. So individual meaning becomes common meaning. But a rich store of common meaning is not the work of isolated individuals or even of single*

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<sup>1</sup> Ormerod, *Method, Meaning and Revelation*, 95.



*generations. Common meanings have histories. They originate in single minds. They become common only through successful and widespread communication.*<sup>2</sup>

As this excerpt from Lonergan highlights, the communication of meaning has a crucial role to play in the establishment of common meaning and community. Lonergan explains that “through communication there is constituted community and, conversely, community constitutes and perfects itself through communication”.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it is only through the communicative function of meaning that the various meanings originated in individual minds can be disseminated and have the opportunity to become common meanings. Moreover, the importance of the communicative function of meaning resides in the fact that it “induces in the hearer some share in the cognitive, constitutive, or effective meaning of the speaker”.<sup>4</sup> Without the communicative function of meaning, cognitive, effective and constitutive meanings would never be able to function beyond the individual in which they originate.

It is also worth noting that the various carriers of meaning may communicate different aspects of the meaning of an experience. Linguistic meaning, which is usually concerned with doctrine, primarily communicates cognitive meaning. Constitutive and effective meanings may in turn be communicated using other carriers of meaning like intersubjectivity, art, symbol, or incarnate meaning. The importance of this distinction will become apparent later in this chapter. Incarnate meaning, which combines “all or at least many” of the other carriers of meaning, is one carrier of meaning likely to resonate with Pentecostals.<sup>5</sup> Lonergan describes this as “the meaning of a person, of his way of life, of his words, or of his deeds”.<sup>6</sup> This recognizes that we communicate meaning through much more than our words alone, rather our very life in all its facets is a source of multifarious meanings. It could be argued that the effective and constitutive meaning of Spirit baptism is communicated most effectively through incarnate meaning, exemplified and lived, rather than through linguistic communication alone. For Pentecostals, who tend to find more merit in experience and deeds than they do in explanation and cognitive reflection, incarnate meaning represents an important form of expression.

In relation to Pentecostal Spirit baptism, there are two primary aspects of communicative meaning to which we have already referred. Firstly, there is the pre-conceptual communication of the experience itself which involves elemental meaning. To revise our explanation from chapter 2,

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<sup>2</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

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

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

elemental meaning occurs when the meaning is not yet separated from the meant.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the meaningful experience occurs prior to the conceptualization of the experience. Thus elemental meaning involves experiencing and being transformed by the experience. For Pentecostals, the experience of Spirit baptism is usually deeply meaningful but because that meaning is elemental it is in many ways ineffable. I will suggest shortly that glossolalia may in fact function as a means of communicating this elemental meaning. Secondly, as well as this elemental meaning, there is also the communication of meaning that occurs after conceptualization and incorporates judgements made about the meaning of the experience. These judgements are formulated into doctrine and this doctrine is embodied in language and communicated linguistically. It is in language, Lonergan argues, that “meaning find its greatest liberation”<sup>8</sup>, and this linguistic meaning may be communicated verbally or through the written word. There is certainly no shortage of linguistic communication focused around Pentecostal Spirit baptism, much of which has been covered in previous chapters. One of our main points of focus here, however, will be the communication of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism in and through ecumenical discussion. It is within this forum, where various horizons come into contact and conflict, that communication faces a significant challenge.

## **6.2 Glossolalia as a Communication of Elemental Meaning:**

Considering the close phenomenological association between Spirit baptism and tongues (or glossolalia) that culminated historically in the doctrine of initial evidence, it may be a surprise to the reader that the question of tongues or glossolalia has received limited attention until now. The rationale for this can be traced back to chapter 3 where I argued that the core of the experience of Spirit baptism is a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit and other characteristics are therefore secondary. This essentially relegates the place of tongues to that of a secondary characteristic that can only be understood in relation to the primary experience of Spirit baptism. While this argument has formed the basis of this thesis, it would be a mistake to assume that I therefore place no value in the gift of tongues. On the contrary, the phenomenological relationship between Spirit baptism and glossolalia cannot and should not be ignored. In this section we will consider how that relationship can be framed and understood theologically as the communication of elemental meaning.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 70.

### 6.2.1 Theological Perspectives:

Firstly, quite apart from the doctrine of initial evidence, several scholars have argued for an intimate connection between Spirit baptism and glossolalia on theological and phenomenological grounds. Amos Yong describes Spirit baptism as an experience in which “the Holy Spirit ... encounters the Pentecostal in a way such that he or she is initially confronted with infinite (unbounded, completely free) majesty and glory, and then swept up ecstatically into the Spirit’s presence”.<sup>9</sup> He then explains that, in response to this transformative encounter, “a celebration emerges from the deepest parts of the soul in the form of an unknown speech”.<sup>10</sup> Thus “glossolalia functions primarily as a sign denoting the experience of the liberating Holy Spirit”.<sup>11</sup> This concept of a “celebration” from the “deepest parts” portrays tongues as an immediate and affective response to an experience that is powerful and liberating. Richie also notes that glossolalia has the ability “to embody and express a gracious quality of divine presence experienced through genuine encounter with the divine Spirit”.<sup>12</sup> Finally, Macchia has shown that, for Pentecostals, speaking in tongues can function sacramentally in bringing to verbal expression the grace of God that encounters believers in Spirit baptism.<sup>13</sup>

With this intimate connection in mind, we can now consider the communication of elemental meaning as one aspect of the relationship or connection between Spirit baptism and glossolalia. If we recognize that elemental meaning is present in the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, as I have suggested in chapter 2, it is then possible to consider how that elemental meaning is communicated. By introducing this category of elemental meaning, what I am essentially suggesting is that, prior to any conceptualization, glossolalia communicates something of the meaning involved in the powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit that is at the core of Spirit baptism. Let us consider my reasons for this suggestion.

When Lonergan describes elemental meaning he uses the example of a work of art. Art, in this sense, means “the objectification of a purely experiential pattern”.<sup>14</sup> The artist expresses their own

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<sup>9</sup> Amos Yong, "'Tongues of Fire' in the Pentecostal Imagination: The Truth of Glossolalia in Light of R.C. Neville's Theory of Religious Symbolism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12 (1998): 51.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Tony Richie, "Transposition and Tongues: Pentecostalizing an Important Insight of C.S. Lewis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 1 (2004): 131.

<sup>13</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "Theology, Pentecostal," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 1132-1134.

<sup>14</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 61.

experiential pattern in a work of art, and while there is meaning in that work of art it is the expression of elemental meaning. As Lonergan explains, "that meaning lies within the consciousness of the artist but, at first, it is only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified".<sup>15</sup> In other words, the meaning is not yet separated from the meant. It is very interesting to note that this same artistic example has been used by Pentecostal theologians in their attempts to explain glossolalia. Macchia draws a parallel between tongues, on one hand, as a language that brings "to the forefront the unpredictable and transcendent aspects of the divine self-disclosure", and, on the other hand, the mystery "in all spontaneous and innovative artistic expressions that transcend mundane forms of thought and expression and that defy human explanation".<sup>16</sup> He further suggests that tongues may have something in common with other forms of expressionistic art.<sup>17</sup> Rybarczyk also correlates glossolalia and the work of the artist, in that both employ our imagination and God-given ability to move beyond the rational. He states that "like an artist who paints what cannot easily be put into words, tongues speaking-praying-worshipping helps the believer express to God what words cannot".<sup>18</sup> In tongues, therefore, we see an expression or communication of meaning that arises from an experience of Spirit baptism that is yet to be cognitively and rationally processed. If art exemplifies elemental meaning, then these comparative examples certainly lend some support to the suggestion that tongues involves the communication of elemental meaning.

Furthermore, there is already considerable precedent for the notion of tongues as communicating meaning that is difficult to conceptualize or, to put it otherwise, expressing the inexpressible. Macchia draws our attention to precisely this notion on a number of occasions,<sup>19</sup> stating that "tongues has been compared to an art form, to other creative means of symbolizing the inadequacy of conventional forms of expression in relation to the inexpressible".<sup>20</sup> Along similar lines, Rybarczyk draws from the apophatic theological tradition to highlight the value of tongues as an effort to "approach the unapproachable".<sup>21</sup> He goes on to say:

*In popular and lay Pentecostal testimonies the subject consistently describes the experience of Spirit baptism as an overwhelming one. A person is so deeply moved by the presence of God's Holy Spirit that unintelligible noises just sort of gush out. Language has to be used to*

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>16</sup> Macchia, "Groans Too Deep for Words," 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Edmund J. Rybarczyk, "Reframing Tongues: Apophaticism and Postmodernism," *Pneuma* 27, no. 1 (2005): 102.

<sup>19</sup> Macchia, "Sighs Too Deep for Words."

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>21</sup> Rybarczyk, "Reframing Tongues," 94.

*describe such encounters, and yet those encounters seem to leap outside of language altogether.*<sup>22</sup>

Both of these authors highlight an understanding of glossolalia as a means of communicating an experience that is both overwhelming and ineffable.

Finally, Tony Richie draws some interesting insights from C.S. Lewis' principle of transposition and his specific application of this principle to tongues. Lewis developed a principle of transposition to explain "the divine-human interface that occurs through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the experience of believers".<sup>23</sup> According to Richie:

*Lewis suggests that our emotional life is more complex than our sensations and is thereby forced to use a lower medium to express higher experiences — even to the point of having to use the same sensations for a variety of experiences. The adaptation from a richer to a poorer medium may be called "transposition".*<sup>24</sup>

Within the context of spiritual experience, the higher or richer reality is obviously the Holy Spirit encountered through experience, while the lower or poorer reality is the experiencing human subject and the inability of that subject to adequately represent or express the higher reality. Tongues, therefore, is one such example of this higher, richer reality overwhelming and overflowing the lower, human vessel. Richie explains that "transposition suggests tongues speech is an adaptation of a supernatural experience of the divine Holy Spirit to the natural medium of human expression".<sup>25</sup> Once again, we see tongues explained as a means of expressing the inexpressible.

Without wishing to digress too far, it is worth mentioning that Lewis made several other observations in regards to transposition, one of which is that "approaching transposition only from below, that is, focusing on the natural without discerning the supernatural, leads to the gross error of getting the facts but not the meaning".<sup>26</sup> This is an interesting statement and has one obvious application to glossolalia. If we focus on the natural manifestation, namely tongues speech, but neglect the supernatural encounter with the Holy Spirit that underlies it all, we can see only the fact of tongues speech but not the meaning. This may be what has happened at certain points in the history of Pentecostalism, where the question of the necessity of tongues obscured the reality of the powerful experience of the Holy Spirit to which tongues bear witness.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Richie, "Transposition and Tongues," 117.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 121.

As a final aside, much has been said about the decline of glossolalia in Pentecostal churches around the world. The reality or extent of this decline is yet to be determined but, if this is the case, one may well ask what will replace glossolalia as a vehicle for the communication of elemental meaning that arises from powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit (assuming that Pentecostals retain their experiential emphasis)? Although an answer to this question lies beyond the scope of this thesis, allow me to make one suggestion as an idea for further research. The prominent role of music, which is itself a form of art, in Pentecostal worship may also involve the communication of elemental meaning. Mark Jennings explains that music is used in Pentecostal churches as “the most important technology for creating a space in which an experience understood as a divine-human encounter can take place”.<sup>27</sup> Ingalls confirms that “participation in musical worship facilitates a divine encounter which often acts as a catalyst for personal and communal transformation”.<sup>28</sup> There is also a strong sense in which worship involves a pre-reflective experience consistent with elemental meaning. Particularly in relation to songs that have already been learned, Adnams argues that singing these songs in worship can be described as “pre-reflective” in that we forget about the music and words as individual components of the worship and simply participate in the expression or experience.<sup>29</sup> He cites Greil Marcus who states that “words in songs are sounds we can feel before they are statements to understand”.<sup>30</sup> In this way words in song “may become largely expressive and thus let go of their narrative or descriptive role”.<sup>31</sup> This correlates with elemental meaning which, as we described above, is meaning that must be experienced before it can be conceptualized and understood. Richard Viladesau explains this further:

*Singing enables us to step back from the word’s immediacy as communication and to make it an aesthetic object; it allows us to contemplate and to celebrate the word rather than simply hear or speak it. It does not simply convey the word but places it in the context of “something for which there are no words”.<sup>32</sup>*

It may therefore be possible to argue that music, with its accompanying expressions, is also a means of communicating the elemental meaning inherent in the divine-human encounter. Whether or

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<sup>27</sup> Mark Jennings, “‘Won’t You Break Free?’ An Ethnography of Music and the Divine-Human Encounter at an Australian Pentecostal Church,” *Culture and Religion* 9, no. 2 (2008): 163-164.

<sup>28</sup> Monique Marie Ingalls, “Awesome in This Place: Sound, Space, and Identity in Contemporary North American Evangelical Worship” (University of Pennsylvania, 2008), 262.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon Alban Adnams, “The Experience of Congregational Singing: An Ethno-Phenomenological Approach” (University of Alberta, 2008), 109.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>32</sup> R. Viladesau, *Theology and the Arts: Encountering God through Music, Art and Rhetoric* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 48.

not this is relevant and helpful to Pentecostalism, however, is a question to be answered at another time.

### **6.2.2 Narrative Perspectives:**

Thus far we have proposed that the link between Spirit baptism and tongues may be understood theologically as the communication of elemental meaning. Speaking in tongues then becomes a vital part of the communicative meaning of the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. To support this hypothesis, though, it is also important to ground our discussion in the testimonies and narratives of early Pentecostal believers who experienced Spirit baptism and spoke in tongues. What did the phenomenon of tongues communicate to the people who first experienced it and how does this reflect the meaning of the Spirit baptism experience? Furthermore, what practical characteristics of the phenomenon of tongues suggest that elemental meaning is being communicated? If speaking in tongues is a means of communicating the elemental meaning of Spirit baptism, we should expect this to be evident in the both the *content* and *type* of meaning.

In consideration of the *content* of meaning, if tongues do in fact communicate the meaning of Spirit baptism, one would expect to see the interpreted meaning of tongues pointing to or referencing the meaning of Spirit baptism. Certainly, the overwhelming testimony of early Pentecostals was that they considered speaking in tongues to be a sign of Spirit baptism. It was believed that “the gift of tongues was reserved for the day of Pentecost to be a sign and evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost”.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, whether or not one agrees with the doctrine of “initial evidence” as it has traditionally been explained, it is certain that Pentecostals perceived an intimate connection between Spirit baptism and tongues.<sup>34</sup> But while there may have been some recognition that tongues reflected something of the experience of Spirit baptism, the description or explanation of this reflection often lacked precision. To address this, I will now attempt to demonstrate that both the cognitive and effective meanings of Spirit baptism are reflected in the Pentecostal expression of tongues.

Firstly, we argued in chapter 3 that the key cognitive meaning of Spirit baptism is that it signifies an experience of the Holy Spirit in which the divine love of God is poured into our hearts. In harmony with this, the gift of tongues was often described as an overwhelming encounter with the Holy Spirit in its own right. As one early Pentecostal believer wrote, “the gift of tongues is the glory of

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<sup>33</sup> “Pentecost with Signs Following,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 4 (1906).

<sup>34</sup> “The Pentecostal Baptism Restored.”

God flooding your soul and the Spirit taking possession".<sup>35</sup> This testimony from Louis Osterberg corroborates this:

*Little by little I felt the power fall. To make a long story short, I was soon speaking in other tongues, and the blessed experience gained then I cannot tell in words, for they would fail to express the divine meaning which it has to my soul. I spoke in tongues for nearly three hours and glorified God in them. During this time, God revealed much to me which I will not at this time relate. I did not think it possible for a human being to be so filled with God's glory as since then. I now begin to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*<sup>36</sup>

It could be argued that these statements are not only about tongues and are simply indicative of the Pentecostal tendency to conflate the experience of Spirit baptism and the gift of tongues. But this tendency itself confirms a correlation between the interpreted meaning of Spirit baptism and the interpreted meaning of the gift of tongues. If such a correlation did not exist then conflating the two experiences would be far less common than it is.

Moreover, as Osterberg's testimony indicates, there was often a connection made between the gift of tongues and the divine love of God. An account of the work of the Spirit at Portland, Oregon in 1908 declared that "the saints are filled and overflowing with the Spirit and with love for souls, talking and singing in tongues".<sup>37</sup> To some the gift of tongues was believed impossible without divine love: "Those who receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues and backslide from this state may retain the speaking in tongues for a while after the divine love is gone, but gradually this gift will also melt away".<sup>38</sup> If the cognitive meaning of Spirit baptism is indeed an experience of the Holy Spirit and an outpouring of divine love, then based on the above testimonies (and many more not included here)<sup>39</sup> it would seem reasonable to suggest that glossolalia does in fact reflect or communicate the cognitive meaning of the Spirit baptism experience.

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<sup>35</sup> "Pentecost with Signs Following."

<sup>36</sup> "Many Witnesses to the Power of the Blood and of the Holy Ghost," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 7 (1907).

<sup>37</sup> "The Lord Is Speaking in the Earth Today," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 12 (1908).

<sup>38</sup> "Pentecost with Signs Following."

<sup>39</sup> For example, "I felt the power go through my body and knew that the Holy Spirit had taken possession of me ... The power of the Holy Spirit was with me in a marked way all day Sunday and Monday. The Holy Spirit continued to manipulate my facial muscles and vocal organs. Monday night I sang and talked a little in a foreign language" ("Everywhere Preaching the Word," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 10 [1907]). Similarly, "Suddenly the Lord filled his temple and I was in the glory. What followed I cannot describe, and it is too sacred to do so, but I knew God had come. Though never unconscious, I was quite oblivious to everyone around, just worshipping. Then my mouth began to quiver, my tongue began to move, and a few simple



Turning our attention now to the effective function of meaning, chapter 4 highlighted that Spirit baptism functioned effectively as a catalyst for evangelism and missions. Interestingly, glossolalia was usually characterized in much the same way. The very earliest interpretation of tongues was as *xenolalia*, or unlearned foreign languages specifically for the purpose of missions. While this later proved to be a misinterpretation of the gift of tongues, this nonetheless had an effective impact on early Pentecostal Christians. Thus it was reported that “many are speaking in new tongues, and some are on their way to the foreign fields, with the gift of the language”.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, tongues was seen as “a wonderful equipment” for mission work, and was described as being “like a bell, ringing the people up ... They are waking up to the fact that God is in the land”.<sup>41</sup> It was also claimed that “the interpretation of many of the messages in nearly every language spoken by the Holy Ghost in unknown tongues is that Jesus is coming”.<sup>42</sup> The missiological and effective significance of these interpretative statements about the gift of tongues should be obvious. If the effective meaning of Spirit baptism is to be understood in terms of mission and outreach, it seems that this same meaning was clearly identified in early explanations of tongues.

In short, there are obvious parallels between the cognitive and effective meanings of Spirit baptism on one hand and the gift of tongues on the other. Therefore, based purely on the *content* of meaning, it seems reasonable to suggest that tongues may function as a medium for communicating the meaning of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism. However, there is also the question of the *type* of meaning. We have suggested that tongues may be a type of elemental meaning, but this requires further explanation and substantiation. It also has to be acknowledged that even by engaging testimonies and narratives we are already one step removed from the elemental meaning. Elemental meaning is only truly grasped through experiencing for oneself, whereas testimonies are themselves an attempt to conceptualize elemental meaning. Nevertheless, several characteristics described by these testimonies attest to the presence of elemental meaning, including the immediacy of the experience of tongues and, at least in some cases, the involuntary nature of the expression.

In terms of immediacy, many early testimonies recount that the gift of tongues was an immediate consequence of Spirit baptism. It was often reported that a person “immediately” spoke in tongues

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*words were uttered, as I just yielded to the Holy Ghost. Much to my astonishment, I began to speak fluently in a foreign language ... The Spirit sang through me. The joy and rapture of this purely spiritual worship can never be described* (“Good Tidings of Great Joy,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 11 [1908]).

<sup>40</sup> “The Pentecostal Baptism Restored.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> “Los Angeles Campmeeting of the Apostolic Faith Missions,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 8 (1907).

as soon as they experienced Spirit baptism.<sup>43</sup> One testimony recounted that “the Holy Ghost had come in to abide - only a few seconds and I was praising God in other tongues”.<sup>44</sup> Now elemental meaning by its very definition is immediate. This is not just a temporal designation, however, but in philosophical parlance immediacy also denotes an experience that is pre-conceptual and unmediated. In relation to tongues, we described this above as expressing the inexpressible. Such a theological description also has narrative support:

*I was literally lifted by the power of God and set upon my knees. In the midst of this heaven born storm I felt my jaws moved, but soon I was unconscious and lost to all around me. When I regained consciousness I was sitting on the floor, my back against the wall and my vocal organs were being operated in a most extraordinary manner. Soon I became apprised of the fact that I was actually talking in another tongue, and the thought flashed through my mind that if this was talking with other tongues, I would be quite satisfied to not talk in English any more, but to thus adore forever, my blessed Redeemer. The English language seems insipid and expressionless and was all too circumscribed for my soul to utter its inexpressible bliss. The real experience is indescribable. It seemed too sacred, heavenly and holy for a mortal to enjoy on earth. How much more real Jesus seemed to me than ever before. At times it appeared as if my soul must leave its tenement of clay. I was enraptured with the glory of God.<sup>45</sup>*

This portrayal of tongues seems to indicate an immediate experience that has not yet been conceptualized and a form of expression (tongues) that expresses the inexpressible. Howard Carter also attested to this:

*My whole being vibrated under the mighty waves of the Spirit's power which passed through me, and I broke forth for the first time in my experience in other tongues. To describe a spiritual experience is as impossible as to define the sweetness of honey, or the beauty of a flower. I may simply state that the spiritual blessing received that day met the great craving of my soul, and satisfied me that the experience for which I had yearned so long was now actually real. The Lord had granted me the gift of the Holy Spirit with the like manifestation as on the day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius. My heart overflowed with joy and thanksgiving and speaking with other tongues.<sup>46</sup>*

Both of these testifiers emotively describe the difficulty, or even impossibility, of communicating their experience in normal language. Instead, the gift of tongues functioned as a means of

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<sup>43</sup> "The Pentecostal Baptism Restored."

<sup>44</sup> "This Is the Outpouring of the Spirit in the Latter Days," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 14 (1908).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Howard Carter, "My Personal Testimony to Pentecost," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, June 2 1934, 3.

communication arising directly from their experience. It is this immediacy that suggests the presence of elemental meaning.

Furthermore, the fact that tongues is often described as an involuntary expression or overflow gives credence to the concept of tongues as unreflective or elemental communication. The testimonies on this point are numerous indeed, but a few examples will suffice:

*I felt my throat and tongue begin to move, without any effort on my part. Soon I began to stutter and then out came a distinct language which I could hardly restrain.*<sup>47</sup>

And along similar lines:

*I was conscious that a living Person has come into me, and that He possessed even my physical being, in a literal sense, in so much that He could at His will take hold of my vocal organs, and speak any language He chose through me.*<sup>48</sup>

It was also believed that, when speaking in tongues, “your mind does not take any part in it”.<sup>49</sup> Thus speaking in tongues was often described as the Holy Spirit “taking control” rather than direct action on the part of the individual.<sup>50</sup> While the psychological veracity of this description is beyond the scope of this thesis, the point is that cognitive reflection on the experience of Spirit baptism was not considered to be a necessary precursor to speaking in tongues. Rather, the gift of tongues was an affective expression made possible through encounter with the Holy Spirit. Fred Weiss, a returned African missionary, wrote that “suddenly several peculiar moves took place around my jaw bones, and from away within, without my having any part in it, I spoke words that I was not accountable for”.<sup>51</sup> Once again, the pre-conceptual and experiential nature of this communication hints that the meaning involved is elemental.

Summarily, the relationship between Spirit baptism and tongues has been explained in a number of different ways, but there may be some theological insight to be gained from the category of elemental meaning and its communication. That tongues represents the communicative meaning of Spirit baptism was demonstrated through observing that the cognitive and effective meanings of Spirit baptism are also present in the interpreted meaning of tongues. That this meaning is elemental was confirmed by the immediate and pre-conceptual nature of tongues speech. If glossolalia is indeed the communication of elemental meaning derived from the experience of Spirit baptism, then it is quite reasonable to expect this gift of tongues to accompany the baptismal

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<sup>47</sup> "Bible Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 3 (1906).

<sup>48</sup> "Pentecost Both Sides the Ocean," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 6 (1907).

<sup>49</sup> "Fires Are Being Kindled," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 13 (1908).

<sup>50</sup> "Pentecost Both Sides the Ocean."

<sup>51</sup> "In the Last Days," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 9 (1907).

experience. In this sense the close relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism makes perfect sense. However, this relationship grounded in the communication of meaning cannot necessarily be stretched as far as a rigid doctrine of initial evidence. Just as meaning is multi-faceted, so too is the expression or communication of meaning. Because elemental meaning is the expression of a unique experiential pattern, we certainly cannot assume, as the doctrine of initial evidence does, that this expression will take the same form for all people everywhere.

With all that has been said about glossolalia as communication of the elemental meaning of Spirit baptism, we are now ready to move beyond this and explore the linguistic communication of meaning in the form of doctrine. While the communication of *elemental* meaning is an important part of the process, the communication of meaning does not stop there. The strength of elemental meaning is that it is direct and immediate, however the consequent weakness is that it needs to be explicated and unpacked. Unless it can be unpacked, it can't be effectively communicated, and this is where linguistic meaning and doctrine comes to the fore.

### **6.3 The Communication of the Doctrine of Spirit Baptism:**

Where Pentecostal Spirit baptism is concerned, there has been a smorgasbord of linguistic or doctrinal communication over more than a century. However, each of the previous three chapters have highlighted various challenges faced by the Pentecostal movement in relation to the doctrine of Spirit baptism. There is the cognitive challenge of identifying and defending key assertions about Spirit baptism, most importantly that it is an experience of the Holy Spirit. There is the effective challenge of maintaining a link, in light of recent eschatological shifts, between Spirit baptism and the evangelistic and social work of the church. There is the constitutive challenge of understanding and appreciating the role of Spirit baptism in the contemporary Pentecostal community. Not surprisingly, all of these challenges, often felt in a very real way by Pentecostal Christians, have an impact on the communication of the Pentecostal doctrine or construct of Spirit baptism. It would seem self-apparent that one cannot adequately communicate what one has not adequately understood.

In fact, Henry I. Lederle has suggested that many pastors avoid teaching on the Holy Spirit completely because it can be controversial, and as a result younger generations can grow up in Pentecostal churches with very little understanding of the movement's distinctive.<sup>52</sup> This concern is also reflected in Simon Chan's critique of Pentecostal traditioning. Chan claims that the problem

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<sup>52</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*, 168.

facing Pentecostals, that of communicating through history the reality of an existential and a-historical encounter with the Holy Spirit, is similar to the problem found in mysticism.<sup>53</sup> He explains that “the mystical experience is by nature ineffable, yet the mystic needs to talk about it; for it is in naming the experience, often using the language of tradition, that one could make any sense of it”.<sup>54</sup> This leads into his discussion of Pentecostal traditioning which concerns the passing on of experiences and beliefs to the next generation of Pentecostal believers. This, he argues, has been done with varying degrees of success. While the strength of Pentecostal traditioning lies in the use of powerful narratives and testimonies, the weakness of Pentecostal traditioning lies in its inability to explain itself.<sup>55</sup> Thus, “for much of their history Pentecostals have been better at telling their story than explaining it to their children”.<sup>56</sup> He then cites the doctrine of Spirit baptism as an example of this weakness in traditioning. Whereas the experience of Spirit baptism was “a powerful revelation by the Spirit who brings the believer into a new relationship with the triune God”, the formulation and communication of the doctrine of Spirit baptism occurred in a restrictive and narrow manner.<sup>57</sup>

In her study of the Assemblies of God in the US, Margaret Poloma draws our attention to precisely the same issue. She points out that the focus of Pentecostal communication has gradually shifted from “personal experience and testimony to profession and expansion of doctrinal decree”.<sup>58</sup> This highlights the dilemma of “the creation of rigid doctrines and religious legalisms set up in an attempt to capture and reproduce the charisma of the original movement”.<sup>59</sup> Or, in other words, the replacing of “right experience” with “right belief”. It will always remain a challenge to communicate or even articulate the true essence of an experience like Pentecostal Spirit baptism. This could also be described as the challenge of conceptualizing elemental meaning. It seems that inevitably something is lost in that conceptualization. Simon Chan poses this incisive question: “How do we conceptualize an experience without losing its inner dynamism for the community?”<sup>60</sup> It would not be a stretch to assert that this question articulates a challenge that has always hindered Pentecostals in their communication about Spirit baptism. While this may be a failure in communication, it could also be that this reflects a failure to adequately understand the cognitive,

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<sup>53</sup> Chan, "Mother Church," 20.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>58</sup> Poloma, "Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God," 7.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>60</sup> Chan, "Mother Church," 24.

effective and constitutive elements of Spirit baptism. As we stipulated above, how can one communicate what one has not understood?

In point of fact, the goal of this thesis has been to analyze the meaning and function of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism in order to communicate a doctrine that makes cognitive, effective and constitutive sense. We will come to a restatement of this doctrine at the end of this chapter. Just before we do, though, there is one more aspect of communicative meaning that requires comment. Every chapter in this thesis has had something to say about the doctrine of Spirit baptism, whether a critique of the classical doctrine or a constructive suggestion, and this material does not need to be revisited. This chapter, though, is about communication, and we have not yet addressed the doctrinal communication that occurs within the context of ecumenical discussion. While this certainly does not represent the oeuvre of Pentecostal communication on the doctrine of Spirit baptism, it is interesting to explore because ecumenism both implies and necessitates communication. Therefore, as a case study, we will examine the doctrine of Spirit baptism as it has featured in ecumenical dialogue between Pentecostalism and other Christian traditions. This will highlight some of the challenges and limitations of communicative meaning on this subject, and further reinforce the need for a fresh articulation of the doctrine.

### **6.3.1 Case Study: Pentecostal Spirit Baptism in Ecumenical Discussion:**

The Pentecostal attitude towards formal ecumenical movements and organizations has often been one of suspicion or even open hostility. Vondey argues that Pentecostalism was initially characterized by a fundamental ecumenical optimism, fuelled by “the shared experience of the Holy Spirit among the diversity of Pentecostal groups”.<sup>61</sup> Thus “the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was seen as the specific evidence of God’s desire to bring unity to the churches and to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth”.<sup>62</sup> However, this initial ecumenical optimism quickly gave way to suspicion aimed at the formalities of ecumenism and ecumenical organizations. Clifton argues that “the impact of conservative streams of evangelicalism and their historic suspicions of the WCC [World Council of Churches]” led to many Pentecostals identifying “association with Catholics and ‘liberal’ Protestants as involving compromise and a denial of the ‘truths’ of the ‘full gospel’”.<sup>63</sup> Thus “Pentecostals became ambivalent towards ecumenical practices, still embracing the goal of

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<sup>61</sup> Wolfgang Vondey, "Pentecostals and Ecumenism: Becoming the Church as a Pursuit of Christian Unity," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 11, no. 4 (2011): 319.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Shane Clifton, "Ecumenism from the Bottom Up: A Pentecostal Perspective," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47, no. 4 (2012): 585.

Christian unity but questioning the means by which Pentecostals were to participate in official ecumenical endeavours".<sup>64</sup>

In more recent times, however, there is evidence to suggest that this attitude towards ecumenism is changing. Thus Wolfgang Vondey can write: "At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Pentecostals are participating in a variety of forms in ecumenical affairs, often on the grass-roots level but also in regional, national, and international contexts."<sup>65</sup> In this section we will reference Pentecostal participation in ecumenical dialogue with several other traditions including evangelicals, Catholics, and Reformed churches. It has to be acknowledged that the decentralized nature of the Pentecostal movement and the fact that there is no central governing body for Pentecostalism does pose some challenges for ecumenical dialogue. It is impossible for one Pentecostal church, or even one Pentecostal movement, to speak on behalf of all other Pentecostal churches or movements. Thus the dialogues we have mentioned above are usually conducted with an invited group of Pentecostal pastors and leaders and prefaced by the caveat that these pastors and leaders do not represent the diversity of Pentecostalism worldwide. Nevertheless, it is still possible to gain some insight into Pentecostal self-understanding through the way in which they represent themselves at these ecumenical discussions.

Regarding Spirit baptism in particular, the ecumenical potential of this doctrine has been recognized by a number of authors. Clifton states of Pentecostals that "the spirituality informed by the experience of Spirit baptism generated an explicitly ecumenical vision".<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Yong sees Pentecost and Spirit baptism as an event that "made possible the encounter of human beings with each other who, left to themselves, would not have entered into relationship".<sup>67</sup> There are certainly ecumenical tones in this assessment. Yong maintains that the church is constituted by unity-in-diversity "by and through the gift of the Spirit of God".<sup>68</sup> Along similar lines, Larry Hart calls Spirit Baptism "a bridge-building biblical metaphor for all churches and all generations".<sup>69</sup> Hart promotes a "dimensional" approach which he claims combines the best of the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and evangelical approaches to Spirit baptism and builds bridges between them.<sup>70</sup> This dimensional approach involves broadening the metaphor of Spirit baptism "to its proper biblical

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<sup>64</sup> Vondey, "Pentecostals and Ecumenism," 320.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 325.

<sup>66</sup> Clifton, "Ecumenism from the Bottom Up," 578.

<sup>67</sup> Amos Yong, "As the Spirit Gives Utterance," *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 366 (2003): 301.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>69</sup> Larry Hart, "Spirit Baptism: A Bridge-Building Biblical Metaphor for All Churches and All Generations," in *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Vinson Synan, *Spirit Baptism: A Bridge-Building Biblical Metaphor* (Lake Mary: Charisma House, 2011), 195.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 197.

parameters” and recovering “a renewed appreciation for the various dimensions of this profound biblical teaching”.<sup>71</sup> He recognizes that, from a biblical perspective, some insist on a conversion-initiation interpretation of Spirit baptism, some on a sanctification interpretation, and some on an interpretation of Spirit baptism as Holy Spirit empowerment.<sup>72</sup> His simple conclusion, perhaps too simple, is that they are all right and they are all wrong. His ecumenical argument is that each tradition highlights one of the dimensions of Spirit baptism.

Ecumenical concern is also right at the heart of Macchia’s work on Spirit baptism. He points out that all Christian communions accept the category of Spirit baptism, therefore it has potential for connecting Pentecostalism to other traditions.<sup>73</sup> He is also convinced that “the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism can be renewed so as to contribute to an ecumenical pneumatology in a way that will allow other voices to challenge and expand their own theological distinctive”.<sup>74</sup> He states:

*Pentecostal distinctives are valuable if we are to speak at the global and ecumenical table from the vantage point of our unique gifting as a movement of Christian affirmation ... Pentecostalism has been blessed and gifted by God with certain theological and spiritual accents. We do other Christian families a disservice if we do not preserve and cherish these and seek to bless others with them. Thus, ideal would be a reworking of our distinctives in a way that cherishes our unique accents but expands them in response to the broader contours of the biblical witness and the diversity of voices at the ecumenical table.*<sup>75</sup>

He then identifies Spirit baptism as chief among the Pentecostal distinctives and uses the remainder of his book to develop an ecumenical theology of Spirit baptism. He is adamant that “the baptism or outpouring of the Spirit can be the organizing principle for a Pentecostal ecclesiology that is responsive to distinctive accents of Pentecostalism as a global movement as well as to a broader ecumenical discussion”.<sup>76</sup>

It is interesting to note that Macchia is pessimistic about the ecumenical value of specific Pentecostal doctrines like subsequence and initial evidence. He suggests that “because of the work of Hollenweger and others, it became increasingly difficult to publish a book on Spirit baptism as subsequent to conversion and necessarily evidenced by tongues without appearing provincial in one’s theology and completely off the mark in terms of what is really ecumenically significant about

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>73</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 22.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 256.



global Pentecostalism".<sup>77</sup> This sentiment is echoed by Wolfgang Vondey who claims that the issues of key importance to classical Pentecostals are of limited relevance in ecumenical conversations. Vondey contrasts "the initial praxis of debating issues of importance primarily within classical Pentecostal circles, often emphasised by the framework of salvation, healing, Spirit baptism, sanctification, and the coming Kingdom" with the contemporary ecumenical agenda among Pentecostals that "is characterised by a more complex, multilayered, and globally diverse theological framework".<sup>78</sup>

Bearing all of this in mind, we will now consider several examples of dialogue between Pentecostalism and other traditions, and the way in which Spirit baptism has been discussed in each.<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, the goal here is not a detailed summary or critique of ecumenical participation by Pentecostals (which has been ably done elsewhere).<sup>80</sup> Rather, the goal is to explore how Pentecostals have communicated their experience and doctrine of Spirit baptism at the ecumenical table. How do Pentecostals take this doctrine into dialogue and how is it communicated? Answering this question will help us to explicate how Spirit baptism has functioned communicatively.

### **6.3.1.1 Evangelical Dialogue:**

Evangelicals have had a profound influence on Pentecostals theologically, especially after certain sectors of Pentecostalism cultivated a close relationship with evangelicals since the middle of the last century.<sup>81</sup> The Assemblies of God in America, for example, joined the National Association of Evangelicals in 1943, although not without some internal objections.<sup>82</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that many early Pentecostal attempts at systematic theology (and some more recent) could essentially be classified as evangelical theology with an added section on Spirit baptism. Given the relatively young age of Pentecostalism, there was an understandable tendency to appropriate doctrines from a more experienced tradition that shared their emphasis on Bible as a primary source of doctrine. Cecil M. Robeck Jr. observes this tendency right back to 1956 when

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>78</sup> Vondey, "Pentecostals and Ecumenism," 326.

<sup>79</sup> For a collection of documents relating to Pentecostal participation in ecumenical conversations see: ———, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Volume One* and ———, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Volume Two*.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example ———, "Pentecostals and Ecumenism."

<sup>81</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 19.

<sup>82</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation: 1920-1965," in *Pentecostalism in Context*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 109.

“the Pentecostal Evangel began to print a new statement of Faith, titled ‘We Believe’, on the inside of the front cover”.<sup>83</sup> He claims that “it was not the Statement of Fundamental Truths adopted by the Assemblies of God, nor was it an abbreviated form of the Statement”.<sup>84</sup> Rather, most of the statements employed the same phraseology as the statement “This We Believe” employed by the National Association of Evangelicals. The editor of the Pentecostal Evangel, Robert C. Cunningham, simply added a statement on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and one on the redemptive work of Christ.<sup>85</sup> This tendency to uncritically adopt evangelical doctrines and epistemological assumptions continues to this day. Poloma suggests that the Assemblies of God has often sought rapport with Fundamentalism and with a more moderate Evangelicalism, but the movement’s attempt to become “fundamentalism plus Spirit baptism” has not always been well received.<sup>86</sup>

In relation to dialogue with evangelicals on Spirit baptism, most of this has been informal dialogue, through books and journal articles, focused on exegetical and doctrinal questions relating to the doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence. Because of the preoccupation of this dialogue with hermeneutical issues it could be said that this conversation has been conducted mainly on evangelical terms. The prime example of this is the ongoing debate, to which we referred in chapter 1, between James Dunn and Pentecostal writers like William and Robert P. Menzies. As we have already seen, Dunn’s primary concern was to refute the Pentecostal assertion that the experience of Spirit baptism occurs subsequent to conversion.<sup>87</sup> William and Robert P. Menzies responded directly to Dunn on this question in their book, *Spirit and Power*, subtitled “A Call to Evangelical Dialogue”.<sup>88</sup> While they do cover other aspects of Pentecostal experience, their main focus in relation to Spirit baptism is, to use their own chapter headings, “The Issue of Subsequence” and “Evidential Tongues”. This dialogue then continued along similar lines in the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* in 2010 which included responses from Roger Stronstad and Max Turner, among others, to James Dunn’s original work.<sup>89</sup>

While the content of this dialogue has already been covered and therefore detailed reiteration here would be superfluous, the Pentecostal communication about Spirit baptism in this context is certainly indicative of what were central concerns for Pentecostals for many years. Biblical apologetics for subsequence and initial evidence dominated Pentecostal scholarly literature for

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Margaret Poloma, "The Future of American Pentecostal Identity," in *The Work of the Spirit*, ed. Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 159-160.

<sup>87</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

<sup>88</sup> Menzies and Menzies, *Spirit and Power*.

<sup>89</sup> Various.

some time. It is interesting that Dunn willingly concedes the value of Spirit baptism as an experience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>90</sup> Yet rather than building on this crucial point of convergence, some Pentecostal scholars have preferred to keep the focus on the other contentious (and, I would argue, peripheral) issues.

There have also been many other conversations and academic exchanges between Pentecostals and evangelicals on the topic of Spirit baptism, but there has been a fairly common theme in the content of the communication. The *Pentecostal* experience of Spirit baptism has usually been overshadowed by exegetical analysis of the *biblical* experience. While in a positive sense this has encouraged Pentecostals to reflectively develop a biblical doctrine of Spirit baptism, the negative consequence of this focus has been the supplanting of affective experience with rational reflection at the core of discussions about Spirit baptism. Because this neglect of affective experience is not consistent with a Pentecostal worldview, I don't believe that this has been the most fertile landscape for ecumenical dialogue. The point that I made in the first chapter in relation to this dialogue still stands: the doctrinal conflict is destined to remain intractable as long as fundamental differences in hermeneutical approaches and epistemology are left unattended and unresolved.

### **6.3.1.2 Catholic Dialogue:**

We will now turn our attention to the long-running dialogue between some Pentecostals and the Roman Catholic Church. The dialogue referred to here has been running in phases from 1972 until 2006 and Vondey describes this international Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue as "by far the most significant long-term ecumenical commitment among Pentecostals".<sup>91</sup> The goal of this dialogue was not structural or institutional unity but rather "unity in prayer and common witness".<sup>92</sup> While there have certainly been challenges and obstacles, both internal to the dialogue and through external pressure, the overall results of the dialogue have usually been portrayed in a very positive light.<sup>93</sup> It is interesting to note that Spirit baptism was one of the first topics covered by the dialogue in 1972, particularly in terms of how Spirit baptism relates to Christian initiation. It is perhaps even more interesting to note that the fifth and, to date, final phase of dialogue returned

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<sup>90</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 225.

<sup>91</sup> Vondey, "Pentecostals and Ecumenism," 323.

<sup>92</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and J.L. Sandidge, "Dialogue, Catholic and Pentecostal," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 577.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 581.

to this same issue in more detail. For the purpose of our discussion here, we will pick up on some of the key points of communication from these two phases.

The final report on the first phase of the dialogue, which covered a broad range of issues<sup>94</sup>, included a section entitled "Baptism in the Holy Spirit".<sup>95</sup> Although the section was brief, we can gain some insight into the aspects of Spirit baptism that the Pentecostals involved in the dialogue felt were important enough to communicate. In particular, the issue of subsequence featured prominently, probably due to the debate about Spirit baptism that was initiated by James Dunn's work shortly before the commencement of the dialogue. The final report defined the Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism as "occurring in a decisive experience distinct from conversion whereby the Holy Spirit manifests himself, empowers and transforms one's life, and enlightens one as to the whole reality of the Christian mystery (Acts 2:4; 8:17; 10:44; 19:6)".<sup>96</sup> While there is an obvious emphasis on the fact that Spirit baptism is distinct from conversion, there are several other noteworthy inclusions. The fact that Spirit baptism is described as a "decisive experience", involving the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and involving more than simply empowerment (but also transformation and the enlightening of the Holy Spirit), does much to commend this definition. In relation to Spirit baptism, the final report of this first phase also recognizes the contextual nature of religious language, the variety of religious experiences, and the importance of love as a foundation for the use of spiritual gifts.<sup>97</sup>

Ultimately, though, it is fairly clear that much of the discussion focused around the issue of the giving of the Spirit in relation to Christian initiation. There is a decisive statement, endorsed by both Catholic and Pentecostal participants, that the actual reception of the Spirit occurs at Christian initiation so that the "Holy Spirit dwells in all Christians (Rom 8:9), and not just in those "baptized in the Holy Spirit"". <sup>98</sup> In regards to how Spirit baptism fits into this process, "it was not agreed whether there is a further imparting of the Spirit with a view to charismatic ministry, or whether baptism in the Holy Spirit is, rather, a kind of release of a certain aspect of the Spirit already given".<sup>99</sup> As mentioned above, that this issue was a concern for the dialogue is certainly unsurprising given

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<sup>94</sup> These included "the scriptural basis for fullness of life in the Spirit, the relation of baptism in the Holy Spirit to Christian initiation, the role of the gifts in the mystical tradition, the charismatic dimensions and structures of sacramental and of ecclesial life, psychological and sociological dimensions, prayer and worship, common witness, and evangelism" (Ibid., 577).

<sup>95</sup> "Final Report: Dialogue between the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and Some Classical Pentecostals," (1976).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 14,16,17.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 18.

the theological context of the time. If anything, it was probably necessary and helpful for Pentecostals to engage this issue ecumenically. However, given the brevity of the final report, it is impossible to discern the depth in which Spirit baptism was discussed beyond what is summarized in the report and evidently some ambiguity remained.

The fifth and most recent phase of the dialogue, which focused again on Christian initiation and baptism in the Spirit, produced a much more detailed summary of the Pentecostal perspective on Spirit baptism (see Appendix G).<sup>100</sup> Significantly, this summary of the Pentecostal perspective on Spirit baptism focused once again on what might be termed the classical doctrines of subsequence, initial evidence, and empowerment. Regarding subsequence, the report concluded as follows:

*Most Pentecostals taught that Baptism in the Holy Spirit was subsequent to conversion ... While Pentecostals generally expect this to be the sequence of events that leads one into the fullness of Pentecostal life, they also accept the fact that people are sometimes baptized in the Spirit at the same time they are converted if the appropriate evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit is present. If it is not received at that time, Pentecostals contend that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is so critical to the fullness of Christian life that it should be pursued immediately.<sup>101</sup>*

Regarding initial evidence, the report noted that “the expectation that all who receive baptism in the Holy Spirit would be able to give some evidence of that fact other than a personal testimony, is deeply ingrained within Pentecostal theology”.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, this “Bible evidence” was understood to be “the same evidence that they understood to be present in the biblical account of Acts 2, the ability to speak in other tongues”.<sup>103</sup> The report did note that there seemed to be a decline over time in the percentage of Pentecostal believers receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the “Bible evidence” of speaking in tongues, raising “profound pastoral and theological questions”.<sup>104</sup> Finally, regarding empowerment, it was recognized that Pentecostals believe that Spirit baptism involves an encounter with the Holy Spirit such that “one is empowered to become the compelling witness that Jesus proclaimed in Acts 1:8”.<sup>105</sup> There was obviously more substance to the dialogue than this short summary portrays, but I believe the essence of the dialogue is discernible. Subsequence, initial evidence, and empowerment for ministry had the floor.

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<sup>100</sup> "On Becoming a Christian: Insights from Scripture and the Patristic Writings with Some Contemporary Reflections."

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 240.

Few would dispute that this long-running dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals has been a crucial catalyst for Pentecostal theological reflection and the development of doctrine. My main critique of this dialogue, as it pertains to Spirit baptism, would be that the focus never really moved beyond doctrinal issues like subsequence and initial evidence. Consequently, the theological richness of the experience itself was for the most part overlooked. That being said, it was encouraging to observe some of the “convergences” that were highlighted in the summary of the section on “Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation”. More specifically, there was recognition of the significance and importance of the actual experience of Spirit baptism:

*The most fundamental convergence concerning the theme treated in the present section, about which we can rejoice, is the common conviction within both our communities that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a powerful action of grace bestowed by God upon believers within the church.*<sup>106</sup>

While the place of Spirit baptism within Christian initiation was not agreed upon during the dialogue, I would suggest that the above statement is of critical importance both theologically and ecumenically. It picks up on a focus that I have argued throughout is at the core of Spirit baptism and should be given far more attention, namely that Spirit baptism is a powerful encounter between the Holy Spirit and Christian believers with enormous spiritual and theological significance. It is important to acknowledge the ecumenical potential of this as a “common conviction” within both the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal communities.

### **6.3.1.3 Reformed Dialogue:**

The final dialogue that we will consider briefly is that between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and some Pentecostal churches and leaders. This dialogue was conducted over a period of five years from 1996 to 2000.<sup>107</sup> Its purpose was to “increase mutual understanding and respect, identify areas of theological agreement, convergence, and disagreement, and explore possibilities for common witness”.<sup>108</sup> While there was not the same level of attention given to Spirit baptism as was given in the Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue, it may nevertheless be revealing to survey some of the statements from the Final Report of the dialogue.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>107</sup> Macchia, "Dialogue, Reformed-Pentecostal," 575.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> "The Final Report: Word and Spirit, Church and World. The Final Report of the International Dialogue between Representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders 1996-2000," *Pneuma* 23, no. 1 (2001).

Concerning Spirit baptism, the only specific statements contained in the final report of this dialogue are in relation to speaking in tongues and empowerment for ministry. After recognition of the fundamental difference between Pentecostal and Reformed Christians in terms of their “expectations concerning the role of the Spirit in culture and the significance of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit”, the dialogue recognizes that “many Pentecostals distinguish between speaking in tongues as a gift of the Holy Spirit (not available to all) and speaking in tongues as sign or evidence (potentially available to all) that one has been baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4)”.<sup>110</sup> Beyond this no elaboration is provided. Similarly, in relation to empowerment for ministry, all that is to be found is the acknowledgement that “Most Pentecostals believe that baptism in the Holy Spirit is for the empowerment of believers to be effective witnesses of the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)”.<sup>111</sup> While it should be remembered that Spirit baptism was not the only focus of this dialogue, it is telling that the only statements pertaining to Spirit baptism concerned initial evidence and empowerment for ministry. Once again, the experience itself is largely overlooked.

#### **6.3.1.4 Critique of Ecumenical Communication:**

This brief excursus on Spirit baptism in ecumenical discussion is not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, the point I wish to make is that, with a few exceptions in the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue, the majority of discussion has addressed the classical Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence, initial evidence, and empowerment for ministry. On one hand this is to be expected given that Pentecostals have usually explained their experience of Spirit baptism doctrinally and theologically in these terms. Thus the communicative meaning has reflected the cognitive meaning. On the other hand, however, an understanding of Spirit baptism limited to these doctrines is far too narrow and fails to capture the essence of the Pentecostal experience. In technical terms, one might say that these ecumenical discussions, focused primarily on doctrine, give weight to cognitive meaning without giving due consideration to effective and constitutive meaning. It is no doubt easiest to focus on cognitive meaning, which is purely intellectual, but a focus in this area alone does not touch the richness of the Pentecostal experience. It could also be argued that ecumenical dialogue about a spiritual experience cannot be properly grounded without the elemental meaning of the experience. Because this elemental meaning can only be captured through experiencing for oneself (which presumably not all participants in the dialogue have done), the scope of these dialogues is necessarily restricted to doctrinal discussion as the only point of common meaning.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 66.

But such a restriction of scope does not benefit the dialogue if the true essence of the experience under discussion is lost. For this reason it is important that communicative meaning expressed through doctrine reflects, as much as is possible, the underlying experience to which the doctrine refers. This is the communicative challenge for the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism.

Therefore, while many recognize the ecumenical potential of Spirit baptism, I submit that the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism may need to be reworked or reformulated in order to be communicated effectively. Or, stated differently, I believe there is a need to reframe the communicative meaning of Spirit baptism to reflect the progress that we have made in terms of cognitive, effective, and constitutive meaning. In relation to ecumenical communication, Wolfgang Vondey acknowledges that “Pentecostals have yet to discover how they can formulate their particular contributions in a language that is both true to Pentecostal experience and understandable for those who are willing to learn about Pentecostalism”.<sup>112</sup> This leads us to the final section of this chapter, namely a suggested rewording of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism.

Just before we proceed to this, though, Lonergan makes an interesting point in relation to the communication of the Christian message. There may also be potential to apply this to the communication of distinctive doctrines or experiences:

*The Christian message is to be communicated to all nations. Such communication presupposes that preachers and teachers enlarge their horizons to include an accurate and intimate understanding of the culture and the language of the people they address ... Here the basic distinction is between preaching the gospel and, on the other hand, preaching the gospel as it has been developed within one’s own culture. In so far as one preaches the gospel as it has been developed within one’s own culture, one is preaching not only the gospel but also one’s own culture. In so far as one is preaching one’s own culture, one is asking others not only to accept the gospel but also renounce their own culture and accept one’s own.*<sup>113</sup>

As Pentecostals engage in discussion and communication about Spirit baptism, there is always the challenge to communicate in a way that encourages the powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit that is Pentecostal Spirit baptism, but without promoting Pentecostal culture as a necessary accompaniment.

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<sup>112</sup> Vondey, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Volume Two*, 267.

<sup>113</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 363.



#### 6.4 A Suggested Rewording of the Doctrine:

In an effort to address the challenge of communicative meaning as identified above, I have suggested that a rewording of the doctrine of Spirit baptism is necessary. Indeed, this makes sense in light of significant changes and evolutions within the Pentecostal movement over the last century or more. Furthermore, there will always be a question over the efficacy of early Pentecostal definitions of Spirit baptism given that “one should not expect terminological precision from the largely inspirational and exhortatory writings of a fledgling Pentecostal revival movement”.<sup>114</sup>

Shane Clifton, for example, has proposed a rewording of the doctrine along the following lines:

*We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit, experienced with or at a moment distinct from Christian initiation, is the ongoing orientation of the believer to the leading of the Spirit for the sake of personal transformation into the likeness of Christ, generating unity in the church, and empowering the community of faith for the mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. This experience of the Spirit is accompanied by the universally available gifts of the Spirit (including tongues), and manifests the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-26).*<sup>115</sup>

Clifton has obviously sought to retain certain traditional aspects of the doctrine like tongues and initial evidence whilst broadening the purpose of the experience to include aspects of personal transformation and unity. There is certainly a lot to like about this proposal.

For my own contribution to the reformulation of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism, and to bring this thesis to a close, I will now review the theological proposals from previous chapters and attempt to condense these into a doctrinal statement. If we take into account all that has come before in this thesis, it will hopefully provide a new basis for communicative meaning and a new platform for participation in dialogue.

In chapter 3 we engaged with the cognitive meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism by identifying that, at its core, the experience of Spirit baptism is an experience of the Holy Spirit. The plausibility or cognitive functionality of this assertion was demonstrated by a comparative analysis between the phenomenology of Pentecostal Spirit baptism and the characteristics of biblical experiences of the Spirit. My doctrinal conclusion was that it is entirely reasonable to accept that the Holy Spirit is present and at work in the Pentecostal experience. We then attempted to explain and understand this doctrine in Trinitarian terms as participation in the life of God. My propositions were threefold. Firstly, recognizing the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son as an

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<sup>114</sup> Lederle, *Theology with Spirit*, 100.

<sup>115</sup> Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology," 21.

act of love, in Spirit baptism we are therefore encountering the love of God poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Secondly, by coming into loving relationship with the Holy Spirit we are participating in the divine relation of active spiration. Finally, by joining with the Holy Spirit in both loving God in return and making that love known to the world, we are participating in the divine relation of passive spiration. All of these theological proposals are intended to help us understand what actually happens in the experience of Spirit baptism and how the Holy Spirit is made present to us. Finally, I suggested that the uniqueness of the experience of Spirit baptism could be explained as an appropriation of our relationship with the Holy Spirit when we come to know the Spirit as the Spirit.

In chapter 4 we acknowledged that the effective meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism has usually been derived from an eschatological interpretation of the experience as providing the empowerment for the urgent missionary work of the church in light of the imminent return of Christ. While this makes sense within a context of eschatological expectation, the challenge to this framework comes from recent shifts within Pentecostalism towards an eschatology that is focused more on the present than on the future. The question, then, is whether the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism can still function as a source of effective meaning in light of these shifts? As an affirmative suggestion, I proposed an alternative theological interpretation of the relationship between Spirit baptism and the work of mission or social action. If we recognize Spirit baptism as a powerful and transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit in which the love of God is poured into our hearts, then Spirit baptism may be described as a baptism into divine love. This outpouring of divine love can then provide a rationale for evangelism and social action that is not dependent upon a particular eschatological orientation. As we receive the divine love of God in Spirit baptism, so then we are compelled to act as a conduit for that divine love to the world through evangelism and social action.

In chapter 5 we recognized that Spirit baptism has been the common experience or source of common meaning that has traditionally constituted or united the various expressions of Pentecostalism. While this constitutive function of Spirit baptism has been called into question in recent times, my suggestion is that we do not currently have enough empirical or statistical data available to make a definitive statement on the constitutive function of Spirit baptism in contemporary Pentecostalism. Moreover, statistical analysis on its own is not sufficient for identifying and explicating the self-understanding or constitutive meaning of the Pentecostal community. Identity and self-understanding are not purely theological concerns but also require sociological analysis. What is needed, therefore, is a concrete ecclesiology (or ecclesiologies) for

the Pentecostal movement that integrate theological considerations with the social and practical reality of Pentecostal churches in different contexts. I did suggest some categories that may be useful for understanding changes in constitutive meaning, specifically the movement from charisma to institution, and the dialectically opposed forces for transcendence and limitation designated as operators and integrators. I also affirmed that Pentecostal Spirit baptism at least has the theological capacity to function constitutively if embraced by the Pentecostal movement. Ultimately, though, only time will tell whether or not this actually occurs.

Based on this summary of preceding chapters and the ideas developed in this chapter, I propose the following doctrinal statement about Spirit baptism derived from our analysis of the functions of meaning in relation to this experience:

*Pentecostal Spirit baptism is a powerful and transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit that unites Pentecostal believers in community and encourages them towards empowered witness and service through an outpouring of the divine love of God.*

While I would be satisfied with this alone, there are no doubt those who would suggest that the connection between tongues and Spirit baptism should be referenced. Although I have my reservations given the historical confusion and conflation between tongues and Spirit baptism, it is impossible to deny the close phenomenological connection between the two. In this chapter we have proposed that the relationship between Spirit baptism and tongues may be understood theologically as involving the communication of elemental meaning and expressing the inexpressible. Therefore, it may be appropriate to add this sentence to the above statement:

*The essence of this encounter, which is often overwhelming and difficult to express in words, may be communicated through an expression of glossolalia or speaking in tongues.*

I understand that a doctrinal statement like this is highly unlikely to gain popular acceptance or adoption, but that is beyond my control. The point is that I believe this doctrinal statement reflects the cognitive, effective, and constitutive meanings that we have developed throughout this thesis and therefore communicates the key aspects of meaning inherent in the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism.

## **6.5 Concluding Remarks:**

This chapter has been concerned with the analysis and development of the communicative meaning of Pentecostal Spirit baptism. We suggested first of all that the phenomenological relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism could be theologically explained as the communication of elemental meaning. If the experience of Spirit baptism originates meaning that

is yet to be explicated, then tongues may function as an immediate and affective medium for communicating that meaning. Secondly, we commented on the communication and discussion of the doctrine of Spirit baptism within the context of ecumenical dialogue. In dialogue with evangelicals, Catholics, and Reformed churches, it seems that the main focus has usually been the classical Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence, initial evidence, and empowerment for ministry. Because this thesis contends that these doctrines are peripheral rather than central to the experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, the logical conclusion is that the communication of Pentecostal doctrine in this area may need to be reformulated or refocused. To this end, we proposed a possible rewording of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism that is worth restating here:

*Pentecostal Spirit baptism is a powerful and transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit that unites Pentecostal believers in community and encourages them towards empowered witness and service through an outpouring of the divine love of God. The essence of this encounter, which is often overwhelming and difficult to express in words, may be communicated through an expression of glossolalia or speaking in tongues.*

While this seems to capture and express the insights of previous chapters, it has to be acknowledged that the efficacy and suitability of this doctrinal statement is yet to be tested.

As a final exhortation, a recurring theme throughout this paper has been the importance of connecting doctrine with experience as a lived reality. This is especially true in relation to communicative meaning and harks back to the concept of incarnate meaning referenced earlier in this chapter.

*Those that communicate the effective meaning of the Christian message, must practise it. For actions speak louder than words, while preaching what one does not practise recalls sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.<sup>116</sup>*

This is a continuing challenge to Pentecostals around the world. If we wish to communicate the essence of Spirit baptism as a powerful and meaningful encounter with the Holy Spirit, this communication can't be limited to doctrine alone. The lasting and transformative effects of this encounter should be evident in and communicated by the lives that we live as Christians.

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<sup>116</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 362.

## Appendix A - Testimonies of Pentecostal Spirit Baptism:

- (1) “The girls in India, so wonderfully wrought upon and baptized with the Spirit, began by terrifically beating themselves, under pungent conviction of their need ... When delivered, they jumped up and down for joy for hours without fatigue, In fact, they were stronger for it. They cried out with the burning that came into and upon them. Some fell as they saw a great light pass before them, while the fire of God burned the members of the body of sin, pride, anger, love of the world, selfishness, uncleanness, etc. They neither ate nor slept until the victory was won. Then the joy was so great that for two or three days after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they did not care for food.”<sup>1</sup>
- (2) “The ‘baptism’, as we received it in the beginning, did not allow us to think, speak, or hear evil of any man. The Spirit was very sensitive, tender as a dove.”<sup>2</sup>
- (3) “As suddenly as on the day of Pentecost, while I was sitting some twelve feet right in front of the speaker, the Holy Spirit fell upon me and filled me literally. I seemed to be lifted up, for I was in the air in an instant, shouting, ‘Praise God,’ and instantly I began to speak in another language. I could not have been more surprised if at the same moment someone had handed me a million dollars.”<sup>3</sup>
- (4) “The Pentecostal baptism spells complete abandonment, possession by the Holy Ghost, of the whole man, with a spirit of instant obedience”.<sup>4</sup>
- (5) When William Seymour finally received his baptism in the Spirit, he fell on the floor as though dead and then spoke in tongues.<sup>5</sup>
- (6) “and the power of God came upon me until I dropped to the floor. I was under the power of God for about an hour and a half, and it was there that all pride, and self, and conceit disappeared, and I was really dead to the world, for I had Christ within in His fullness. I was baptized with the Holy Ghost and spoke in a new tongue”.<sup>6</sup>
- (7) “He finished the work on my vocal organs ... and spoke through me in unknown tongues. I arose, perfectly conscious outwardly and inwardly that I was fully baptized in the Holy Ghost, and the devil can never tempt me to doubt it. First I was conscious that a living person had come into me, and that He possessed even my physical being, in a literal

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<sup>1</sup> Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>5</sup> Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

sense, in so much that He could at His will take hold of my vocal organs, and speak any language He chose through me. Then I had such power on me and in me as I never had before. And last but not least, I had a depth of love and sweetness in my soul that I had never dreamed of before, and a holy calm possessed me, and a holy joy and peace, that is deep and sweet beyond any thing I ever experienced before, even in the sanctified life. And O! Such victory as He gives me all the time".<sup>7</sup>

(8) "The Spirit worked my flesh with great vibrations for some time. At last I felt as though I were dying, and I was told I looked like it. Slowly, surely my life seemed to ebb away, until at last unconsciousness took place. How long I lay I do not know, but the first thing I was conscious of was a new life flowing in. Soon my jaws and tongue began to work independently of my volition and the words came, a clear language. All glory be to God. Now I feel a power for witnessing I never had before and an assurance of power in service that shall grow as I remain faithful".<sup>8</sup>

(9) "I praised and praised God and saw my Savior in the heavens. And as I praised, I came closer and closer and I was so small. By and by I swept into the wound in His side, and He was not only in me but I in Him, and there I found that rest that passeth all understanding, and He said to me, you are in the bosom of the Father. He said I was clothed upon and in the secret place of the Most High. But I said, Father, I want the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the heavens opened and I was overshadowed, and such power came upon me and went through me. He said, Praise Me, and when I did, angels came and ministered unto me. I was passive in His hands working on my vocal cords, and I realized they were loosing me. I began to praise Him in an unknown language".<sup>9</sup>

(10) "I grew smaller and smaller till I felt about the size of a grasshopper. I asked the Lord to put the Holy Ghost on me, and it came like the outpouring of water on the crown of my head and it went through my entire body to the very tips of my toes and fingers and my heart seemed to expand ten times larger. Then something rushed through me like I was under a faucet [*sic*]. It was the Holy Ghost and the next thing I knew, something began to get hold of my jaw bones and tongue. I said, Lord whether I ever speak in tongues or not, I want the baptism with the Holy Ghost as they had it on the day of Pentecost. I went home and it seemed a music band of a thousand instruments was set up within me".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 183-184.

(11) “And the Holy Ghost fell on me like balls of fire, and went through me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. The Spirit flooded my whole being and enlarged my heart till I was afraid the vessel might not be able to hold the glory and the power that seemed to rush into me like water poured out. Before I realized it, the Spirit got hold of my tongue as I used it for the glory of God in speaking in an unknown tongue”.<sup>11</sup>

(12) “On 28 January, at about half past eleven at night, Jesus fulfilled his promise and baptized me with the Holy Spirit. This was the greatest experience of my life ..., when I suddenly felt my shoulder shaking, and there was immediately a feeling like an electric shock from outside which went through my whole body and my whole being. I understood that the holy God had drawn near to me. I felt every limb of the lower half of my body shaking, and I felt involuntary movements and extraordinary power streaming through me. Through this power the shaking of my body grew continually, and at the same time the devotion of my prayer increased, to an extent that I had never experienced ... My words dissolved in my mouth, and the quiet utterances of my prayer grew louder and changed into a foreign language. I grew dizzy. My hands, which I had folded in prayer, struck against the edge of the bed. I was no longer myself, although I was conscious the whole time of what was happening. My tongue jerked so violently that I believed it would be torn out of my mouth, yet I could not open my mouth of my own power. But suddenly I felt it opening, and words streamed out of it in strange languages. At first they came and went, with times of silence, but soon my voice grew louder and the words came quite clearly; they came like a stream from my lips. The voice grew louder and louder, at first sounding clear and bold, but suddenly changing into a terrible cry of distress, and I noticed that I was weeping. I was like a horn that someone was blowing. A great chasm was open before me, into which I was shouting, and I understood immediately the meaning of what I was uttering, even though the words were strange to me. According to the account of people who were in the neighbouring room, this speaking and singing lasted about ten minutes. When it ceased it became quite silent, and there followed an almost silent prayer, which was also uttered in a strange language ... When it was over my soul was filled with an inexpressible feeling of happiness and blessedness. I could do nothing but give thanks, give thanks aloud. The feeling of the presence of God was so wonderful, as if heaven had come down to earth. And indeed heaven was in my soul ...”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>12</sup> Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 332-333.

- (13) "Something burst within my breast. An ocean of love divine rolled across my heart. This was out of the range of psychology and actions and reactions. This was real! Throwing up both hands I shouted, 'Hallelujah!' I ran joyfully through the whole tent, for through the corridors of my mind there marched the heralds of Divine truth carrying their banners on which I could see emblazoned: 'Jesus saves', 'Heaven is Real', 'Christ Lives To-day'".<sup>13</sup>
- (14) "My whole body shook; it was like waves of fire going through me, over and over again, and my whole being was as bathed in light".<sup>14</sup>
- (15) "The power came upon me, and He-the blessed Holy Spirit-came too, for it was He. Oh the joy, as I knew He was about to baptize me! It was like a fountain, welling up from within. Higher and higher it came until it reached my throat. My lips were stammering. I tried to speak, but not a word. I tried to say, 'JESUS,' but my throat was not big enough. It seemed as if the walls of my throat had something within that was pushing them out (and there was, praise God). It was a physical operation, as well as a spiritual exhilaration. It was glory! Hallelujah!"<sup>15</sup>
- (16) "The power of the Lord was surging through me. I turned round and knelt, intending to pray quietly and praise the Lord for His blessings. As I prayed the power of the Lord increased, and I soon forgot all about the meeting and was wholly taken up with the Lord. Heaven seemed wonderfully near, and the spiritual joy which flooded my being words cannot describe. I praised the Lord and rejoiced in His wonderful goodness. How long I had been on my knees I do not know, but I felt someone touch me on the arm and ask me to rise. I protested at first, fearing that the heavenly blessing would be lost, whereupon he whispered in my ear, 'You are disturbing the meeting, brother; will you come with me to the vestry, and we will pray.' I was astonished to learn that my silent prayer had become audible, and so much so that I was hindering the progress of the service. I left the seat and followed the brother into the vestry, and as I was crossing the threshold the power of the Spirit flooded me mightily. My whole being vibrated under the mighty waves of the Spirit's power which passed through me, and I broke forth for the first time in my experience in other tongues. To describe a spiritual experience is as impossible as to define the sweetness of honey, or the beauty of a flower. I may simply state that the spiritual blessing received that day met the great craving of my soul, and satisfied me that the experience for which I had yearned so long was now actually real. The Lord had granted me the gift of the Holy Spirit with the like manifestation as on the day of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>15</sup> A. G. Voight, "A Methodist Minister's Testimony," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, February 14 1925, 8.



Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius. My heart overflowed with joy and thanksgiving and speaking with other tongues. The aching void of my Christian life was filled by the Spirit of the Lord".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Carter, "My Personal Testimony to Pentecost," 3.

Appendix B - AG US Conversions and Spirit Baptisms 1979-2003<sup>17</sup>:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Baptisms</b>	<b>Conversions</b>	<b>%</b>
1979	57673	203434	28.35%
1980	70130	222896	31.46%
1981	75360	239025	31.53%
1982	79363	237322	33.44%
1983	79783	234980	33.95%
1984	73569	210575	34.94%
1985	80396	249014	32.29%
1986	83289	235480	35.37%
1987	84140	241029	34.91%
1988	73305	243509	30.10%
1989	71592	251897	28.42%
1990	76989	319558	24.09%
1991	71172	294784	24.14%
1992	72694	319418	22.76%
1993	74961	312548	23.98%
1994	77009	319351	24.11%
1995	78687	384057	20.49%
1996	90558	508296	17.82%
1997	101700	559501	18.18%
1998	94721	505017	18.76%
1999	98080	534635	18.35%
2000	88957	486339	18.29%
2001	90914	491390	18.50%
2002	94054	482920	19.48%
2003	88417	460865	19.19%

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<sup>17</sup> Assemblies of God, "Statistics of the Assemblies of God (USA)."

Appendix C - AG US Water Baptisms and Spirit Baptisms 1979-2012<sup>18</sup>:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Baptisms</b>	<b>Water Baptisms</b>	<b>%</b>
1979	57673	84130	68.55%
1980	70130	105096	66.73%
1981	75360	104164	72.35%
1982	79363	109245	72.65%
1983	79783	102551	77.80%
1984	73569	93570	78.62%
1985	80396	97217	82.70%
1986	83289	97143	85.74%
1987	84140	93939	89.57%
1988	73305	95193	77.01%
1989	71592	86365	82.89%
1990	76989	91900	83.77%
1991	71172	92291	77.12%
1992	72694	91834	79.16%
1993	74961	95380	78.59%
1994	77009	99027	77.77%
1995	78687	100955	77.94%
1996	90558	116221	77.92%
1997	101700	131935	77.08%
1998	94721	126031	75.16%
1999	98080	131851	74.39%
2000	88957	119584	74.39%
2001	90914	118507	76.72%
2002	94054	118436	79.41%
2003	88417	121733	72.63%
2004	91470	125273	73.02%
2005	90238	118838	75.93%
2006	91893	114972	79.93%
2007	88826	113503	78.26%

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

2008	85667	114091	75.09%
2009	85230	121212	70.31%
2010	86575	123878	69.89%
2011	83774	126774	66.08%
2012	81345	131713	61.76%

Appendix D - ACC Conversions and Spirit Baptisms 2005-2013<sup>19</sup>:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Baptisms</b>	<b>Conversions</b>	<b>%</b>
2005	7979	41968	19.01%
2006	7338	41457	17.70%
2007	7629	41072	18.57%
2008	8284	37323	22.20%
2009	7299	34724	21.02%
2010	7174	36912	19.44%
2011	6259	49856	12.55%
2012	N/A	45699	#VALUE!
2013	7010	41900	16.73%

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<sup>19</sup> "Salvations, Dedications and Baptisms," Australian Christian Churches (2013).

Appendix E - ACC Water Baptisms and Spirit Baptisms 2005-2013<sup>20</sup>:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Holy Spirit Baptisms</b>	<b>Water Baptisms</b>	<b>%</b>
2005	7979	9824	81.22%
2006	7338	9268	79.18%
2007	7629	9017	84.61%
2008	8284	8537	97.04%
2009	7299	8111	89.99%
2010	7174	7639	93.91%
2011	6259	7823	80.01%
2012	N/A	8834	#VALUE!
2013	7010	9003	77.86%

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

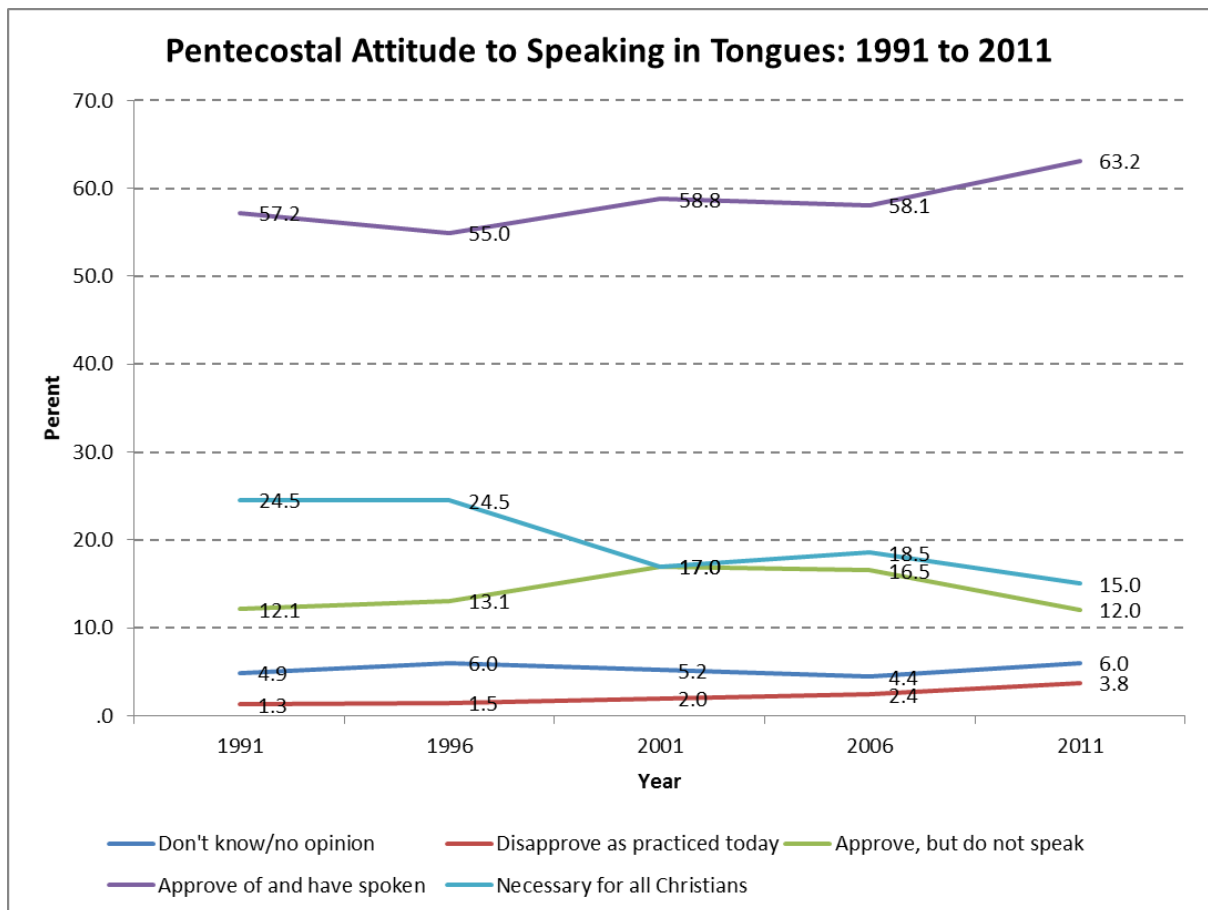
Appendix F - National Church Life Survey 1991-2011<sup>21</sup>:

The relevant question as it appeared in the surveys:

**What is your opinion of 'speaking in tongues'? Choose the sentence which is closest to your opinion.**

- 1 Don't know or have no opinion
- 2 I generally disapprove of speaking in tongues as it is practised today
- 3 I generally approve of speaking in tongues in most situations, but do not speak in tongues myself
- 4 I approve of and have spoken in tongues myself
- 5 Speaking in tongues is necessary for all Christians

Survey results:



<sup>21</sup> "National Church Life Survey."

## Appendix G - Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation, A Pentecostal Perspective<sup>22</sup>:

### 2. A Pentecostal Perspective

238. Classical Pentecostals first attracted public attention on January 1, 1901 when a young woman named Agnes Ozman spoke in tongues under the ministry of Charles Fox Parham. Several years later the three-year revival (1906-1909) at the Apostolic Faith Mission, 312 Azusa Street, in Los Angeles, led by the African-American, William Joseph Seymour, became the center of the Pentecostal Movement. From "Azusa Street" the message of salvation, holiness, and power was rapidly dispersed around the world by a host of evangelists and missionaries where it took root and developed. It is for this reason that so many Pentecostal and Charismatic believers look to the "Azusa Street" mission as the fountainhead of Pentecostalism.

239. Through the years Pentecostalism has taken many forms. It includes the classical Pentecostal denominations and many independent or non-denominational Pentecostal and charismatic fellowships. While many will choose the name "Pentecostal" to describe themselves, others would use different terms such as "Charismatic," "Third Wave," "New Apostolic," "African Indigenous", or "Word of Faith." In addition, many within the historic churches have called themselves Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, or charismatic, acknowledging the fact that they are in some way related to Classical Pentecostalism both historically and theologically. In the course of these developments some groups do not identify with the Pentecostal doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit but they have maintained many elements of the Pentecostal experience, e.g., being filled with the Spirit, empowerment, signs, wonders, spiritual gifts and charismatic praise. All together, those who in some way share a Pentecostal identity have been estimated to number nearly 600,000,000.

240. Baptism in the Holy Spirit has been a central feature of the Pentecostal Movement. Classical Pentecostals hold to a distinctive doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe that in this Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Christian encounters the Holy Spirit in such a way that one is empowered to become the compelling witness that Jesus proclaimed in Acts 1:8. Pentecostals also believe that without such an encounter with the Holy Spirit, the life and witness of the Christian is greatly impoverished.

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<sup>22</sup> "On Becoming a Christian: Insights from Scripture and the Patristic Writings with Some Contemporary Reflections."



241. Several streams of American religious life which gained momentum in the nineteenth century clearly influenced the emergence of Pentecostalism. The revivalist stream took root in colonial America with the Great Awakening in the eighteenth century and continued along the expanding frontier of the new Republic of the United States. Through evangelistic preaching including the use of camp meetings many were brought to Christian conversion through the drama of crisis experiences and the expectation that God was at work in the assembled community in the power of his Word and Spirit. Powerful experiences of the religious affections were not uncommon in these circles. Within this stream many sought a deeper life of holiness in their desire to be free from the domination of sin and to witness for Christ through an empowered life. By the mid-nineteenth century this took form in the Wesleyan-Holiness movement that taught a second experience of grace subsequent to conversion. Whereas in conversion one was saved through forgiveness and justification and regenerated into new life in Christ, the second work of grace, identified as “entire sanctification” freed one from the power of sin by the eradication of one’s sinful nature. Being filled with divine love one was therefore enabled to grow in Christian perfection. Many began to identify this experience as a “Baptism in/with the Holy Spirit.”

242. The Holiness movement also included a non-Wesleyan wing which was influenced by the Keswick Movement from England. Its adherents sought holiness as the “Higher Christian Life” but believed that sanctification was an ongoing process that began in conversion and continued throughout one’s Christian life. Many in that movement too, however, believed in a subsequent experience, that is, a baptism with the Holy Spirit that empowered them for witness and mission and was the basis for the “overcoming life” they desired.

243. Developments in church and society also influenced the early Pentecostal Movement. Many evangelical and holiness Protestants became disenchanted with the state of the church as it was represented both in the proliferation of denominations with their competing claims for supremacy, and in the basic optimism exuded by many in the historic Protestant churches that came to be identified with the Social Gospel. Their experience of the church in their day led these Christians, including many of the forebears of Pentecostalism, to conclude that the clerical life was overly professionalized, church structures had become too rigid, ecclesial practice had become routinized, moral laxity was being tolerated, syncretism was compromising historic doctrinal positions, and biblical truth was being undermined by the new “higher criticism.” Darwinism became ascendant not only in science but in society at large. From their perspective all of this had led to a decline of genuine Christian spirituality. As a result, many came to believe that the historic churches around them did not reflect the vision of the church that was outlined in the Bible.

244. Restorationist currents in the understanding of the church were widely present at the birth of Pentecostalism. Already influential in some sectors of Protestantism it typically envisioned the history of the church as a process of decline and restoration. In the opinion of some, as early as the post-apostolic period, the church began to depart from the spiritual authenticity of the primitive Christian community of the New Testament. Compounded by the growth of Christianity into the very structures of ancient society and its legal recognition by the emperor Constantine, the subsequent emergence of Christian society, culture and empire, in other words, European Christendom, was viewed from the perspective of spiritual compromise rather than growth and development. Sometimes the vision of what the church should be was presented as a return to the simplicity and purity of the New Testament community.

245. Convinced that the church had declined and biblical Christianity had been lost, early Pentecostals adopted a schema of restoration and renewal in light of the judgment and restoration motif in Joel 1:4 and 2:25. Many anticipated that the restoration of the church would come only through Divine intervention manifested in a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:23, 28-32; cf. Acts 2:16-21). When an outpouring of the Holy Spirit came with the Azusa Street Revival, they concluded that the promised “last days” restoration was being fulfilled. The title of the earliest history published by Pentecostals expresses their vision of what they believed was taking place: *The Apostolic Faith Restored*.

246. Restorationism involved an eschatological vision of the People of God which held profound implications for Christian mission. Pentecostals came to believe that this restoration would include the charisms of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 that many denominations had declared were no longer necessary or available. Some contended that the “gift of tongues” would be restored to further the missionary enterprise resulting in a global revival. Pentecostals believed that their very existence was an eschatological harbinger.

247. In spite of their Restorationist convictions, and their emphasis upon getting “back to the Bible,” many early Pentecostals called attention to the ongoing role that the Holy Spirit had played among those whom in their judgment were remnants of the true church. In distributing the works of the Pre-Nicene Fathers they were acknowledging their contribution to the life the church. They drew attention to earlier Christian prophetic, monastic and *millenarian* movements as forerunners to their own Movement. They produced selective litanies that included such persons as Martin Luther, John Wesley, Edward Irving, William Booth and others they believed had contributed elements of restoration already in place – justification, sanctification, social concern and tongues.

Their continuity with the historic church is best demonstrated with a review of the pedigree of *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission*. In 1563, through an act of Parliament, the Anglican Church adopted the “Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.” John Wesley, always an Anglican priest, incorporated nearly verbatim, twenty-five of the “Thirty-Nine Articles” to form the backbone of the *Doctrines and Discipline* that came to be used in the Methodist Episcopal Church. William J. Seymour drew heavily from Wesley’s version when he authored the “Azusa Street” text.

#### **a. Pentecostals and the Reception of the Holy Spirit**

248. The earliest Pentecostals were typically not new converts, but rather already well established Christians. Many of them stood within the Anglican – Methodist – Wesleyan-Holiness tradition and taught the doctrine of entire sanctification. Others adhered to the Keswick Movement and their call to the “overcoming life”. Regardless of their starting points, they all claimed that they had placed their faith in Jesus Christ. They had been converted and justified. They had received the Holy Spirit at the time of their Christian conversion, and pointed to Romans 8:9b, “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to him,” to support their claim. They all took holy living seriously, often producing catalogues of things to avoid, intended to help the believer to live a holy life aided by the Holy Spirit.

249. While Pentecostals believed that they received the Holy Spirit at conversion, sometimes the language they employed was vague and confusing. They might ask a fellow Christian if he or she had received the Holy Spirit in much the same way that Paul asked the Ephesians in Acts 19:2. Their question, however, was not about the initial reception of the Holy Spirit at the time of Christian conversion; it was a question about whether or not this Christian had received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Those who did not understand the question within the context of Pentecostalism were often convinced that these early Pentecostals held to an erroneous position that even confessing Christians were without the Spirit.

250. Other Pentecostals, especially Oneness Pentecostals, contributed to the confusion because they linked salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit together theologically. One cannot participate in “full salvation” apart from a confession of faith, baptism in water and the coming of the Spirit being evidenced by speaking in other tongues. Thus, the elements of faith, repentance, water baptism by immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, reception of the Holy Spirit and Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues all came together in such a way as to offer some support for those who advocated baptismal regeneration. They believed that

the words of Jesus to Nicodemus that “no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” (John 3:5), united what most other Pentecostals viewed as distinct actions of God in justification and Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

#### **b. The Relationship of Baptism in the Holy Spirit to Sanctification**

251. The two holiness streams, associated respectively with Wesley and the Keswick Convention, influenced early Pentecostal developments and led to the first division in the movement. The teaching of the Azusa Street Mission was clearly Wesleyan in inspiration. First, the new believer was justified as an act of God’s free grace, and upon a confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ the new believer was baptized in water. Second, the young convert was encouraged to pursue the sanctification of the Holy Spirit (John 17: 15, 17; 1 Thess. 5:23; Hebrews 12:14). This second “work of grace” (now no longer called baptism with the Holy Spirit) was then followed by further encouragement to seek a Baptism in the Holy Spirit to empower all sanctified Christians for ministry according to what was believed to be the scriptural pattern. This meant, once again, waiting before God, but this time it was in anticipation that God would pour forth the Holy Spirit in fullness upon the candidate. This “baptism” or “pouring out of the Spirit” or “immersion in the Spirit” by Christ would be accompanied by the “Bible evidence,” the same evidence that they understood to be present in the biblical account of Acts 2, the ability to speak in other tongues.

252. Whether one took the classical Wesleyan-Holiness position in which sanctification was a second work of grace, or adhered to the more classical Protestant position on sanctification influenced in Pentecostal circles by the Keswick Movement, in which one entered into a positional and progressive form of sanctification when one was placed “in Christ,” advocates agreed that personal sanctification and lives of holiness were serious matters. Almost all of them further agreed that when one received Baptism in the Holy Spirit, one received the “Bible evidence” of that encounter. Their differences over their understandings of sanctification initially led to temporary breaks in communion between some groups that took variant views on these two subjects. Condemnations often ran high as individuals chose sides. In recent years, these breaks have been overcome to such an extent that adherents of both perspectives recognize the water baptism of one another, they participate in the Lord’s supper together, and in most cases, they enjoy the mutual recognition of ministry.

253. With the exception of Oneness Pentecostals, most Pentecostals taught that Baptism in the Holy Spirit was subsequent to conversion—in the case of Wesleyan-Holiness Pentecostals subsequent to conversion and entire sanctification. While Pentecostals generally expect this to be

the sequence of events that leads one into the fullness of Pentecostal life, they also accept the fact that people are sometimes baptized in the Spirit at the same time they are converted if the appropriate evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit is present. If it is not received at that time, Pentecostals contend that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is so critical to the fullness of Christian life that it should be pursued immediately.

### **c. Receiving Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

254. It should be reiterated that Pentecostals do not normally equate Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the reception of the Holy Spirit at conversion. Pentecostals believe that at conversion the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3) and subsequently Christ baptizes the believer in the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:4). Both are part of the initial experiences of someone who has become a Christian (cf. Ephesians 1:13-14; Titus 3:4-6). To become a Christian in all its fullness implies among other things, coming to faith, undergoing baptism in water, and in openness and expectation, receiving Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the attendant evidence. Thus, Pentecostals contend that a person will receive this Baptism in the Holy Spirit when she or he believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 10:44-46), comes to God in childlike faith, and in an attitude of love and trust (cf. Luke 11:11-13), which suggests that the candidate is open to God's work in his or her life.

255. In response to the preaching of the Word, candidates for Baptism in the Holy Spirit often participate in what may be described as a "liturgical act," though Pentecostals would not normally use that language. They are invited to pray around the altar in the local congregation, sometimes for extended periods of time. Generally this invitation is given at the close of the service. One or more individuals, often the pastor, elders, or other mature Christian leaders *may* lay hands upon the candidate. For some, this act is viewed instrumentally, that is, as the point of impartation of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. For others this act of "laying on of hands" provides a sense of solidarity between the candidate and those who were praying with him or her. In some Pentecostal churches, the "laying on of hands" has become more formalized. While at times Baptism in the Holy Spirit may come at the moment hands have been laid on the candidate (Acts 8:17; 19:6), Pentecostals do not presume that Baptism in the Holy Spirit comes either necessarily or only through the act of "laying on of hands". Indeed, many Pentecostals testify that they received this baptism alone, in their homes, in their kitchens, and even without asking for it. Thus, most Pentecostals believe that Baptism in the Holy Spirit does not require another person to give, impart, or transmit it.

### **d. Evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

256. The expectation that all who receive baptism in the Holy Spirit would be able to give some evidence of that fact other than a personal testimony, is deeply ingrained within Pentecostal theology. The purpose of this “Bible evidence” was understood to be both missionary and evangelistic. The Holy Spirit, in an instant of time, could grant a missionary call, point in the direction of a field of service, and equip one with the language necessary to fulfill that call, in short, the recipient would be empowered to engage in missionary evangelism, just as the 120 on the Day of Pentecost were empowered to “go into all the world” (Mk 16:15). From Parham’s perspective, this is what the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2:4 meant, and it was now necessary to be restored because of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

257. Not all Pentecostals have agreed with this notion of the evidential aspect of the doctrine. Even from the beginning, some debated whether it was a human language, a manifestation of ecstatic speech, or even an angelic tongue (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1). While most classical Pentecostal denominations continue to hold one or another of these positions, some of the earliest Pentecostal groups, most notably those that emerged in Chile around 1910, and a number of other Pentecostal denominations came to believe that one could provide evidence of his or her Baptism in the Holy Spirit by demonstrating that he or she had received one of several different manifestations. These would include “speaking in other tongues, dancing [in the Spirit], having visions, prophesying, or engaging in any manifestations that are consistent with the Word of God (Scripture).”

258. In recent years, a smaller percentage of believers within Pentecostal denominations in the United States are receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues than did in earlier years. This has raised profound pastoral and theological questions within these groups. The discussion of these matters continues in the Pentecostal community.

#### **e. The Relationship between Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Charism of Speaking in Tongues**

259. The Apostle, Paul, raised a related question when he asked “Do all speak in tongues (*me pantes glossais lalousin*)?” in 1 Corinthians 12:30. The Apostle’s question clearly anticipated a negative response as was signaled by his use of the Greek negative, “*me*”. It also led Pentecostals to differentiate between the tongues received at the time of Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the charism or gift of tongues about which Paul wrote. Thus, in many Pentecostal churches, the distinction is made between “evidential tongues” and the “gift of tongues”. They may be “the same in essence, but different in their purpose.” Some contend that the “evidential tongues” constitute a continuing “prayer language,” giving it a “devotional” quality, which may be undertaken privately and does not need interpretation while the “gift of tongues” is intended for public usage and, thus,

requires interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:5, 13-17, 27-28). Another way to express this would be to say that phenomenologically these manifestations appear to be the same thing, but the purposes they serve, the ways they are exercised, and the way that they are discerned by the believing community are quite different. These are important discussions that have not yet been completely resolved in the Pentecostal community.

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