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The Initial Evidence Issue

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THE INITIAL EVIDENCE ISSUE: A PENTECOSTAL RESPONSE

William W. Menzies

In an earlier issue of the *Journal* (vol. 1, no. 2, July 1998), the stated theme was "Initial Evidence." Guest editor, Robert Menzies, gathered together an array of articles reflecting a variety of points of view, from classical Pentecostalism to Evangelical criticism. I have been requested, as one from within the classical Pentecostal position, to respond to the articles in that issue.

First, I would like to express my appreciation to the guest editor for assembling a useful collection of materials. Many of the current salient points in recent Pentecostal theology were addressed, or at least alluded to, in the articles. The quality of the articles, and the dispassionate addressing of issues, disclose a level of maturity that befit a reasoned, scholarly interchange—which is intended to be the character of the journal. I wish to record my response in that same congenial, collegial spirit.

Few will dispute the fact that Christianity in the current century has been marked by an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Certainly the Pentecostal movement is a significant part of this outpouring. A century ago, the Pentecostal movement did not even exist. Because of recent interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit a spate of literature has been generated attempting to trace the origins and development of the modern Pentecostal movement. All would agree that the origins of the movement near the beginning of the twentieth century were, to say the least, humble and inauspicious. For more than half of the century because of near-universal ostracism by the larger church world, Pentecostalism developed in virtual isolation. Some Evangelicals classified Pentecostalism among the cults as late as 1950. In spite of almost total rejection by other Christian bodies, Pentecostal groups quietly grew, especially in non-American and non-European settings. The missionary enterprise of Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God began to attract not only growing interest but also increasing

respect. In spite of tentative overtures to make room for Pentecostals within the larger context of Evangelical Christianity, and in spite of fairly steady growth during the first fifty years, Pentecostalism was still pretty much a stepchild of respectable Christianity. At mid-century, who would have dreamed of the dramatic growth of Pentecostalism, to say nothing of the spawning of "second-wave" and "third-wave" adjunct movements that have occurred in more recent years, especially in the last twenty-five years. Although Pentecostals are welcomed at the tables of Christian discourse in a variety of venues today—largely because they can no longer be ignored—nonetheless, there continues to be a questioning of the theological bases upon which Pentecostal experience and practice are erected.

Today Pentecostals are faced with a theological challenge. In an earlier generation, proclamation of a commonly accepted message was all that was required. Until mid-century, one was either a Pentecostal or one was opposed to Pentecostalism. Few adopted a middle ground. Pentecostals, convinced of their teaching and experience, felt little need to articulate a sophisticated defense. But the situation has dramatically changed. Young Pentecostals are confronted with a bewildering array of opinions about the work of the Holy Spirit. Much of this is because of the recent openness to the work of the Holy Spirit across the entire Christian spectrum—which has produced a wealth of theological materials. Many are seeking in fresh ways to understand the work of the Spirit within diverse traditions. The literature which has abounded has certainly competed for the attention of many Pentecostals, especially the younger generation of students and pastors. So, in addition to confronting theological opinions from beyond the boundaries of classical Pentecostalism, Pentecostals today are now discovering uncertainty and confusion within their own ranks. New questions are being asked, questions fostered in large measure by the growing body of Christians genuinely interested in the work of the Spirit today who are writing persuasively about the Holy Spirit, but with nuances that raise important questions for classical Pentecostals.

It is important for Pentecostals in this dynamic Age of the Spirit to recognize the questions that are being raised, questions that deserve serious answers. It is important that a movement known more for its activity than for its reflection encourage biblical and theological scholarship. The "Initial Evidence" issue of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* is one endeavor in this direction—to give space for dialogue and interchange around significant questions being surfaced today. The *Journal* is a forum for more than mere proclamation, but is

intended as well to be a gathering place for the hearing of significant concerns about Pentecostal theology, and to provide a place where solutions, and directions for further study, may be indicated. The following pages engage the writers of the various articles that appeared in the "Initial Evidence" issue of the *Journal*.

Robert P. Menzies: Point of Reference

The article by Robert Menzies, "Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method" (pp. 111-23), establishes important markers for future discussion. Three critical problems facing Pentecostals are cited, and then Menzies offers his suggestions for addressing these issues. The three issues are 1) The Inadequacy of Two-Stage Patterns, 2) The Problem of Historical Precedent, and 3) "The Intention to Teach" Fallacy.

Menzies sees that evidential tongues is inextricably linked to the Pentecostal understanding of baptism in the Spirit as an experience distinguishable from conversion to Christ. Before the matter of "evidence" can be dealt with, Pentecostals must be able to argue convincingly about the larger context, the validity of baptism in the Holy Spirit. James Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*[1] expresses a widely held Evangelical understanding. He asserts that the Pentecostal bestowal of the Spirit is the means by which the disciples enter the new age and experience the blessings of the new covenant. Hence, Spirit-baptism for the followers of Dunn is equated with conversion. Pentecostals, by contrast, see baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience separable from conversion. It is not entrance into the new covenant, but for Pentecostals, baptism in the Spirit is a source of empowerment for witness (Acts 1:8). Thus, Spirit-baptism is logically, if not always chronologically, distinct from new birth. It is an experience available to those who already are participants in the new covenant. Menzies sees as the primary issue, then, the meaning of baptism in the Spirit. R. Menzies agrees with Dunn's criticism of typical Pentecostal argumentation that engages in conflation of various New Testament texts to reinforce the notion of a subsequent experience of the Spirit. It is not enough to string together proof-texts drawn from John, Paul, and Luke. The issue is really methodological.

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[1] James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM, 1970).

Menzies agrees with Dunn's criticism of this methodology, but not with Dunn's conclusions. Menzies sees that the early Pentecostals were right in their insistence on baptism in the Spirit as an experience separable from conversion—but that a clearer hermeneutic must be employed to speak convincingly about this.

To address the first issue, Menzies appeals to the hermeneutical principle that asks each biblical author to be reviewed apart from what else other biblical writers may have taught or emphasized. For Menzies, the critical question to ask is "what did Luke teach about the Pentecostal experience?" If one narrows the question precisely to the teaching of, say, Luke, what Lucan theology of the Spirit emerges? Menzies sees that Luke's material clearly articulates a distinction between conversion and Spirit-baptism, and that Spirit-baptism has a clear purpose not to be confused with new birth. The solution to the first issue, then, is to deal discreetly with each biblical writer to capture the theological nuances of each, without resorting to the heterogenous listing of references from diverse authors.

The second issue Menzies identifies is the problem of historical precedent. Traditional Evangelical scholars tended to accept the principle that narrative materials of Scripture are not adequate to teach doctrine unless what is purported to be taught in a narrative passage is corroborated by an overtly didactic passage. If one were to resign oneself to this position, Pentecostals would be sore pressed to argue for a baptism in the Spirit, to say nothing about the matter of evidential tongues. However, I. Howard Marshall, in *Luke: Historian and Theologian*,[2] challenged the traditional Evangelical view. He contended that Luke, even though an historian, should be seen as a theologian in his own right, even though his material is largely narrative, rather than propositional. Since that time other Evangelical scholars have come to adopt this position, as well. The trend is clearly in the direction of the outline established by Marshall, so that today one must distinguish between "traditional" Evangelical opinion and "recent" Evangelical opinion. The tide seems to be moving in favor of the legitimacy of Lucan theology as a proper complement to Pauline theology. In such case, Pentecostals now have an important hermeneutical opportunity at hand to demonstrate the validity of their theology. For Menzies, then, given the right of Luke to be a theologian, one can argue successfully for Luke's

[2] I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971).

teaching of an experience of the Spirit available to all believers, subsequent to conversion, as an eduement of power for evangelism.

The third issue Menzies addresses is what he calls the "intention to teach" fallacy. He points out that Pentecostals may be better served if they would approach the matter of evidential tongues as a different kind of question from that posed by baptism in the Spirit. He sees that Spirit-baptism is a theological item addressed by biblical theology—but he does not see evidential tongues coming under the same banner. By this he means that one must distinguish the functions of biblical theology and systematic theology. For Menzies, biblical theology is the task of listening to the various biblical authors discussing topics of their own choosing. Systematic theology, however, is the posing of questions contemporaries are asking—and seeking for biblical resources that will help to develop a consistent framework through which one can answer the question. Some questions we have, however, may not have absolute systematic answers. Menzies offers two cautions at this point: one is that Pentecostals should exercise care not to put evidential tongues into the biblical theology bracket, but rather should work through the implications of the biblical data for the construction of a viable systematic theology. Second, he cautions Evangelicals not to toss aside the matter of tongues-as-evidence doctrine too quickly, since the question posed is not illegitimate, and may, in fact, have a satisfactory systematic theology response, if pursued thoughtfully.

Menzies, in his summary (p. 121) sees the category of baptism in the Holy Spirit as of first priority, and is a matter for biblical theology. He goes through a descending hierarchy of affirmations that have been held dear by Pentecostals, concluding that further down the list is the evidence that one has been baptized in the Spirit. This, he has argued, must be dealt with on the basis of systematic, rather than biblical theology. One of the strategies Menzies advocates for Pentecostals as they face the future is the need to stress the relevance of our doctrine of evidential tongues, a topic fruitful for future exploration (p. 123).

Roli G. dela Cruz: "Salvation in Christ and Baptism in the Spirit"

Roli dela Cruz, colleague on the faculty of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, has written a response to Robert Menzies' article I have reviewed above. He writes as an Asian Pentecostal (p. 126), acknowledging that he has been helped greatly by the influence of R. Menzies' thinking. He readily affirms the valuable contribution that

Pentecostal theology has made—and will continue to make to the larger Evangelical world. He sees that Pentecostals are under the gun to re-articulate their theological position more persuasively lest they be swallowed up within the folds of a broad Evangelicalism.

In his critique of Menzies' paper, dela Cruz has raised an important question respecting the connection between tongues-as-evidence and Spirit-baptism. He wonders if prophecy may not qualify equally with tongues as evidence of Spirit-baptism (pp. 129, 130). His challenge to Menzies is that he has acknowledged that Luke emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in prophetic utterance, rather than focusing on either the role of the Spirit in regeneration or in the working of miracles. If this be so, dela Cruz argues, one may present substantial textual material, not only in Luke, but in the Pauline literature, as well, that gives emphasis to intelligible speech (prophecy) over tongues. He concludes by saying, "Therefore, it appears to me that the very strength of Menzies' methodology is also its point of weakness" (p. 130). Consequently, may not the same methodology yield support for prophecy as functioning in the same manner as tongues?

Dela Cruz recognizes that Menzies has pointed the way toward a constructive engagement with Evangelicalism. He applauds Menzies' insistence on hewing to the same hermeneutical guidelines as the Evangelicals (modified, of course, by the recent development in opening up narrative materials for theological purposes). By this insistence, it becomes possible to speak the same language as the Evangelicals. He also applauds Menzies for equally insisting on faithfulness to the insights of Pentecostalism. This two-fold posture is at the heart of Menzies' contribution, according to dela Cruz.

Having said this, dela Cruz then goes on to say that Pentecostals—particularly in Asia—should not be under the constraint of limiting hermeneutical inquiry to the boundaries prescribed by current Evangelicalism. He wonders what might have happened if the theological agenda for Pentecostalism had originated in Asia, rather than in the West. Citing Wonsuk Ma, dela Cruz notes that the matter of "initial evidence" is not nearly as critical in much of Asia, as it appears to be in the West. Further, dela Cruz recognizes that narrative is a natural medium for the communication of truth in much of Asia—perhaps much more so than propositional doctrinal expression. He sees rich potential for theology arising from Pentecostal experience, and the reporting of these existential episodes. He poses an interesting question: "Would not the same Spirit interpret the Pentecostal experience the way he illuminates Evangelical biblical interpretation?" (p. 137). The author chooses to view this concept

with considerable reservation, since without careful qualification it appears to open the door to a sea of subjectivism. I would observe that one of the basic reasons for the survival of the modern Pentecostal movement has been the sincere attention the leaders of the movement gave to the principle that all belief, practice, and behavior should come under the judgment of the scriptures. Students of church history noted that those Charismatics of yesteryear who elevated experience to the level of the revealed word of God invariably fell into disastrous problems that effectively destroyed embryonic revivals.

Dela Cruz has posed an interesting question. In view of the basically different worldviews of East and West (at least since the Enlightenment), what might have happened to the theological agenda if Pentecostalism had arisen first in the East instead of the West? He notes that in the West Evangelicals were largely influenced by empirical science and consequently took refuge in positions that were more easily defended. This produced a "citadel" mentality that included such items as the "inerrancy of the autograph" theory of biblical inspiration and the "cessation of the charismata." Both of these concepts are key elements in the nineteenth-century "Princeton theology," a species of orthodox Christianity that established what was perceived to be a defensible perimeter around the core of Christian belief. A key to the apologetic strategy of this period was to limit the field of battle. By rejecting claims to extra-biblical miracles, these apologetes had only to argue for the validity of biblical miracles—which they did extremely well. However, the narrowing of the perimeter came at the expense of an expectation of the supernatural in the contemporary world. American Fundamentalism was deeply influenced by the Princeton apologetic. Much of animist Asia, to the contrary, never suffered through the assaults and counter thrusts of the rationalism that marked the Enlightenment, and impacted the shaping of modern western Evangelicalism. In a world in which the supernatural is accepted, Asian Pentecostals find a different set of challenges than those that occupy the attention of Pentecostals in the West. Having said all that, dela Cruz does not wish to chuck the entire theological contribution that grows out of western-based history. All he argues for is openness to encourage Asians to explore different ways of addressing the Asian theological agenda (p. 138).

Reflecting on recent history in the Philippines, dela Cruz observes that in the last twenty years, there has been a significant Charismatic eruption within the Roman Catholic Church. Filipino Pentecostals had been taught that Catholics were not saved, yet they saw them experiencing baptism in the Holy Spirit. How could this be? Were their

Evangelical friends in the Philippines misguided about the only sure way of salvation? This dilemma has forced Filipino Pentecostals to think more deeply about the meaning of salvation and how the Spirit works. He concludes by asking how these issues in the Asian context may be addressed with a view to a more useful missiology (pp. 143-46).

Dela Cruz has engaged thoughtfully the work of Robert Menzies, and has added important questions to the list for future exploration.

Frank D. Macchia: "Groans Too Deep for Words"

Frank Macchia has offered in his paper an appeal for a new dimension in Pentecostal theology. He deplores the paucity of theological reflection within Pentecostal circles on the meaning of glossolalia. This, he finds surprising, since speaking in tongues lies close to the heart of that which gives shape and form to Pentecostalism. Macchia goes on to cite some of the comments appearing in recent years that engage the connection between tongues and Spirit-baptism, statements fairly common in Pentecostal articles of faith. The comments he cites exhibit dissatisfaction with the terminology "initial evidence" for a variety of reasons. Macchia himself thinks that another term, such as "sign," might be less problematic, since "evidence" smacks too much of the intrusion of scientific proof into the realm of theology and experience (p. 153). However, Macchia is reluctant to cut the tie between tongues and Spirit-baptism.

Macchia explores implications of the desire to reject the essential connection between Spirit-baptism and tongues. Unlike Watson Mills, who opts for discarding the connection (p. 155), Macchia reaches for a fresh way to keep the connection. He sees something akin to a sacramental significance to tongues. "It may be argued that the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in the diverse but unified praise and witness of the Spirit to the goodness of God is the central theme of Acts" (p. 159). He sees in the experience of Spirit-baptism, testified to by speaking in tongues, an inherent value that somehow must be retained, if we are to maintain faith with the teaching of Luke. Although he is reluctant to limit Spirit-baptism to tongues, nonetheless Macchia appeals for some fresh way in our day to capture the significance of the connection. "Spirit baptism is fundamentally and integrally about what tongues symbolize. As such, the initial evidence doctrine has value even though it requires theological reflection and revisioning" (p. 165). Macchia is inviting Pentecostal scholars to join him in the search for new ways to articulate

the significance of what he sees as intuitively understood within Pentecostalism from the beginning—that somehow the empowering of the Spirit for impacting the world for Christ is central to the message of Pentecost—and tongues is a unique sign to this redemptive mission objective (p. 171). Macchia is attracted to Paul Tillich's conception of a true symbol—something that uniquely participates in that to which it points (p. 156).

As a suggestion toward the components of a revisioned statement about the connection between tongues and Spirit-baptism, Macchia points to J. Roswell Flower of the American Assemblies of God. "He shifted the focus from tongues as the necessary accompaniment of the reception of Spirit baptism to tongues as the fullness of expression toward which the experience leads" (p. 172). The consequence of this teaching is that the experience of Spirit-baptism does not come to full biblical expression and signification without tongues. Macchia, therefore, sees an inherent, perhaps an intuitive appreciation, of the connection between tongues and Spirit-baptism—and all he is asking for is that new ways of expressing this value be discovered.

Tan May Ling: A Response to Frank Macchia

Tan applauds the attempt of Frank Macchia to restate the core of traditional Pentecostal teaching on baptism in the Spirit and the accompanying sign of speaking in other tongues. Tan prefaces her response to Macchia with a short excursus on the disjunction between the academy and the church. She feels that whatever is achieved in the academy to provide a clearer Pentecostal statement must be articulated in ways the common person in the pew can appreciate. Somehow the nuances desired by astute leaders do not always register with ordinary people. One common consequence of this disjunction is for lay persons to "seek tongues," and miss that to which tongues is at best a witness. The mystery is that when we have done our best to capture the essence of the experience of baptism in the Spirit, we still find that God is larger than our categories. She recognizes that the effort to achieve verbal and theological clarity in tension with the mystery of deep spiritual experiences is a laudable endeavor, but is often misunderstood within the church (p. 178).

Tan, along with Gordon Fee,[3] rejects the terminology of "normative" to describe the connection of tongues with baptism in the Spirit (p. 180). She is inclined to believe that the term "normative" is reaching beyond the boundary of what scripture teaches in Acts. With Fee, she would opt for a turning of the tables, and the posing of the question differently. Instead of asking, "Must all speak with tongues?" she would ask, "Why not speak in tongues?" In other words, lifting the issue out of dogma to the level of an invitation to enter into a higher realm of possibility. She states, "Normalcy clarifies our position and experience better" (p. 180). She rejects what she perceives in traditional Pentecostalism to "make what is implicit explicit" (p.182).

I would ask Tan to examine the implications of her assertion. She is implying that there is, in fact, an inadequate theological base for the Pentecostal insistence on a connection between Spirit-baptism and speaking in tongues. Were this to be granted, she would be correct. However, in the face of spirited and fresh theological endeavors, especially among younger Pentecostal theologians such as Roger Stronstad, Robert Menzies, Donald Johns, and Frank Macchia, it may be a bit early to throw in the towel on the core of Pentecostal theology. The hermeneutical bias of earnest scholars like Gordon Fee, now somewhat discredited by an increasing litany of Evangelical and Pentecostal scholars, is not a very substantial platform on which to erect a credible theology. To slide into the terminology of "normal," as opposed to "normative" misses an important point: the term "normative" means simply, "the biblical pattern." All that Pentecostals are required to do is to articulate a clear foundation for a biblical pattern and then to proclaim it. Certainly there are fresh ways to express biblical values, and all theological affirmations must come under the judgment of the revealed word of God. The terms employed are subject to revision. But, in the revisioning, one must exercise care to insure that the inherent values discovered in scripture are kept intact.

History and experience are not in themselves autonomous witnesses to truth. However, it is useful to track, where possible, what has historically followed when certain teachings have been disseminated. Some have observed that in the latter half of the current century, there is

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[3] See Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988). In *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), Fee repeats all the issues that Pentecostals disputed in his previous writings. It should be noted, however, that in 1993, a second edition of *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* appeared with some slight concessions to complaints from fellow Pentecostals.

a discernible traffic pattern with respect to teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit. Fifty years ago, a significant component of Christian traditions rejected the terminology of baptism in the Holy Spirit, and scoffed at the notion that speaking in tongues was valid in the contemporary church. The exponents of "rejection" theology have largely disappeared. Many of those who ridiculed the possibility of the re-emergence of the gifts of the Spirit have now addressed the task of opening the windows of their theological worlds to embrace what God the Spirit is doing today. A fair number of Evangelicals now would say that baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues—long the benchmark of Pentecostalism—are not only "possible," but "normal."[4] By this, Evangelicals who espouse this position would affirm that experiencing such phenomena as speaking in tongues is a positive good to be encouraged. It is likely that this is the common position of a fair number of Evangelicals today. Although such a position is radically different from the rejection posture of but a few years ago for many, it still must be seen as a tentative theology.

On the other hand, moving from the classical Pentecostal position, those like Tan who are willing to jettison the "normative" language, have effectively embraced what is now fairly standard Evangelicalism. I see little difference between her position and that of many earnest Evangelical brothers and sisters. However, observers like Vinson Synan, who have surveyed church territory for many years, are inclined to see a direct connection between the teaching that tongues is an accompanying sign of Spirit-baptism and the continuing spiritual strength of Pentecostal churches. His observation is that when this teaching is discarded, it is not long before the concept of baptism in the Spirit is no longer advocated and eventually the demonstrable manifestations of the Spirit that mark Pentecostal worship soon decline.[5]

To be sure, one must be careful not to develop theology on the strength of empirical data. However, at what might be called the

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[4] See my "A Taxonomy of Contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Theologies," a paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society for Pentecostal Studies, November 1978, Valley Forge, PA. This paper, unpublished, was based on a study of significant exponents of various points of view respecting the Pentecostal teaching of baptism in the Spirit with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues.

[5] Synan's observations were corroborated in a conversation the author had with Synan in Seoul, Korea, September 21, 1998.

"verificational level"[6] one should expect to see what the Bible teaches to be workable in daily life. When lessons from history throw up warning signals, prudence would suggest that caution should be exhibited, lest the baby be discarded with the bath water. Appealing for harmony with Evangelicalism as the term "normalcy" implies may, in fact, be a greater concession than such harmony warrants. For a continuation of this matter, note the following comments respecting Harold Hunter's paper and the paper of Matthew Clark immediately after.

Harold D. Hunter: "Aspects of Initial-Evidence Dogma"

Harold Hunter is the sole representative of the Holiness Pentecostal tradition in the "Initial Evidence" *Journal* issue. His paper provides an interesting and substantial history of tongues-as-evidence from inside the Holiness Pentecostal portion of the modern Pentecostal movement. In this there is nothing particularly different from the Keswickian stream of Pentecostalism. Noteworthy is that from the beginning, at least in North America, there was almost a universal acknowledgement that all who are baptized in the Spirit will speak in tongues. However, Hunter points out that there is considerable variety in how the theology of Spirit-baptism is expressed in other cultures. He points out that cultures strongly influenced historically by Reformed Christianity tend to move away from initial evidence language fairly readily. This he observes to be true in Korea and South Africa (p. 200).

Of interest is Hunter's comment on charismatic theologians. He says, "Ironically, while most early leaders of the Charismatic movements distanced themselves from the older Pentecostal formula, some Protestant Charismatics are reversing this judgment. The writings of J. Rodman Williams[7] serve as a good example" (p. 200). An analysis in chronological order of Williams' writings discloses to Hunter a clear move in the direction of a connection of tongues-speech to pneumatic experience. "With the release of *Renewal Theology* in 1990, he now uses the term "initial evidence" (p. 200).

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[6] William W. Menzies, "The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology: An Essay on Hermeneutics," in *Essays on Apostolic Themes: Studies in Honor of Howard M. Ervin*, eds. Paul Elbert (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985), pp. 1-14 (12-14).

[7] See J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988-1992). Note particularly II, pp. 210-12.

Hunter further notes that although Catholic Charismatics have been among the most emphatic in their denial of this "Pentecostal baggage" many of their prayer groups have fostered more pressure for devotees to speak in tongues than found in classical Pentecostal churches (p. 201). Evidently many recognize intuitively that there is an important connection between speaking in tongues and baptism in the Spirit.

Matthew S. Clark: "Initial Evidence: A Southern African Perspective"

Matthew Clark, the single representative from Africa, a minister of the Apostolic Faith Mission, addresses the issue of baptism in the Spirit and the Pentecostal teaching of the accompanying sign of speaking in other tongues from a different vantage point from that of the other contributors to the "Initial Evidence" issue of the *Journal*. The introductory portion of Clark's paper provides for the reader a compact and illuminating history of South Africa as well as a summary of the history of Pentecostalism in his country. This furnishes a useful context for the development of his thesis.

Clark seems to accept the validity of the concept of baptism in the Spirit as an experience separable from new birth, and that the biblical model for this experience includes the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues. Evidently this is not dealt with in detail in the theological statements of southern African Pentecostal bodies, but it is apparent from Clark's paper that these concepts are generally assumed to be true. The Apostolic Faith Mission insists that all candidates for ministry be baptized in the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues (p. 209). However, Clark cites evidence that indicates that among the laity in his denomination the practice of charismata is declining. Inadequate teaching on the importance of the doctrine and inadequate emphasis on encouraging members to receive the Pentecostal experience in time may result in a denomination that is Pentecostal in name only, Clark affirms. He contends that baptism in the Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues is a relevant topic for serious consideration. "The issue of the 'initial evidence' of this experience cannot be other than crucial to the consideration of current Charismatic practice within the Pentecostal churches" (p. 211).

Clark sees the bulk of Pentecostal ministry, including praying for the sick, increasingly in the hands of the clergy. He views with uneasiness the move away from traditional evening prayer meetings common in southern African churches, in which people were encouraged to seek the

Lord for baptism in the Spirit. He is uneasy about the attention being given to "cell" groups, which follow the Ralph Neighbor form. These cell groups, which feature evangelism, tend to rule out meaningful Bible study and earnest prayer among believers. Although he cannot cite data to support his concern, Clark sees the substitution of the new form of church life emerging as not being conducive to development of strong Pentecostal spirituality among lay people (p. 212).

Two recent developments Clark sees as problems within the southern African Pentecostal churches. What he calls a "tongues cult" emerged in the 1970s, as a desperate reaction to the declining proportion of members reporting the experience of baptism in the Spirit. Some zealots sought to focus attention on tongues, without adequate attention to what the tongues should point. Eventually many pastors responded to this unfortunate diversion with stronger teaching that tongues, although the *initial* evidence, is not the *only* evidence (p. 213).

Clark speaks of a second issue that has troubled southern African Pentecostal churches in recent years. He observes with concern the emergence of urban "hyper-churches," which are marked by a governance structure that resembles the "shepherding" model that wreaked such havoc among charismatic churches in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. A hierarchy of "anointed" pastors operates as a spiritual elite. Only those who "have the vision for the work" are qualified to make decisions. Those under this leadership are mere passive followers. Clark traces the roots of this "neo-gnosticism" to the revelation-knowledge teachings of Kenyon (p. 213).[8] Clark, by way of response to this elitist phenomenon, argues, "The experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, as recorded by Luke in Acts 2, was strongly egalitarian. *All* spoke in tongues" (p. 213). Clark refers appreciatively to the work of Roger Stronstad, whose essay titled "The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology,"[9] reinforces precisely what Clark wishes to emphasize. Clark sees a profound truth in the Pentecostal teaching of baptism in the Spirit,

[8] See D. R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988). This volume, reviewed by the author prior to its publication, is an expose of the roots of the hyper-faith teaching of some highly visible American evangelists, particularly Kenneth Hagin. His carefully documented study points to E. W. Kenyon as the fountainhead of this theological aberration.

[9] R. Stronstadt, "The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. W. Ma and R. P. Menzies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), pp. 60-77.

in which all share a common experience and participate in the objective of that experience, which is witnessing to the world.

A final note sounded by Clark is a brief assessment of the impact of post-modernism on Pentecostal theology. He cautions against the allure of dancing with post-modernist thinking. Clark emphasizes that "Pentecostals have always claimed that their teachings and experience in this area have been solidly Bible-based; indeed, it was Bible study that led to the seeking of the experience. A strong emphasis on glossolalia as initial evidence for Spirit-baptism is also a strong emphasis on the use of Scripture to evaluate, promote or reject the experiences that are being offered in the market place of spirituality" (pp. 214-15).[10]

Among the conclusions to his essay, Clark emphasizes that Pentecostals should bear in mind that baptism in the Spirit is an experience that Scripture describes as *observable* to the bystander. He points specifically to the episode in Acts 8, in which Simon wished to buy the power to communicate the Spirit. "That it is public, observable, and has dramatic impact upon the recipient and the bystanders is part of our Pentecostal heritage and ethos. It is this that led Pentecostals to speak of tongues as "evidence" of spiritual experience" (p. 216). Clark does add the cautionary note, however, that tongues is the *initial*, and certainly not the only evidence of Spirit-baptism.

Clark's final comment is worth noting: "I do not apologize for accepting and arguing the fact that a discussion of initial evidence inevitably becomes a discussion of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and that therefore the relevance and authenticity of the one reflects on the relevance and authenticity of the other" (p. 217).

David S. Lim: "An Evangelical Critique of 'Initial Evidence' Doctrine"

David Lim, noted Evangelical scholar in the Philippines, is sympathetic to the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, but finds difficulty fitting the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit with the accompanying initial evidence of speaking in tongues into Evangelical theology. Lim addresses his concerns in a series of four questions.

First, he asks, "Is Spirit-baptism normative?" Lim is concerned with the emphasis on the crisis-event character of Pentecostal Spirit-baptism.

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[10] He refers to the work of Timothy Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), pp. 163-88.

He is not convinced that empowering by the Spirit always comes in one event. In fact, he muses that contact with second-generation Christians discloses a high proportion who have difficulty in pointing to the precise moment of their conversion. So, his argumentation centers in the common problem Evangelicals find with too narrow a focus on a single-event conversion experience. This dilemma he transfers to the Pentecostal issue of a crisis experience of baptism in the Spirit. He calls for redefining of Spirit-baptism so as to include a possible succession of events. He wishes to emphasize "life in the Spirit," rather than a single baptism in the Spirit (p. 222).

Second, he asks, "Is the evidence necessary?" The heart of his complaint respecting the Pentecostal emphasis on speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of Spirit-baptism lies in a theme in Scripture that seems to run counter to the whole idea of seeking evidence. Lim quotes a variety of New Testament passages, ranging through the Gospels and Paul's Epistles, pointing out that the New Testament writers seem to disparage the notion of people seeking signs. He sees at the root of this desire for evidence a common human frailty reaching as far back as Cain (Gen 4:13-15). In summary Lim questions whether the seeking for visible signs may in fact be a mark of spiritual immaturity, not of maturity (p. 224).

A third question Lim addresses is: "Is initial evidence important?" Lim focuses attention on the concept of *initial*, as distinguished from *ultimate* evidence. He sees New Testament (Pauline) teaching emphasizing that the mark of Spirit-filled living is *love*. So, Lim wonders if there is not a lesson here that Pentecostals should consider—giving priority to the ultimate manifestation of Spirit-energized living, rather than focusing too much attention to the proof of receiving the Spirit initially. For Lim, it is a question of majoring on minor issues (pp. 224-25).

Lim's fourth question may be phrased, "Tongues: sole initial evidence?" Lim bases his concern on his understanding of tongues as one of the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament. He sees little evidence, outside the possibility of the Book of Acts, for giving heightened attention to the single gift of tongues that seem to preoccupy Pentecostals. He is more comfortable with the host of Charismatics, and those Pentecostals who do not adopt the doctrine of initial evidence. He more readily identifies with those who advocate that tongues may be one of the signs of the Spirit's presence, but only one of several (pp. 225-26). Classical Pentecostals would respond to this by affirming that evidential

tongues (Acts episodes), though similar in form to the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12), have a different function.

In his summary, Lim calls for a redefinition of initial evidence, so that tongues may be considered a common, or even the usual, experience associated with the reception of the Spirit. He appeals for a new emphasis on *ultimate* evidence, rather than giving too much attention to the initial event.

A last recommendation of Lim is that Pentecostals need to consider how they can better actualize the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. He believes that the initial evidence teaching leads to a contradiction of this principle, since Christians are divided into two classes—those who speak in tongues and those who do not. Lim deplores the implicit introduction of a "spiritual elite" into the Christian fold.

By rethinking the four issues he has addressed, he thinks Pentecostals could strengthen their witness in the world greatly (p. 229).

Max Turner: "Tongues: An Experience for All in the Pauline Churches?"

Max Turner speaks from a sympathetic position, identifying himself as one who values tongues, but does not adopt a classical Pentecostal position. He is a Charismatic friend of Pentecostals. From this vantagepoint, the central concern in his paper is whether or not Paul intended to teach two types of tongues—an understanding crucial to Pentecostal theology. He appreciates that Pentecostals advocate a distinction between Luke's attention to evidential tongues and Paul's attention on the public manifestation of tongues in the congregation. The assumption among Pentecostals is that Paul assumes that believers who receive the Pentecostal experience speak in tongues in a more or less private manner, but Paul's concern is to deal with the matter of public practice of the gift of tongues in the worship setting. This understanding is important for development of an adequate Pentecostal theology.

But, for Turner, the question is whether or not Paul intended to teach such a two-fold function for the manifestation of tongues (p. 234). Turner considers two primary Pauline texts in developing his response to this question. The first is 1 Cor 14:5, in which Paul says, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues…." Is this an allusion to the Lukan emphasis, a private expression of tongues intended for all believers? The second critical passage is 1 Cor 12:30, in which Paul asks the rhetorical question, "Do all speak in tongues?" Turner allows that Paul acknowledges two different *uses* of tongues—one private and one public,

but he questions if Paul intended to teach two different *types* of gifts (p. 238).

I will not in this article attempt to engage the closely reasoned argumentation of Max Turner. This Robert Menzies has done, and continues to do, in other forums. Suffice it to say that it is still an open question, an important question to be sure, that lies close to the heart of the development of a sound Pentecostal theology. Turner has provided a useful service for Pentecostals in identifying a central biblical and theological issue that requires further serious work, the question of whether or not two kinds of tongues, private evidential tongues and public ministry gift tongues, are supportable by scripture. In the second section of his paper, Turner acknowledges the contribution of two Pentecostal theologians for whom he has special respect, Robert Menzies and Simon Chan. For each of them, he raises further questions, welcoming from them additional responses.

In conclusion, Turner, although acknowledging the validity of speaking in tongues, reports that there is not sufficient evidence to show that any type of tongues was regarded as normative by Luke or Paul (p. 252). The challenge to Pentecostals to develop a more persuasive theology is clear.

Conclusion

The collection of articles in the "Initial Evidence" issue of the *Journal* has demonstrates, I believe, the usefulness of providing a forum for open and free discussion of issues crucial to Pentecostal teaching and practice. A service to Pentecostals is the framing of important questions by Evangelical friends who are sympathetic to Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality, but who do not affirm basic Pentecostal convictions. In addition, it is important to hear questions from within the ranks of Pentecostal believers. Only in the environment of open and friendly discussion is it possible to engage fruitfully the concerns of earnest and loyal colleagues.

The author of this response acknowledges that he is certainly not an official spokesman for any body, but here renders his personal opinions. He cheerfully invites responses to his response in future issues of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*.