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THEOLOGY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH Vol. 4

Lutherans Respond to Pentecostalism

The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches

Lutherans Respond to Pentecostalism

edited by Karen L. Bloomquist

on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation—
A Communion of Churches

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Lutherans Respond to Pentecostalism
Theology in the Life of the Church, vol. 4

Karen L. Bloomquist, editor
on behalf of The Lutheran World Federation—A Communion of Churches

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Contents

5 **Introduction**
Karen L. Bloomquist

9 **Neo-Pentecostalism and the Changing Face of Christianity in Africa**
J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

29 **Salvation, Deliverance and Well-Being?**
Samuel Dawai

31 **Blessing, Well-Being and Salvation: Should Lutherans Learn to Dance to Another Tune?**
Guillermo Hansen

55 **Some Biblical Understandings of Deliverance as Possession**
Cheryl S. Pero

63 **Who's Afraid of Bible Believing Christians?**
Sarojini Nadar

81 **The Influence of Neo-Pentecostalism in Nigeria**
Ibrahim Bitrus

89 **One Church's Response to Pentecostalism**
Galana Babusa Yako

91 **In Spirit and Truth: Liturgy in Dialogue with Pentecostalism**
Musawenkosi Biyela

99 **A Lutheran Critique of Popular "Praise and Worship" Songs**
Gertrud Tönsing

117 **The Work of the Holy Spirit in Christian Life and in the Church: Lutheran Theological Reflections**
Hans-Peter Grosshans

129 **Spirituality and Social Activism: Insights from Luther**
Paul John Isaak

139 **On not Limiting the Scope of the Spirit's Activity**
Karen L. Bloomquist

145 **The Holy Spirit Strengthens Us**
Rogate R. Mshana

149 **Responding as Lutheran Churches to Pentecostal Influences Today**

157 **Contributors**

Introduction

Karen L. Bloomquist

When the "Theology in the Life of the Church" program of the Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) Department for Theology and Studies began in 2005, some LWF member churches and theological institutions around the world were asked to identify what they felt to be the burning issues or challenges that needed to be engaged theologically. Although the responses included various matters of survival, injustice and relations with those of other faiths, most frequently they were related to the spread and influence of Pentecostalism.

Since 2006, six theological seminars have been held within this overall program.[1] Rather than probing these challenges more deeply *per se* (much of this has already been done by others), the focus has been on how these challenges provoke the need for more in-depth theological work in relation to the life of churches, both locally and ecumenically. In that sense, the challenges themselves have led to a reconfiguring of theological agendas with different starting points and emphases. For example, worship and other practices of churches have frequently emerged as matters requiring more explicit theological attention.

The sixth of these seminars was convened in July 2008 in Soweto, South Africa, under the title, "Critical Lutheran Beliefs and Practices in Relation to Neo-Pentecostalism." Most of the participants were theologians and pastors from Africa, with a few coming from Europe and the Americas. They brought with them quite different experiences and impressions of Pentecostalism in all its diverse expressions. In some cases, Lutherans feel threatened by the upsurge of Pentecostal churches around them; in other cases, charismatic practices that some associate

[1] Previous foci were on poverty (Arusha, 2006), interfaith relations (Breklum, 2006), fundamentalism (Lund, 2007), empire (St. Paul, 2007) and religious resurgence (Hong Kong, 2008). Articles based on these events can by be found in Karen L. Bloomquist and Musa Panti Filibus (eds), *"So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth." Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Africa. LWF Studies 01/2007* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2007) as well as the three previous volumes in the TLC series: Karen L. Bloomquist (ed.), *Being the Church in the Midst of Empire. Trinitarian Reflections. Theology in the Life of the Church*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2007); Simone Sinn (ed.), *Deepening Faith, Hope and Love in Relations with Neighbors of Other Faiths. Theology in the Life of the Church*, vol. 2 (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2008); Karen L. Bloomquist (ed.), *Identity, Survival, Witness. Reconfiguring Theological Agendas. Theology in the Life of the Church*, vol. 3 (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2008).

with Pentecostalism have to some extent been incorporated in Lutheran worship practices. In many cases, it has become difficult to distinguish between what in practice is "Lutheran" and what is "Pentecostal." Yet, during the course of the presentations and discussions, and in the final message (see the last article in this publication), some identifiable Lutheran theological accents became increasingly apparent.

It is vital that these Lutheran accents are developed, not primarily as a defensive posture over and against Pentecostals, but in order to be clear about what Lutherans can contribute to some of the themes and emphases put forward by Pentecostals, for example, regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. Theological conversations with Pentecostals are occurring in many places, locally, nationally and internationally. For this purpose it is important that Lutherans know what they stand for, in order to be well equipped to move into dialogue with others.

This book begins with two substantive articles that provide crucial historical and definitional grounding. The prominent scholar of Pentecostalism, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, examines the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa, while Lutheran scholar, Guillermo Hansen, offers an in-depth analytical engagement with Pentecostalism from a Latin American perspective.

Attention is given to the Bible, both in terms of references to deliverance (Cheryl S. Pero) and critically in terms of how many Pentecostals approach the Bible. Sarojini Nadar proposes a challenging constructive approach to the Bible that is more consistent with a Lutheran hermeneutic.

How Pentecostalism is influencing practices in Lutheran churches, especially with regard to worship, is a pervasive concern. Specific examples are brought in from Nigeria and Kenya. Musawenkosi (Musa) Biyela develops theological understandings of worship, with practical implications for how Lutheran churches could seek a better balance between order and spontaneity. The theology in specific examples of "praise and worship" music are analyzed and reflected on from a Lutheran perspective by Gertrud Tönsing.

In discussions of the Holy Spirit, Hans-Peter Grosshans develops distinctively Lutheran perspectives on the Holy Spirit's work in the world, in relation to the perspectives of other churches and traditions, and sets forth some clarifying characteristics of that work. Paul John Isaak calls for more attention to "right heartedness" or spirituality, as well as "right action" or social activism, and draws on Luther to challenge neo-Pentecostal prosperity theology. More expansive ways of thinking of

the activity of the Spirit of God are proposed: connecting, empowering, and transforming all of creation. The Pentecost homily preached at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva and included here is by Rogate R. Mshana (a lay member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania).

These articles and the seminar's concluding message are intended to further what need to be deeper ongoing theological conversations about these matters in many settings. Readers are likely to disagree with some of what is set forth here or feel the need to add to what is said here. Nonetheless, it is hoped that these articles will provoke further theological and practical work on the challenges that Pentecostalism raises for Lutheran churches in different parts of the world.

Neo-Pentecostalism and the Changing Face of Christianity in Africa

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

Pentecostalism is a movement of the Holy Spirit. If mainline Protestants confess their "belief" in the Holy Spirit and draw attention to the centrality of Scripture in Christian life and ministry, Pentecostals like to go one step further by insisting that belief must be proven by "experience." With this experiential emphasis in mind, I use the plural designation Pentecostals to include Christian groups which emphasize salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit, in which pneumatic phenomena, including speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general, perceived as standing in historic continuity with the experiences of the early church as found especially in the Acts of the Apostles, are sought, accepted, valued and consciously encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God and experiences of God's Spirit.[1]

This definition is applicable to all of Pentecostalism, including its charismatic progenies. While this definition may be applicable across the board, it is still important to distinguish classical Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God that trace their roots to the 1906 Azusa Street revival, from the historically younger and theologically more versatile neo-Pentecostal churches and movements that emerged during the second half of the twentieth century. Although also present in the West, neo-Pentecostalism has blossomed mainly in the non-Western Christian worlds of Latin America, Asia and Africa. In addition, the majority of the growing numbers of non-Western immigrant churches burgeoning on the northern continents of Europe and North America today also belong to this new stream of pneumatic Christianity.[2]

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[1] J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005), p. 12.

[2] See for instance, Jacob K. Olupona and Regina Gemignani (eds), *African Immigrant Religions in America* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007); Gerrie ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998).

Different neo-Pentecostal movements

Coming into prominence during the second half of the twentieth century, neo-Pentecostalism, including its African manifestations, has blossomed in three main forms:

- Autochthonous, urban-centered and usually mega-sized churches led by gifted, media savvy, educated pastors who offer messages of spiritual and material prosperity, empowerment and this-worldly possibilities in one's endeavors.

- Trans-denominational fellowships with their own innovative evangelization programs woven around powerful testimonies of conversion served at breakfast and luncheon meetings that attract professionals, the upwardly mobile and mostly middle to upper class professionals.

- Prayer and renewal or charismatic movements operating within historic mission denominations among which the religion of older churches is criticized as being "an affair of simply outward form and ordinances, whereas authentic Christianity is now being restored as an affair of the heart… ."[3]

These reflections focus mainly on the activities and spiritualities of the third category, that is, neo-Pentecostal groups functioning as prayer and renewal movements within historic mission denominations. However, it is important to note from the outset that the three expressions of neo-Pentecostal Christianity are related to one another. Para-church neo-Pentecostals such as trans-denominational fellowships often are the first stop for members of the historic denominations as they move out to join the new independent charismatic churches (the first category). I will argue though that generally neo-Pentecostals view their innovative movements in religion as divinely inspired initiatives to restore certain missing dimensions to historic mission Christianity in particular. Thus, J. I. Packer outlines the claims of the charismatic movement and its self-definition in relation to the spiritual health of the church today.

[3] David Middlemiss, *Interpreting Charismatic Experience* (London: SCM, 1996), p. 7.

> For this movement claims to be a major channel, perhaps *the* major channel, of the Holy Spirit's work in and through the church at this present time. … For it sees itself as a revitalizing reentry into a long-lost world of gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit, a reentry that immeasurably deepens individual spiritual lives and through which all Christendom may in due course find quickening.[4]

I shall argue that neo-Pentecostalism first aims to deepen the spiritual lives of members of the church by moving against nominal Christianity and, secondly, works to infuse existing Christian communions with the dynamic and fiery life of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is not insignificant that members often refer to the movement in terms of the "latter rains" through which the Spirit seeks to revive the church of God in its various denominations and liturgical expressions through the felt presence and power of the Spirit. Although denominational opposition has often led to inevitable secessions, renewal movements within historic denominations have been very successful in many parts of Africa. We learn, for example, that the Lutheran church in Ethiopia generally takes a charismatic approach, which in that respect is a different spiritual path from its historical origins in Western Lutheranism. I conclude that, for the church in Africa, there are very useful lessons to be learned from the presence of the neo-Pentecostal movement.

African theology and neo-Pentecostalism

A number of African theologians have studied postcolonial African Christianity from the "top" (i.e., the academy) through the categories of inculturation and liberation. Theologizing through the academy and engaging mainly with their counterparts, such African theologians castigated Christianity in Africa for its Western trappings and orientation. Following the conferences that culminated in the publications *African Theology en Route* and *Christianity in Independent Africa*, there were further calls for the de-Westernization of Christianity in Africa through the incorporation of African songs and symbols in the liturgy.[5] Works

[4] J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in our Walk with God*, revised and enlarged edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), p. 139.

[5] Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres, *African Theology en Route* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979). This book contains papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians

such as Kwesi A. Dickson's *Theology in Africa* called for the affirmation of African religious cultures as holding important treasures needed to transform Christianity in order to make it more meaningful in its new home on the continent.[6] Lamin Sanneh drew attention to the importance of the translation principle for the success of Christianity in Africa.[7]

Important as these calls may have been, grassroots responses to the largely rational and cerebral Western mission Christianity placed the emphasis elsewhere. Beginning with the rise of the African Independent Churches (AICs) at the turn of the twentieth century, matters of the Spirit and the manifestations of the Spirit's power have through the years proven to be far more important to ordinary African Christians than some African theological scholars had envisaged. In looking at the nature of African initiated Christianity, Bengt G. M. Sundkler concluded that "in these churches one saw what African Christians, when left alone, considered important to their faith."[8] As many authors focused on independent church Christianity concluded, what was important was a Christianity that was experiential in its pneumatology and existential in its soteriology. Participants in the AICs, or "prophet healing churches" as Harold W. Turner aptly described them, yearned for renewal through pneumatic Christianity that was charismatic, vibrant, experiential, powerful, accessible and which took the nonrational aspects of the "holy" seriously. African Christians searching for healing or wanting to experience what they read in Scripture about the possession of the Holy Spirit, found the AICs places where they felt at home. They visited the AICs in large numbers until, as indicated below, the historic mission denominations were forced to take notice of the hemorrhage taking place within their churches.

God's empowering presence

We concur with the conviction that the Holy Spirit, discussed by Gordon D. Fee in terms of God's invisible but empowering presence, is the

held in December 1977, at Accra; Edward Fasholé-Luke *et al.* (eds), *Christianity in Independent Africa* (London: Rex Collins, 1978).

[6] Kwesi A. Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983).

[7] Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

[8] Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1961).

source of renewal.[9] He points out that the success of the early church lay with their "experienced life of the Spirit." The translated Scriptures helped local African Christians to come to the same conclusion. African theologian, Kwame Bediako, studied the ministry of the prophet William Wade Harris, whose itinerant evangelical work spawned several AICs in the early twentieth century. He concluded that prophet Harris's ministry took the spirit world of the African universe seriously. Through the mightier power of the Holy Spirit, he proved to his hearers that Jesus Christ had conquered the malevolent supernatural universe feared by the indigenous people. The east African revival after World War II pursued a similar form of pneumatic Christianity, leading to the rise of many Spirit led local churches. According to Fee, it is this common "missing out" on the Spirit as an "experienced, empowering reality" that has frequently been restored historically "through a variety of Spirit movements"[10] including those we have designated here as neo-Pentecostals. Thus the search for renewal in African Christianity, at least at the grassroots level, was more of a search for God's empowering presence than for the mere incorporation of African religious symbols and ideas into the faith, important as that may have been to the theologians.

Pentecostalism of any ilk appeals to the Bible and the experience and power of the Holy Spirit for legitimacy. Spirit filled, exuberant, expressive and emotionally charged worship is one of its distinctive marks. Indeed, it is through this type of experiential worship that the neo-Pentecostal movement has had its strongest impact on other churches. Writing as a charismatic Pentecostal, Tom Smail notes that many non-Pentecostal congregations have begun to sing the songs that the renewal has generated, with some going on to experience the "immediacy, intimacy, freedom and joy in the near presence of God that, through the renewal, the Holy Spirit has been restoring to the church."[11] For the neo-Pentecostals, who in particular aim at renewal, Titus 3:5-6 is usually a key text:

> ... he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and re-

[9] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

[10] *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

[11] Tom Smail, "In Spirit and in Truth: Reflections on Charismatic Worship," in Tom Smail, Andrew Walker and Nigel Wright (eds), *Charismatic Renewal* (London: SPCK, 1995), p. 119.

> newal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

This study in renewal Christianity focuses not so much on history, but more on the meaning of the growth of charismatic renewal and its orientation towards popular, unmediated religiosity for understanding the church, theology and spirituality in Africa today.

Pentecostalism as a "third force"

In the early 1950s, Leslie Newbigin identified Pentecostalism as a "third force" in Christianity alongside Roman Catholicism and mainline Protestantism. Catholicism was defined by rituals and sacraments, Protestantism was driven by the *sola scriptura* dictum of the Reformation to focus on the Word and the emerging Pentecostal movement drew attention to the importance of experiencing the Holy Spirit. Newbigin does not think that any of the three should be privileged as far as the household of God is concerned, but he underscores the role of the Spirit in the process of renewal.

> When the church becomes corrupt and its message distorted, God does raise up prophets to speak His word afresh, and groups in whom His Spirit brings forth afresh His authentic fruits. When these gifts can be assimilated within the old structure they serve to renew it all.[12]

The neo-Pentecostals' ultimate aim, as noted earlier, is to assimilate the experience of the Holy Spirit and incorporate spiritual gifts into the lives of otherwise non-Pentecostal churches. Charismatic renewal movements are first and foremost often constituted by ordinary lay members of churches or people on the periphery of religious life. Second, they pose significant challenges to Christianity in contemporary Africa, particularly in the forms inherited from Western missions. Members of neo-Pentecostal fellowships, as Josiah Mlahagwa concludes from a study of the Tanzanian context, "are torn between [adhering] to tradition on the one hand, and to the manifestations of the Spirit on

[12] Leslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (London: SCM, 1953), p. 74.

the other."[13] Third, renewal movements tend to emerge as critiques of existing traditional churches because of the participants' belief that in these older churches, "Christ's promise of his indwelling Spirit may be accepted intellectually but not experientially."[14] Thus, for example, the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, a powerful trans-denominational fellowship patronized by members of historic churches, encourages its members to serve as agents of renewal in their churches by actively seeking leadership positions in them.

Historical antecedents

Renewal in Christianity through the Holy Spirit intensifies enthusiasm, unmediated access to divine power and popular participation in religious practice. Thus the Protestant Reformation and the Great Awakenings of North America, for instance, challenged dry denominationalism, ritual formalism, moral compromises and what the originators perceived as staid, silent and moribund Christianity perpetrated by Roman Catholicism and certain forms of Episcopalian Christianity. The sudden growth in churches during the Great Awakenings, writes Nathan Hatch, "indicated a profound religious upsurge and resulted in a vastly altered religious landscape."[15] The emerging renewal movements, he continues, "empowered ordinary people by taking their deepest spiritual impulses at face value rather than subjecting them to the scrutiny of orthodox doctrine and the frowns of respectable clergymen."[16] In other words, through renewal Christianity, as evident in revival movements and independent churches of Africa, the religiously disenchanted seize the moment by taking their spiritual destiny into their own hands. This accessibility to and democratization of charisma is a key factor in understanding the ebbs and flows of contemporary charismatic renewal movements in Africa.

[13] Josiah R. Mlahagwa, "Contending for the Faith: Spiritual Revival and the Fellowship Church in Tanzania," in Thomas Spear and Isaria N. Kimambo (eds), *East African Expressions of Christianity* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), p. 305.

[14] Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. xiv.

[15] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 4.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

As David B. Barrett, an early researcher in the African revival movements, concludes:

> Independency and movements within the churches now began to be seen not primarily as a negative reaction to mission, but in the more positive sense understood by the participants themselves: as movements of renewal attempting to create a genuinely indigenous Christianity on Africa soil.[17]

Harvey Cox observed that religious renewal, unlike some large-scale cultural trends, often begins on the periphery and only subsequently works its way to the center: "spiritual energy, it seems, comes from the 'bottom and edges'."[18] Charismatic renewal shares the virtues of enthusiastic religion in which the experience of the supernatural becomes normative for ordinary people, or as Cox describes them, those on the periphery. Thus Mlahagwa consistently points out, in almost every case, renewal movements in Tanzania originated from the margins under lay leadership.[19] In *Interpreting the Charismatic Experience*, David Middlemiss goes as far as to argue that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century experiences of "enthusiasm" "could be the charismatic movement's closest ancestral relative."[20] The desire to restore the primitive spirituality of the early church, he continues, permeates the charismatic movement. Its aim, as Middlemiss notes, "is to be like the church of the New Testament in its simplicity, commitment, radicalism and power."[21] Like classical Pentecostalism of which it is a progeny, the critical factor in the life of renewal movements is the Holy Spirit. The aim is to bring life into churches perceived to have turned spiritually stagnant and theologically liberal.

In a book, very aptly titled *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, Omenyo has articulated the histories, presence, nature and theology of such groups functioning within the historic mission denominations. The study is fairly representative of developments in Africa.[22] Almost without

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[17] David B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968).

[18] Harvey G. Cox, "The Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rise and Fall of Secularization," in *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, vol. 28, 2/3 (1999), p. 6.

[19] Mlahagwa, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 298, 299.

[20] Middlemiss, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 1.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[22] Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charis-*

exception, the presence of charismatic renewal movements within historic denominations started as a response to the emergence of African initiatives in Christianity at the turn of the twentieth century. These are the indigenous churches, such as Zionist in South Africa, Aladura (praying people) in Nigeria, and spiritual churches in Ghana, which were the direct result of the evangelistic ministries of such indigenous prophets as Isaiah Shembe of South Africa, William Wade Harris of Liberia, the Ivory Coast and the then Gold Coast, Simon Kimbangu of the Belgian Congo and Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger delta. Allan Anderson has described the churches spawned by the efforts of these indigenous prophets as an "African Reformation."[23] Lamin Sanneh succinctly captures their contribution to African Christianity:

> A process of internal change was thus initiated in which African Christians sought a distinctive way of life through mediation of the Spirit, a process that enhanced the importance of traditional religion for the deepening of Christian spirituality. … Biblical material was submitted to the regenerative capacity of African perception, and the result would be Africa's unique contribution to the story of Christianity.[24]

The prophets, with their itinerant ministries, went about proclaiming the gospel independently of the mission churches in the midst of fierce opposition and accusations of practicing the occult. They challenged their hearers to repent, abandon traditional gods and other resources of supernatural succor and turn to the one true God of the Bible. In his recent book, *African Pentecostalism*, Ogbu Kalu rightly describes these prophets as those who tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives. One reason for this is that

> they were closer to the grain of African culture in their responses to the gospel and so felt the resonance between the charismatic indigenous worldviews and the equally charismatic biblical worldview.[25]

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matic Renewal in Ghana (Zoetermeer, Netherlands: Boekencentrum, 2002), p. 7.

[23] Allan Anderson, *African Reformation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000).

[24] Lamin O. Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), p. 180.

[25] Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. x.

As most scholars observe, these prophets were not founders of churches. Their converts found their way into existing mission churches and, in the case of prophet Harris, under his specific instruction. A Methodist layman in what then was the Gold Coast, J. E. Casely-Hayford, paints the following picture of how prophet Harris's work led to an increase in Christians:

> This is not a revival. It is a Pentecost. Its orbit is worldwide. … Men, women and children are drawn as by irresistible power. And when he has done with them, they find their way to the churches of their own accord and remain there. It fills one with awe to hear some of these converts pray.[26]

Then, as now with the new Pentecostal churches, the historic mission denominations were disturbed by the drift of their members to the AICs, where they sought healing, protection and worship that resonated with African religious piety. The hemorrhage elicited some positive responses from the mainline churches which adopted different religious defense mechanisms to deal with the situation.

Responding to pneumatic Christianity

The case of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) is fairly representative of these developments across Africa. The PCG synod was quite honest in assessing the situation in which their members were drifting into new independent churches. In 1965, they responded by setting up a committee to study the phenomenon of charismatic renewal and advise the church on what steps to take. The committee saw its mandate as

> an expression of the concern of the Church about the large numbers of people who leave the Presbyterian Church in order to join a Spiritual Church or to attend meetings of healers and prophets, and secondly, about groups forming themselves within the Church which often adopt similar practices usually unfamiliar to Presbyterian Church life.[27]

[26] Quoted in Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville, 1967), p. 271.

[27] *Presbyterian Church of Ghana Synod Minutes for 1965* (Accra: Presbyterian Press, 1966), p. 41.

In the PCG, "practices unfamiliar to our church" referred basically to speaking in tongues, healing and deliverance sessions, holding all-night vigils with loud mass extemporaneous prayers, the use of local choruses instead of Western style hymns, prophecies, visions, revelations and other pneumatic phenomena associated with Pentecostal/charismatic worship services. People joined the spiritual churches because these churches provided indigenous ecclesial contexts where the pneumatic phenomena, which the PCG was resisting, enjoyed freer expression. One of the conclusions of the PCG synod committee report is very instructive for our purposes:

> A large number of Christians join them because they are disappointed with their former churches. They complain that the worship there is dull and that there is no "spiritual power," …and that there is not sufficient prayer in the old churches. They therefore seek a younger, more zealous and more "spiritual" fellowship.[28]

A number of people in the mainline churches consequently adopted a system of plural belonging by maintaining membership in their mother churches, but worshipping with one of the many spiritual churches. At the 1969 Annual Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana (MCG), meeting in Sekondi (western Ghana), similar concerns regarding plural church membership were expressed. In a report on "The State of the Work of God," it was suggested that it was necessary to study the phenomenon of African Christian independency, "and find out what is lacking in [the Methodist] Church which members think is available in the so-called Spiritual churches."[29] The MCG Conference subsequently agreed that "everything possible should be done rightly to guide the prayer groups and to retain them within the Church, to the *enrichment* of our prayer meetings … and the life of the Church as whole."[30] The call to retain members of renewal movements within the historic denominations was a recognition that the movements were potential sources of schism. The problem arises when, in attempting to domesticate the spirit of renewal, leaders of mainline churches insist that the rank and

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Methodist Church Ghana, "Report of the Committee on the Life of the Church to the Annual Conference," in *Representative Session Agenda* (Sekondi, 1969), p. 34.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

file of those "born again" be committed to the rules and traditions of their own denominations.[31]

From antagonism to tolerance

Almost a century after many lay people were thrown out of historic mission churches because their experiences of the Holy Spirit were considered to be spiritualities alien to church life, the older churches now accommodate charismatic renewal groups and phenomena within their ranks. This could not have been otherwise, because the impact of neo-Pentecostalism has left the older churches with very little room to maneuver. Their very survival has come to depend not on their historic achievements in education and social work, but on how open they are to a Pentecostal or charismatic culture. The PCG's Synod Committee's acknowledgement that worship in their denomination was "dull and lacked vitality," accounts for the change in direction we see in the mainline churches today. Church members were filling the vacuum in their liturgical lives elsewhere and so internal reforms had to be made to accommodate the charismatic renewal phenomena that people craved for. Further, the committee's reference to groups "forming themselves within our church" was an indication that the groups concerned were grassroots movements through which ordinary people appropriated Christianity in ways that had meaning for them. Following these developments, the PCG Synod Committee and the MCG Conference both submitted that their churches should recognize the internal renewal groups in order to help curb the loss of members to independent spiritual churches.

The responses today have been broadened to include challenges coming from the drift into independent charismatic and born-again churches in urban Africa. Ogbu Kalu refers to the older independent churches as helping to put "a charismatic stamp on African Christianity."[32] The East African revival did a lot to draw attention to the importance of the Holy Spirit in Christian life and expression in that part of the continent. Africa's new independent neo-Pentecostal or charismatic churches have taken renewal Christianity to another level. Thus Kalu speaks with veracity because the pressure from African initiated Christianity in

[31] Mlahagwa, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 299.

[32] Kalu, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 25.

the early years of the twentieth century is what started the tolerance of renewal movements within the mission churches. Reforms started with the incorporation of locally composed choruses, drumming, dancing and prayer vigils into historic mission church life. With the challenge now heightened by the newer independent charismatic and born-again churches with their attraction for the upwardly mobile youth, these reforms have come full circle. There is now a complete "pentecostalization" or "charismatization" of churches that previously resisted any form of change that disengaged them from denominational identities.

Evangelicalism and charismatic renewal

While the AICs' contribution to the formation of charismatic renewal movements in mainline churches must be noted, it is also important to draw attention to the complex origin of the charismatic movement in Africa. One key element was the college and student evangelical ministries that were so prominent in Africa's schools from the mid-twentieth century onwards. The school fellowships found a continuous life in town fellowships, some of which later metamorphosed into charismatic churches. Other leaders stayed with the "responsible church membership" philosophy of the evangelical movement and remained within the mainline churches as members of renewal groups. In sub-Saharan Africa today, historic mission churches, influenced by their members associated with evangelical groups and trans-denominational charismatic fellowships, organize evangelistic healing crusades and prayer pilgrimages for members. They hold anointing services and other renewal-oriented programs intended to empower people in the Spirit. These developments constitute historic mission responses to the forceful challenge of neo-Pentecostalism in Africa.

The emphasis on activities associated with the Holy Spirit has virtually moved from the periphery to the center in these historic mission churches. The names of the churches remain Methodist, Lutheran or Anglican, but the forms of worship are entirely different from those inherited from the mission forbears of these Western related African churches. In Africa, therefore, the pneumatic reforms, originally inspired by the prophet-healing or AICs, have taken almost a century to take root. The older churches have become very wary of the potential loss of denominational identities, as their congregations, under pressure from the pews, take on charismatic

color particularly from the young and educated. The rise of evangelical movements in schools, universities and colleges and the proliferation of youth music groups has helped to erode the importance of denominational loyalties and barriers. Suddenly, what mattered was not denominational affiliation but meaningful religious experience.

Many of these people, for whom denominationalism is meaningless, have found their way into new charismatic or born-again churches, thus increasing the pressure of charismatic reformation on the mainline denominations. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the charismatic renewal expanded its frontiers into many denominations. Secondary and tertiary education, as Matthews Ojo points out from the Nigerian context, brings young people into contact with renewal Christianity. Thus, for those who are committed to staying in the older churches, the pressure is relentless on church authorities to reform.[33]

The Spirit moveth: challenge of neo-Pentecostal renewal

We concur with Arnold Bittlinger who, in a study commissioned by the World Council of Churches, attributes the unprecedented growth of charismatic movements to a three-fold longing on the part of Christians:

> The longing for a truly spiritual life in reaction against an over-cerebral Christianity
> The longing for real fellowship, one in which the gifts of the individual are taken seriously, in reaction against Christianity which reduces church members to minor supernumeraries
> The longing for strength in reaction against a Christianity which denied or explained away the miracles and mighty works attested in the New Testament.[34]

The expressions "over-cerebral Christianity," "Christianity which reduces members to minor supernumeraries," and a "Christianity which denied or explained away the miracles and mighty works attested to the New Testament" would be applicable in various degrees to the historic

[33] Matthews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006), p. 79.

[34] Arnold Bittlinger, "Charismatic Renewal: an Opportunity for the Church?," in *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 31 (1979), p. 247.

mission denominations. As early as the 1920s, when African agents of mainline denominations started experiencing what we categorize today as charismatic renewal phenomena, they were dismissed as "occult" practices for which the church had no need. Those who today are still apprehensive of it see renewal Christianity only in terms of "religious emotionalism," "enthusiasm," or even "occult."[35] However, as Fee argues elsewhere, if the church is going to be effective in our postmodern world, we need to stop paying mere lip service to the Spirit and to recapture New Testament perspectives of the Spirit as God's empowering personal presence in and among us.[36]

Tension and renewal

In the movement of the Spirit, there are areas in which tensions may arise as liturgically ordered churches attempt to incorporate charismatic renewal phenomena into their worship life. The first tension is over whether the exercise of charismata should be treated as a valid option for an entire church or as essential gifts to be sought by all members. In Mlahagwa's words, "Most mainline churches were still solidly anchored in the traditional missionary doctrines, which did not subscribe to a belief or promotion of tongues, prophetic utterances and healing."[37] Second, tensions arise out of lay involvement in charismatic renewal because church authorities often feel marginalized when members seek pastoral care from other people with proven ministries in healing, deliverance and counseling. Third, the struggle to retain identity in the face of change instigated by charismatic renewal also generates tensions between those who feel that particular liturgical orders are what give a church its identity and those who favor freewheeling services under the inspiration of the Spirit.

Recounting the experiences of one Nigerian community, S. U. Erivwo points to how members of Catholic charismatic renewal movements seceded to join the late Nigerian charismatic, Archbishop Benson Idahosa. Many of the members had had religious experiences that they described as being "born-again." Subsequently, they rejected such

[35] Middlemiss, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 1.

[36] Fee, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. xv.

[37] Mlahagwa, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 299.

traditional Catholic doctrines as the regular and auricular confession of sins to the priest, prayers offered through departed saints and the Virgin Mary, not eating meat on Good Friday, the use of the rosary and the devotional habit of kissing the cross.[38]

Wherever charismatic renewal has occurred within an historic mission church, it has generated these tensions between "charismatic leaders and church authority," "believers in tradition and believers in change," and "insiders" and "outsiders." As well articulated by Packer,

> The charismatic movement has often invaded churches in the form of a reaction (sometimes justified) against formalism, intellectualism, and institutionalism and in favor of freewheeling experientialism. Such a swing of the pendulum is bound both to win converts and to produce division; frustration-led reactions always do.[39]

Thus, we have heard from Tanzania of frustration with the rigidity and increasing control of the revival movement by conservative clergy, and that a number of born-again believers have left their churches to join the new Pentecostal churches that are springing up.[40] The story is the same in West Africa, as we saw in the Nigerian Catholic situation. According to Peter Hocken, Catholic authorities initially categorized the charismatic movement as an alternative form of "spirituality" by accepting it as a valid expression of Christian faith, but essentially making it one valid option among many spiritualities.[41] In the earlier discussed example of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, one of the recommendations was to treat Bible study and prayer groups as an "organization that could be constituted and recognized as a Church movement like the Singing Bands [and others]... ."[42] In the case of the Catholic Church, explains Hocken, members of the charismatic movement found this attitude unacceptable because for them, "the renewal" is for the whole church. This creates a tension with non-members who with some reluctance treat the move-

[38] S. U. Erivwo, "A Consideration of the Charismatic Movement among the Urhobo and Isoko Speakers: 1929 to Date," in *Orita*, vol. 15 (1983), p. 26.

[39] Packer, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 142.

[40] Mlahagwa, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 299.

[41] Peter Hocken, "Charismatic Renewal in the Roman Catholic Church: Reception and Challenge," in Jan A. B. Jongeneel, *et al* (eds), *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays on Intercultural Theology* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 301-309.

[42] Minutes, *op. cit.* (note 27), p. 52.

ment as one option among several spiritualities or organizations in the church, and participants who see the movement as directed towards the renewal of the whole church.[43]

Charismatic renewal movements tend to be ecumenical in character. The participation of non-Catholics—Methodists, Lutherans, or Anglicans—in movements functioning within specific denominations raises problems of control, particularly for church authority. New lay ministries arise naturally in contexts where people believe in the experience of the Holy Spirit. In the words of St Paul, "But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7). I share Juan Sepúlveda's view that the constitutive act of the Pentecostal movement is an "offer of a direct and particularly intense encounter with God which makes possible a profound change in the life of the person who experiences it." Through the Holy Spirit, "God makes himself directly accessible to the believer who seeks him, thus destroying the necessity of every kind of external priestly mediation."[44] The key expression here is direct accessibility to the Spirit. When that happens, the legitimacy of priesthood comes to be based on experience rather than theological training and ordination. Gordon Fee observes that, based on the principle of direct accessibility to God, the attempt by renewal movements to recapture for the life of the church some spiritual vitality tends to make institutionalized Christianity nervous in both positive and negative ways.

This nervousness is not unfounded because renewal movements are always potential sources of secession from mother churches. For church authorities and members who are traditionally or denominationally minded, the "charismaticization" of historic mission churches by renewal groups threatens their identity as Methodists, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. In one case, in 1992, these tensions led to a serious and acrimonious session in Ghana's Evangelical Presbyterian Church.[45] One faction was made up of renewal movement members in that church. Since the mid-1990s, they have reconstituted the movement into a separate denomination, the Global Evangelical Church. The tensions over charismatic renewal are between a Christian faith centered on formal,

[43] Hocken, *op. cit.* (note 41), p. 302.

[44] Juan Sepúlveda, "Reflections on the Pentecostal Contribution to the Mission of the Church in Latin America," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 1 (1992), p. 100.

[45] Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe of Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

conscious, rational acceptance of determined beliefs or doctrines, and one that gives primacy to the subjective experience of God in which faith is a response to being "possessed" by the divine. Charismatic renewal expresses a kind of popular Christianity, "which reacts against changes, which, in their process of institutionalization, have become very distant from the people, in their language, or theology, in their practices, as well as in their religious or social aspects."[46]

The positive response has been that the historic churches created the needed space for renewal movements to operate in. Patrick J. Ryan, a Jesuit priest and former professor of religion at the University of Cape Coast (Ghana), was candid in his opinion on how renewal has helped the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana, and cautions ordained clergy against adopting a negative attitude towards them.

> In his providence, twenty years ago God provided Ghanaian Catholicism with a partial answer to the problems posed by neo-Protestant Pentecostalism. Too few priests have recognized the importance of that answer and have tried to ignore or even relegate that answer to an insignificant corner. Catholic Charismatic Renewal fully Catholic and fully Charismatic can and does offer Catholics all that might otherwise attract them away from humdrum masses and devotional exercises to the religiously attractive realm of neo-Protestant Pentecostalism. When priests ignore charismatic prayer groups in the pastoral bailiwicks, the prayer groups sometimes go astray, as many of us have learned from sad experience.[47]

A direct access to the Spirit radicalizes the Protestant principle of the priesthood of all believers, introducing a more typically New Testament pattern of ecclesiology into churches in which priesthood may hitherto have been defined only in terms of the ordained ministry. The rise of this new form of "lay spirit-filled pastor" makes the trained clergy uncomfortable, often leading to resistance that is overextended to cover charismatic renewal groups. Allan Anderson has pointed to the import of the involvement of the laity in Pentecostalism as a major strength of the movement. He notes that once people had direct access to God

[46] Sepúlveda, *op. cit.* (note 44), p. 95.

[47] Rev. Fr. Patrick J. Ryan, "The Phenomenon of Independent Religious Movements in Ghana," in *Catholic Standard* (15-21 March 1992), p. 6.

through their experiences of the Holy Spirit, they felt that "there was no need for a theologically articulate clergy, because cerebral and clerical Christianity had, in the minds of many people, already failed them." What was needed, according to Anderson, "was a demonstration of power by indigenous people to whom ordinary people could easily relate." This, in his words, "was the democratization of Christianity, for henceforth the mystery of the gospel would no longer be reserved for a select privileged and educated few, but would be revealed to whoever was willing to receive it and pass it on."[48]

Conclusion

As far as the participants in charismatic renewal movements are concerned, the entire historic mission church needs the Holy Spirit, the source of renewal. They claim that the church is full of "dry bones" that need the revival of the Spirit of the Lord to experience new life. Unless the church distinguishes its need for the Spirit from its unpleasant association, it may never be able to discern what God may be saying to it through the renewal movements with all their weaknesses. In Pauline thought, the church of the New Testament was thoroughly charismatic, that is, a fellowship in which the Spirit of God was experienced as God's empowering presence. If the historic mission churches are to be true to the spirit of the New Testament, charismatic renewal prayer groups and the gifts of the Holy Spirit must be treated as essential gifts and not optional extras that the church could do without.

[48] Allan H. Anderson, "Global Pentecostalism in the New Millennium," in Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (eds), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p. 222.

Salvation, Deliverance and Well-Being?

Samuel Dawai

For Pentecostals, salvation is personally experienced through baptism by the Holy Spirit, being "born again" and the exercise of the gift of tongues. Salvation results in a "sanctified," holy, pious life in pursuit of perfection. The practice of exorcism is widespread and extensively publicized. Through deliverance, believers are freed from any evil spirits and are no longer under the dominion of evil, the devil and demons.

Generally, Cameroonians are very much influenced by beliefs related to spells and charms that a person can receive from their enemy. Such a spell or enchantment, a sort of curse or misfortune, affects persons such that they do not prosper in life, or suffer from physical ailments that modern medicine cannot cure. Also, parental curses can "follow" a person, exercising a negative influence on them.

As a result, people are susceptible to the apocalyptic views of Pentecostal preachers: evil spirits are ubiquitous, the world is utterly evil and one should run away from it. Pentecostal churches see themselves as communities gathered just before the end times, awaiting the *parousia*. This imminent expectation is accompanied by an apocalyptic enthusiasm and sectarian behavior, in which members isolate themselves from the outside world and flee from real life. These new churches abuse the apocalyptic views by promising heaven or by selling the utopia of the "gospel" of prosperity and thus avoiding the real issues Africans have to face daily.

Expressions such as "God bless you" are used excessively. Blessings take different forms: academic success, success in business, promotion, etc. These are seen as directly resulting from the person's actions and faithfulness to God.

Salvation, deliverance, healing and blessings cause the believer to live happily and experience well-being. The good Christian is one who is saved, spared all evil powers, enjoying health, success in family life and material wealth. Such a person is called upon to be generous to the church, with the pastor becoming the main beneficiary of such giving.

Such understanding of salvation, deliverance and happiness leads to legalism and a "gospel" of prosperity. It also results in preaching that is

guilt driven, because believers are provoked to deep sorrow over their shortcomings. Linking salvation to the well-being of the believer turns the former into a good work, because deliverance, healing, blessings and miracles are connected to holy living. Therefore, it is the Christian's merit that matters rather than the merit and grace of Christ alone.

It is unfortunate that traditional churches often do not offer a better alternative. They repeat empty sermons that do not bring any change in the believer's life. They compromise themselves by their ties to corrupt governments. Leaders live lives that are not guided by genuine Christian ethics. The present should be valued and the real world engaged in order to contribute to its transformation.

Blessing, Well-Being and Salvation: Should Lutherans Learn to Dance to Another Tune?

Guillermo Hansen

There are several ways in which we could approach this theme. One would be to proceed deductively by identifying discrete passages in Luther, the Confessions and Lutheran theologians that may help us to construct a grammar. Although necessary, this type of approach usually ends up with a distilled scholarly product that often fails to take into account the new global conditions within which discourses on salvation, well-being and blessing can possibly make sense. Another way would be to approach the Lutheran corpus from the perspectives offered by the new challenges and visions that relocate the very meaning of blessing, well-being and salvation. Viewpoints stemming from the life and medical sciences, ecology, systemic approaches and deep psychology will necessarily intertwine with globalization, racism, indigenous spiritualities and New Era perspectives, creating new hermeneutical scenarios that enrich and challenge (Lutheran) Christian discourse.

Since the contemporary perspectives that we should consider are so vast and diverse, it becomes a task that I cannot undertake here. Therefore, I shall reflect on the understanding of well-being, blessings and salvation that stems from a Lutheran scanning of the Pentecostal experience. In this fashion, an alleged Lutheran perspective entails not so much the recasting of statements from a closed corpus, but a lively rediscovering of our selves in something that resembles a dance. While dancing, we hold different perspectives as we take our own stances; each partner, as they hold the other's arms, embraces and separates, echoes the other's movements according to their own articulation of flesh, bones and mood. As we dance looking at each other, our partner becomes an occasion for us to see and rediscover things about ourselves. Thus we pose the question of blessing, well-being and salvation as we face our Pentecostal occasional partner as another.[1]

[1] My reference here is to the "Pentecostal" experience —rather than "neo-Pentecostal"—because

I will approach our theme in an oblique way, that is, by first understanding some of the steps proposed by our partner as we both interpret the melodies of blessing and salvation. As we move together across the floor, it will become evident which idiosyncrasies we bring to the dance, and in what steps we may be completely in harmony but also out of step. Secondly, since salvation is the ultimate backdrop or melody to which both religious partners dance, we must consider the different components of the choreography. Basically, we hear and respond to the notes and rhythms with our psyches and bodies, which in turn are conditioned by the physical scenario, the relevant features and forces that we see in it, as well as the mental map that we draw of it all. We deploy and move our bodies accordingly, and that may lead to different appreciations of tempo, style and scope of our dance. Must the same rhythm always be kept? Are there different melodies to which we are also called to dance?

I suggest three avenues for approaching our complex theme. First, one must take note that Pentecostalism represents a new form of experiencing and communicating the Holy in distinction from those that see the Holy as contained by a sacred space (Roman Catholicism), or confined to a linguistic event shaping a trustful disposition in consciousness and will (Reformation), or displaced to a future messianic time (Radical Reformation). For this "new" experience of the Holy one must understand that it is in fact not so new, and that it is part of a larger pattern of an emergence of the *mysterium tremens et fascinosum*, a mystery awesome and fascinating (Rudolph Otto), in the midst of crises which tear the spatial and temporal fabric of our "paramount" reality. Pentecostalism, as a window to the mystery and a symptom of a deeper crisis of our postmodern world, can be regarded as an agent of cultural and religious deconstruction. As such, it makes us take a renewed look at the sources, experiences and codes we employ to articulate our notion of the sacred.

This leads us to the second theme. Exploring the relationship between bodies and environment and the ways in which ritual and blessings mirror or challenge the social body will help us to understand metaphors

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that allows for a broader perspective. In Latin America, we distinguish three phases regarding the Pentecostal phenomenon: 1910-1940, schism within mainline Protestant denominations and mission from the US; 1950s, consolidation of autochthonous churches among migrants; 1990s-present, hypermodern neo-Pentecostal movements. See Jean Pierre Bastian, *La mutación religiosa de América Latina: para una sociología del cambio social en la modernidad periférica* (Mexico: FCE, 1997), pp. 134ff.

of salvation as codes seeking to reorient our lives. Blessings and well-being are the concrete experiences of such an orientation.[2] Abandoning conscious control in Pentecostal manifestations represents the social situation they experience as a reality largely unstructured, lacking clear boundaries. If a social system determines the extent of relaxing or tightening control over the individual, then the absence of a strong social and symbolic articulation leads people to seek, in the slackening and easing of body control, appropriate means of expression that mirror the larger social situation. It is here that Pentecostalism embodies both an implicit critique of society and an unsatisfactory symbolic resolution for bodies that still need to live within the profane. Its codes seem to be unable to resituate those bodies in new, "profane" spaces of freedom and justice.

Thirdly, I will conclude with the logical corollary of the two above aspects, which coalesce in a postmodern redrawing of the frontiers between the sacred and the profane. I argue that Pentecostalism lacks a clear Trinitarian framing for its ecstatic experiences, leading to "inflation" and an irresistible desire to overflow into the profane, abolishing its relative autonomy. Its ideology of sanctification is one-sided, resulting from a restricted code of alienation that cannot move forward toward an elaborated code of integration. In the end, the theological articulation of the extraordinary experience of the sacred falls short of integrating other experiences of the sacred in and through the profane.

The redrawing of the relation between the sacred and the profane—their nature, limits, relations and dynamics—is the theme at which I want to arrive in order to recognize Pentecostalism as an agent of cultural and religious deconstruction, and at the same time to highlight the Lutheran understating of the holy and the sacred as a critical reconstructive or redirecting channel for the spectacular forces witnessed by Pentecostalism. The distinction between law and gospel and between salvation and sanctification, the anthropology of the *simul* and Luther's Trinitarian theology of the governances and orders, I will argue, stand for an elaborated code of integration that can situate constructively religious experiences within a larger world of discourses and meanings.

[2] André Droogers, a Dutch professor of cultural anthropology, stresses the particular Pentecostal appeal as lodged in the rehabilitation of the person. In contexts of transition and vulnerability, rebirth, conversion and blessing it provides a solid basis for reorganizing life. See "Pentecostalism," in Guillermo Hansen (ed.), *El silbo ecuménico del Espíritu: homenaje a José Míguez Bonino en sus 80 años* (Buenos Aires: ISEDET, 2004), p. 29.

The Pentecostal experience of the mystical

When Lutherans look around the global religious scene, they cannot but be perplexed and puzzled. Something is going on. Countless "abnormalities" stick out from the apparently smooth waters of the profane: spiritism, charismatic phenomena, body possessions, alien abductions, apocalyptic visions and religious renewals. Whatever one may think about them, at some level they are all manifestations of that which generates symbols, myth and beliefs. In psychological and anthropological studies, these can be understood as manifestations of a disturbance in the collective unconsciousness of the species, which "responds" autonomously to the violent impact of disruptive developments.[3] According to Carl Gustav Jung, deep changes in nature, politics and society shake the tightly knit fabric of a culture, allowing for the emergence of archetypes which hitherto were either repressed or not entirely assimilated.[4] Therefore, a "revolt" ensues against a one-dimensional worldview that fails to satisfy the needs of the human soul. When the habitual outlook and responses can no longer provide meaningfulness and motivation, the deep psyche is aroused through dreams, fantasies, visions, or disturbances.

Yet, whatever that may be, Lutheran churches are not major players in this contemporary phenomenon. Once our movement was the result of the cataclysmic transformations that occurred at a time when Europeans started to circumvent the globe—not exactly to the joy of the people encountered outside Europe. We were once witnesses to the irruption of the Holy that could no longer be contained in the ritualized spaces of the church, and was cast into the world making the profane a place of witness and service. What today applies to the Pentecostal phenomena was also true then: the greater the social and geopolitical changes, the more radical the revision of cosmologies and the restructuring of the inherited myth.[5] In the same vein, crossroads in human history signal massive conversion phenomena where ideas hitherto peripheral to consciousness become central, catalyzing psychic energies in new

[3] See Dennis Stillings, *Cyberbiological Studies of the Imaginal Component of the UFO Experience* (Saint Paul: Archaeus Project, 1989), p. 87.

[4] See Carl Gustav Jung, *Energía psíquica y esencia del sueño*, transl. Ludovico Rosenthal and Blas Sosa (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1954), p. 212.

[5] See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 151.

directions.[6] Finally, rejecting inherited rituals is the external manifestation of a change in the customary ways of dealing with the profane and the sacred. Thus, both Lutheranism at its peak and Pentecostalism today can be understood as revitalization movements with their own particular import.

In a way, much of this dynamism of the sacred that Lutheranism once stood for seems no longer to exist; it has become bogged down, rationalized. Our myths and symbols appear to have ceased to function as catalysts for spontaneous processes. We tend to fall into a legalism that makes of Christianity another moral system or force to fit into the role of agencies, busy with the implementation of development programs. The plains of the profane, the secular and the modern, which, in a way, Lutheranism has helped to build, have become sluggish, or worse, cracked from top to bottom. We are very much aware of the global economic, social and political realities and the crises these produce. But this is only part of the problem. Underlying is the deep cultural, epistemological, moral and psychological fluidity that has undermined the massive pillars of modernity and the certainties of the secular. Science, the pinnacle of "modern" achievement, is constantly eroding the very worldview for which it stood: with each successive probe, "matter" has proven to be more ethereal, more vaporous and more uncertain. The frontiers reached by microphysics on the one hand, and cosmology on the other, show that the further we track matter toward its causal origins in both time and being, the more it sheds the attributes with which we capture it in the zone of our profane existence.[7] Naturalism and progress, resting in strategies and ideologies of control which ruled out the possibility of transcendence, are now on the defensive. Reality has shown to be sullen in the face of such attempts to understand and control it.

Through these cracks in reality a new horizon of transcendence emerges, and new possibilities for revitalizing myth and symbols appear. Seemingly "irrational" experiences manifest humanity's symbolic encoding of that which transcends analytical capacities at a given time. It is the realm of the *numinosum*, the mystical, of what is *qadosh*, *hagios*, *sanctus*, *heilig*; not a rational categorization, not a grasping of the world of *creatura* (the profane), but an extraordinary surplus of energy

[6] Cf. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Random House, 1994).

[7] See Huston Smith, *Beyond the Postmodern Mind* (Illinois: Quest Books, 2003), pp. 177ff.

and significance coming from beyond. As Rudolf Otto[8] once asserted (appealing to Luther), the experience of this irruption of the *epekeina*, of this *apokalypsis*, is not possible for the "natural" human, that is, for those whose consciousness is trapped in the encoding of the prevailing culture. This naturalness of existence is incapable of terror, fear and trembling. But for those for whom the present ways are no longer satisfying and are linked to a cultural array of narratives and myths which have not cancelled out transcendence, the abyss of the *tremendum* may open up, may tear apart the fabric of reality—to the point of sometimes becoming pathological.

The threatening side of any experience of the sacred also has an affirming side, an attractive pole, which resonates with the perception of a gain in life that follows from an apparent loss. Otto calls this aspect the *fascinosum* dimension of the sacred—the Holy—which corresponds to the creature in the attempt to possess, be filled with, or identify with the divine. When the Holy carves itself this space in the realm of the *creatura*, we encounter a blessing, a reality or dimension that is sanctified.

It is precisely at the point where the total heterogeneity of this presence threatens to cancel out the creature that the ritual emerges. These are rituals of salvation, of integration into consciousness of new contents that otherwise remain abstruse or dormant.[9] Ritual is always closely related to a myth, being its performative dimension that seeks to create a scenario that can deal with realities that are portrayed as "external" (God, grace, Holy Spirit, etc.). It is through ritual that creatures acquire (re)generation, (re)discovery and (re)birth, casting a new luminosity on all of existence. New rituals of salvation emerge when the fabric of reality—the paramount experience—is torn open, exposing nature, community and the individual to a source of rebirth and renewal.

Different religious movements create discreet rituals of salvation when serious damage to self-esteem and social integrity occurs. When singular life crises occasioned by social abuse, internal disillusionment, military invasions, cultural fragmentation, ecological catastrophes, colonization or pandemics impair personal identity, strenuous efforts are undertaken to understand and repair this damage. While not necessarily limited to the strictly "religious," rituals for renewal and salvation are most often related to a transcendent agency where the model for

[8] Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923).

[9] An observation first made by Carl Gustav Jung.

human personality is associated with a supernatural being. According to the anthropologist Anthony Wallace, at least three main rituals of salvation can be identified.[10]

- **Possession**: The basis for this ritual is a disorder of the classic, obsessive compulsive neurosis, in which victims of a "possession" are compelled, against their conscious will, to perform certain acts, to say certain things, to think certain thoughts and to experience certain bodily sensations which are felt to be foreign to their usual nature. It corresponds to the experience of an intrusion of an alien mental system that momentarily takes control over one. Salvation by possession implies the acceptance of at least two mutually contradictory identities, each having the possibility to have control over the body and psyche at certain times. Baptisms or possessions by a spirit go hand in hand with rituals of exorcism seeking to name and cast away intrusive and detrimental identities.

- **Mystic**: This is lodged in a profound sense of dissatisfaction with one's secular identity, generating feelings of anxiety and fear, a desperate need to be saved. A nagging and chronic sense of unworthiness, inadequacy and dissatisfaction with life shapes its pathological background. In this case, the path to salvation requires the abandonment of the old self which, in most cases, leads to a constant struggle with two tendencies within oneself. Salvation can take different hues: ecstasy, a floating away, or a deep sense of relief and release from a deep-seated fear and trembling to a new confidence and certainty of divine benevolence and concern.

- **Satisfaction**: Another strategy for repairing damage to the self and one's self-esteem through penance and good works. Contrary to the more depressive and deeply dissatisfied psychological background, what prevails here is an identity which, although reasonably intact, may in some specific aspects experience severe shame and guilt. This shame and guilt are not so much produced by a perverse nature as by the lack of a quality, virtue, or grace that leads to a sense of

[10] See Anthony Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 139ff. I present them here in a slightly modified form.

incompleteness. The goals of the rituals here are to acquire access and possess the divine or a divine favor.

This typology offers a general outline for understanding Pentecostal, Lutheran and Roman Catholic soteriological myths and rituals, which certainly cannot be reduced to these pure forms. The question then is, Why do the Pentecostal and/or charismatic ways of pursuing blessings and salvation seem to be gaining more and more ground? It is certainly not a matter of their respective conceptions of God, grace and salvation only, as though they were free-floating signs in a vacuum, developing according to an internal logic. Rather, if ritual and myths articulate the interface between a reality that is not of this world with a specific human and natural environment, why do Pentecostalism and its rituals have such appeal? I believe that this is so because today the Pentecostal movement seems better positioned both to capture the crisis of the profane, the sciences and social organizations, and to witness to a vital, living, moving God. In this sense, Pentecostalism becomes an ideal vehicle for the reemergence of a sacred unconscious, the basis of selfhood and identity for humanity.

Today, Pentecostalism seems to provide better possibilities for a symbolic encoding of those (irrational) experiences that transcend the analytical. In order to deal with this crisis, consciousness must create an "objective" scenario of forces that can bring regeneration and rebirth. This is why Pentecostalism, more than any other religious movement, is an agent of "sociocultural deconstruction,"[11] dismantling structures of thought and action that allow for a more fluid and semantically fruitful mode of being. It conveys a blessing for those who find comfort in the thought that, after all, there is a mystery that surrounds all. It is a deconstruction of the idols of common sense, opening up thought and being to new prospects and possibilities. This *mysterium* is what, in the end, upsets all conceptual methodologies and foundations, slipping through the fissures and gaps of a modern, materialistic worldview.

However, what is the "purpose" of these irruptions? Why does the *mysterium* appear to be more present in some epochs and/or sectors than in others? It seems to me that these irruptions of the sacred are part of an evolutionary strategy[12] that is fundamental for our flourish-

[11] Cf. Stillings, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 25.

[12] "Evolution" should not be seen in a progressive or gradualist key, but from the perspectives

ing and survival. We can imagine it as a wake-up call in the face of a creation gone astray, a lure toward other imaginative possibilities. They are manifestations of a desire and need for healing, blessings, salvation. Certainly, Pentecostalism does not "create" the Holy; it channels it. But it does create a new space where the positioning of bodies within the larger social body seems to offer a privileged heuristic location.

The body and the bodies

It is only after we have established the transcendent ground of religious phenomena that we can approach the Pentecostal reality from a more sociological angle. According to Jean Pierre Bastian, Pentecostalism appears as a strategy to reorganize life vis-à-vis the dominant sectors of society.[13] It allows for the construction of an alternate world from the margins of another that appears hostile and alien. The gaps in identity and the anomie brought about by the migration from country to city are galvanized as charismatic leaders replace ancestral shamans. Through extraordinary rituals, a new conscience emerges which undoes the edifice of the modern world. This creates spaces of fusion, where the poor, who are individualized by the disruptive forces of neoliberalism, reconstitute themselves by means of an external power (Spirit).

Consciousness cannot be conceived without bodies—both personal and collective. Bodies are the union of being and knowledge, nature and consciousness. The experience of our interaction with the physical environment and other people furnishes the raw material for conceptual and ontological metaphors which bring forth a physical world. Yet, these metaphors are in turn capable of becoming symbols for a realm that is transcendent. These observations are further supported by Mary Douglas's studies on the relationships between body and society. For Douglas, the

developed in paleontology by Stephen Gould and in history by Frederick Teggart. Their theories maintain that while societies and cultures tend toward stasis and equilibrium, they are sporadically marked by sudden and abrupt changes. These changes, naturally, do not come from the center but from the margins or periphery of societal and cultural complexes undergoing deep changes. In this situation, changes are unavoidable and dominant institutions and cultural representations start to recede in the face of the penetration of new groups and ideas. Lutheranism, certainly, is not there. Curiously, its future will in part depend on its ability to establish a connection with this powerful movement, hoping in this process to have some influence on the direction it will take.

[13] This can related to Wallace's typology: importation of a system of beliefs, of codes, without its original adherents. That has been the case of the Toba indigenous peoples in Argentina.

relations of spirit to matter, or mind to body, are condensed statements about the relationship of society with the individual. The body, she argues, represents wider society, while mind/spirit represents the individual identified with a specific subgroup within the larger structure.

Two things can be said about marginal groups in relation to their religious expressions and choices. On the one hand, assuming that the body is a symbol/image of society, we see that when societal dynamics oppress, alienate and marginalize, then the image of God loses its hierarchical majesty and becomes an intimate, personal friend who speaks directly to believers.[14] Rites of possession, healing and baptism by the Holy Spirit fall into this category, where the reality of the sacred is lived almost directly. On the other, the insistence on the superiority of the spiritual over the body must be understood not as an ontological dualism, but as a symbolic ritualization of the confrontation between individual liberty and societal/ecclesial constraints. To the extent that society contains individuals without bonds or solidarity, they are more likely to symbolize and ritualize this situation through the separation of spirit from matter.[15]

All these elements allow us to perceive Pentecostalism in a new light. In terms of the ritual of salvation by possession as described by Wallace, the abandonment of conscious control in Pentecostal experiences can be said to be a representation of the largely unstructured social reality they experience. If a social system determines to what extent control over the individual will be relaxed or tightened, then the lack of a strong social and symbolic articulation—what Douglas calls group and grid—leads people to seek appropriate means of expression that mirror the wider social situation in the slackening and easing of body control. Accordingly, bodily control tends to be relaxed there when social control is weak. The weaker the social constraints, the more bodily dissociation is approved, and ritual is accepted as a spiritual channeling of benign power for the self and the sub-group.[16] It is hardly surprising then that women are often the most active members of charismatic and possession cults in societies, where the social division of labor involves

[14] See Douglas, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 165.

[15] A contrary tendency is to insist on the expression of spirit in and through matter, implying a certain subordination and support of the structures of society, that is, a stronger integration with secular dynamics—as in of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Reformed traditions.

[16] See Douglas, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp. 92f.

women less deeply in the dynamics of control and in the legal and political patriarchal institutions.

These anthropological and sociological perspectives show that the location of the body in the wider fabric of society largely determines the form of rituals and the mythic construction of salvation. Rituals of possession and intimate encounter with the Holy are strategies of empowerment among groups marginalized from mechanisms of profane control—but not from the manifestation of the sacred. It is inappropriate to dismiss Pentecostalism as a recreation of metaphysical dualisms, for it is a ritualized dualism that represents the basic dichotomy lived in society at large. In a way, this dualism is a cry for liberation proper to "colonial" situations.

Yet, it is legitimate to pose the question, What type of liberation? While it is true that for a myth to be operative it has to move consciousness, it is also true that this consciousness is the result of the interaction with the environment. While it is true that the human psyche's deepest dimensions are not subjected to the laws of space and time, we must move in space and time through visions that seek to rearrange the conditions of temporality as the realm of the profane. The passage from the so-called "sacramental dimension," signified by the Pentecostal experience, to a practical political mediation, necessary if we are to live in this world, needs something more than the enthusiasm stemming from direct contact with the Spirit. It needs mediation that helps resituate bodies and consciousness within the larger social body and social consciousness.[17]

Notwithstanding its phenomenal appeal, we shall see that Pentecostalism's discourse is set within a restricted code of alienation centered on rituals of possession and bodily contortions (speaking in unintelligible tongues, the experience of fire, loss of motor control, prophecies), which have not yet moved on to an elaborated code of integration of the sacred and bodies within the world. A restricted code of alienation refers to how speakers draw from a narrow, ritualized range of syntactic alternatives, thereby interpreting experience within this narrow frame. An elaborated code of integration is when speakers have to select from a

[17] When Luther criticized the *Schwärmer* for attempting to separate the Holy from the Word (both law and gospel), he was pointing to the need for the mediation of the majestic power of the sacred into the building of individual consciousness, sociability, community and the sustainability of creation. An elaborated hermeneutical mediation is critical for a sound psychological and social conformation—something that liberation theology has also stressed through the importance of the different levels of mediations: socio-analytical, hermeneutical, practical-political.

wider range of syntactic alternatives, which must be flexibly organized in order to interact with heterogeneous domains of reality.[18]

In spite of Pentecostalism's tremendous experience of and witness to the sacred, its understanding of the purposes, extent and dynamics of the Holy as a salvific event is left wanting. It experiences freedom, but does not encourage it. How then can consciousnesses touched by the sacred have an impact on the way in which bodies can be free, not only in ritual time and sacred space, but in secular time and profane space? Traditionally this has been the theme of sanctification. Since Pentecostalism has only the unmediated effect of the Spirit upon ritualized bodies, it is difficult for it to articulate the ways in which blessings in ritual relate to the blessings that God bestows on creation—and the larger social body. Recent attempts to do that are ominous and worrisome.

Redrawing the boundaries between the sacred and the profane

The renowned Peruvian Pentecostal theologian, Bernardo Campos, offers an important insight into the problem of moving from a restricted to an elaborated code. In his book, *De la reforma protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia* (From the Protestant Reformation to the Church's Pentecost), he describes Pentecostalism as a global movement which is socially structured around an ideology of sanctification. Yet, it is not the traditional Protestant conception of sanctification which is present here, but a new notion that signals a (dangerous) redrawing, if not erasing, of the frontiers between the sacred and the profane.

As a symbolic system that organizes social and psychic processes in order to preserve the achieved identity of groups and individuals, Campos sees Pentecostalism as driven by the aim of permanently sanctifying all that is profane. "Each small church," he writes, "has the mandate to grow numerically, to multiply and 'conquer' as much as it can of the

[18] See Douglas's employment of Basil Bernstein's categories of speech in *Natural Symbols*, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp. 23ff. One could also employ Maturana's category of "languaging" and conversations. We could say that Pentecostalism is bountiful at the level of languaging, but is poor at the level of the conversations, necessary to coordinate wider spectrums of communication that go beyond the primary niche of languaging. An interesting example of transitional codes can be seen in Luther's discourse throughout the 1520s: from the distinction of inner and outer man in the *Freedom of the Christian* (1520), to the full-blown political and historical theology developed in the middle of the decade as shown in his understanding of God's will to sanctify creation through the different orders of society (*politia*, *oeconomia*, *ecclesia*).

secular places in order to covert them into sacred ones."[19] While the impetus of this sanctifying drive is the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Spirit or, as it is often put, the baptism by the Spirit or fire that gives room to a particular notion and experience of the *homo cultualis*, Campos never ceases to emphasize the apocalyptic millennialism that accompanies such a sanctifying crusade into the world. It is as though the realm of the Holy were to overflow into society, with the mission to make of it a sacred place. In a revealing passage, he states:

> In the case of Pentecostals this worshipping space extends itself to spheres of daily living and of working time, invading and incorporating them to the dynamics of the sacred. ... The pentecostal man and woman are a *homo cultualis*, a man and woman of the *cultus* and for the *cultus*, for whom life does not admit differences between the sacred and the profane…all has been consecrated to God.[20]

It is interesting to observe how Campos has been able to approach his own Pentecostal tradition as a redrawing of spaces. God, bodies, labor, ritual, secularity, worship, mission—all are condensed in terms of understanding the sacred reaching into the profane. In a way, Campos is describing Pentecostalism as a typical revitalization movement which, on the basis of the certainty of salvation, seeks now to reorganize culture and society with a better way of life replacing the old. It is as though Pentecostalism were to move from a "compensatory" realm (refuge) and "opposing" organization (social strike) to a substituting and/or reordering force in society.[21] Yet, the tone of and reasons for this reordering are worrisome. Campos writes: "The task of the church in the world is therefore a sanctifying task seeking to rescue persons from the present evil aeon."[22] This rescue, of course, is not anymore from this world, but in this world, and the means to achieve it is by lifting the walls that distinguish the

[19] Bernardo Campos, *De la reforma protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia: debate sobre el Pentecostalismo en América Latina* (Quito: Ediciones CLAI, 1997), p. 51.

[20] Bernardo Campos, "La construcción simbólica de la Pentecostalidad: prolegómenos para una teología pentecostal," in Bernardo Campos, *Experiencia del Espíritu: claves para una interpretación del Pentecostalismo* (Quito: CLAI, 2002), p. 155.

[21] See Campos, *op. cit.* (note 19), pp. 60f.

[22] Campos, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 155.

sacred from the profane. What can that possibly mean? A purification of the secular? A crusade? A cancellation of history? [23]

As noted, while the deepest dimensions of the human psyche are not subject to the laws of space and time, we must move in space and time through visions that seek to rearrange temporal conditions. Pentecostalism seems to grasp this dynamic, realizing its formidable formative force. Yet, its ideology of sanctification, the conquering of the secular in order to transform it into sacred territory and the normativity of the *homo cultualis* that leaves little room to imagine other ways to be human, point to a dangerous carryover of the sacred into the profane. Is the Holy really sacred when enclosed in such a code? Can the Holy really be encapsulated within the Pentecostal experience? I suspect that the Pentecostal hermeneutics of the Holy (Spirit), charismas and salvation are so restricted by the extraordinary contortions of bodies and souls possessed by sacred power, that little room is left for a theological perspective able to deal with bodies and souls in ordinary situations. The excessive stress on the extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit leads to a denial of the soft presence of the Spirit which insufflates our ordinary lives,[24] not to mention the *absconditus* nature of the sacred.

This hermeneutic, bound to the restrictive code of body contortions as the privileged locus for the sacred, is unable to recognize the otherness of bodies which are attune to different rhythms in creation—also rhythms that manifest the sacred. Here we not only reach the postmodern walls of pluralism and the respect toward otherness that were developed in the course of the last century, but also the very phenomenon of

[23] In Latin America, numerous attempts to redraw frontiers between the sacred and the profane have been made throughout history. The Iberian Christendom project, that Vítor Westhelle has aptly called the "ecclesialization" of Latin America has left deep wounds of resentment of and contempt for the Roman Catholic Church. See Vítor Westhelle, "Conquest and Evangelization in Latin America," in Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder (eds), *Word Remembered, Word Proclaimed* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1997), pp. 89-107. The sacred not only overflowed into the secular as a strategy of conquest, but sought to deny its very existence and autonomy. It was an attempt to "supernaturalize" the natural. During the second half of the twentieth century, the father of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez, attempted to reverse this situation by identifying men and women as incarnationally the potential locus of the manifestation of the sacred. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas* (Madrid: Sígueme, 1972), p. 250. According to this view, history carries within itself the seeds for the irruption of the sacred processes of liberation. But instead, history has once again shown its ambiguous face. The naturalization of the supernatural proved to be a monumental failure. In view of this situation, many say—in jest and in contempt—that while the middle and working classes expected a revolution, the poor chose Pentecostalism.

[24] Cf. Martin Luther, "The Bondage of the Will" (1526), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 3ff.

individuation that Pentecostalism incarnates. If individuation consists of a self-integration around the notion of the inner world based on unconscious identification with archetypes, then withdrawing and/or limiting projections towards the external world and integrating archetypal contents with our fragile humanity are what keeps people from falling into inflationary projections.[25] As Campos shows, Pentecostalism is involved in exporting and projecting "pentecostality" into society, instead of discovering and accompanying the different ways in which the Holy is already present in the world under codes different from those of the Pentecost event. The process of individuation propagated by Pentecostalism seems to leave little space for other forms of being religious and human.

Unsurprisingly, the Christological code of Pentecostalism has tended toward the exalted and glorified Christ, with little space left for the crucified beyond lip service to classic atonement models.[26] The "pentecostant" [sic] community sets itself congenially in the very center of the Pentecost event in order to reproduce it in the present. It is a ritual occasion that generates an ecstatic experience where the "pentecostant" community breaks with daily routine. It transports itself to *illo tempore*, to that primordial time, and realizes it in the present through cultic and ritualized space-time.[27]

Here we see a powerful tension in the Pentecostal experience: it stresses at the same time the atemporal character of the "pentecostant" community and the urgency to live out this experience in the larger world. The only way to resolve this tension is to "pentecostalize" the heterogeneous spaces of the profane, incorporating them into the dynamics of (its own Pentecostal version of) the sacred. This signifies the collapse of the wall distinguishing the sacred and the profane. It is not that such a wall should not be criticized, but it is objectively impossible to live in a state of constant pneumatic arousal. When this happens, violence knocks at the door, for the main goal of this excitement is to subjugate the profane by negating its very otherness.

This is another aspect of the inflationary projection of how the Pentecostal code seeks to pervade the whole of society. Because this is impossible to realize fully, it contributes to the current, postmodern

[25] Cf. Steven Walker, *Jung and the Jungians on Myth* (New Cork-London: Garland, 1995), p. 33.

[26] See Campos, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 143.

[27] See *ibid.*, p. 141.

emotionalism, the semi-hypnotic state which leaves the realm of objective determinants completely untouched.[28] It is as if Pentecostalism realized within itself one of the two postmodern trends: not so much the Holy as the otherness of (profane) space, but the possession of otherness within itself. As Slavoj Zizek has argued, the postmodern emphasis in recreating subjectivities often hides the fact that objective reality, the hard worlds of economics, politics and globalization, continue their unaltered course.[29] This, in turn, hinders the ethical drive stemming from deep, spiritual experiences. The profane should not simply be seen as a space condemned, but as a space for ethical commitment and encounter with new expressions of the sacred.

Too quickly, identifying the profane with the demonic not only cancels any possibility of identifying different forms of sacred presence in and through the profane independent of the Pentecostal experience, but also helps to undermine the integrity of the "profane" as God's good creation. Indirectly, it either invites the profane to become prisoner of new heteronymous theocracies which are unlikely to be realized or, more likely, it contributes to chaotic autonomies that seek emotional solutions to systemic problems. In other words, it is as though the ecstasy of bodily contortions were unable to move into the questioning of systems that contort bodies to feed their greed.

At this point, we must retrieve the important Trinitarian hermeneutic of the two regiments and the three orders, in an attempt to move from a restricted code of alienation to an elaborated code of integration.

Salvation and holiness: the Lutheran shift from a restricted code to an elaborated code of integration

In Luther, the sacred has a more nuanced view that incorporates at least two distinct, related dimensions.[30] In his *Confession of 1528*, Luther makes an important and often forgotten distinction between holy (*heilig*) and saved/blessed (*selig*). He polemically engaged with the

[28] It would be interesting to compare the mesmerizing and hypnotic "glow" of the television set and the neo-Pentecostal phenomenon here—two realities that seem to go hand in hand.

[29] See Slavoj Zizek, *El títere y el enano*: *el núcleo perverso del Cristianismo* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2005), p. 57.

[30] I say at least two because a third dimension would be his notion of the inordinate presence of the holy, the *deus absconditus*, as he develops it in *De Servo Arbitrio*.

notion that monastic orders, rules, cloisters and religious foundations are privileged places to gain access to the sacred, i.e., to win salvation and then proceeded to reassert Jesus Christ's exclusive soteriological character (*selig*) and to redefine the true holy institutions established by God for the good of creation and humanity (*heilig*).

Pointing to the forms of social and secular life appropriate to creaturely existence from the beginning of time, he identifies three holy orders as the spaces where we are addressed by God and are capable of a free and grateful response. Every human being belongs to the order of the household (*oeconomiam*), the government (*politiam*) and the church (*ecclesiam*). These orders are co-creatures with humanity, created together with the human being in order to provide for the social spaces that are necessary for the flourishing of human life.[31] In a way, these orders are what make us human, and to be human is already an act of obedience to God. He writes:

> For to be holy and to be saved are two entirely different things. We are saved through Christ alone; but we become holy both through this faith and through these divine foundations and orders. Even the godless may have much about them that is holy without being saved thereby.[32]

While salvation is an event communicated through faith in Jesus Christ, God also provides for the well-being of the whole of creation independently of direct participation in the saving event. This does not undermine the ultimacy of salvation, but affirms the goodness of creation as it is constantly sustained by God. Therefore, from a Trinitarian point of view, Luther understands that the orders are holy in that they are instituted by God and sanctified through God's Word.

In the office, whose main task is the proclamation of the gospel, he affirms that "all who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good and God-pleasing order and estate."[33] This includes those who preach, administer sacraments and supervise the common chest, and all those servants who serve such persons. For

[31] See Bernd Wannenwetsch, "Luther's Moral Theology," in Donald McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 130f.

[32] Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 365

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 364

Luther, "These are engaged in works which are altogether holy…."[34] But then he moves into the other two "profane" orders and makes similar assertions. Fathers and mothers who are diligently raising their children to the service of God (the realm of the *oeconomia*), "are engaged in pure holiness, in a holy work and holy order."[35] In the same vein, the offices comprehended by civil government "are all engaged in pure holiness and leading a holy life before God."[36] The reason for that is that these "three religious institutions or orders"[37] are found in God's Word and commandments. God's Word is holy and therefore it sanctifies everything that is connected and involved with it.[38]

This holiness of which Luther speaks is related to the creative Word in a twofold way. On the one hand, faith is receiving in one's own existence the person of Christ, participation in a realm of being that is not of this world but manifested and expressed in it.[39] Faith is not something attached to the human person, but a total trust in life as given to me graciously and unmerited.[40] On the other, and related directly to this union with Christ, this faith is always busy, always efficacious, always ecstatic. It can be said that love is the means through which faith works on behalf of creation. The receptive side of life comprehended by faith is thus also expressed proactively. This is why in his *Confession* Luther speaks about Christian love as another order "above" the other three. In its orbit,

> one serves not only the three orders, but also serves every needy person in general with all kinds of benevolent deeds, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, forgiving enemies, praying for all

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] It is critical to note that Luther saw the Ten Commandments as providing the axiological horizon for these orders. See Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," (1520) in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 44 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966).

[39] This is clearly developed in Martin Luther "The Freedom of a Christian," (1520), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 327.

[40] See Oswald Bayer, "Justification as the Basis and Boundary of Theology," in *Lutheran Quarterly* XV/3 (Autumn 2001), p. 275.

> men on earth, suffering all kind of evil….All of these are called good and holy works.[41]

It is important to note that this relativization of the orders by the power of love does not render them unimportant. On the contrary, the nature of this very love, as expressed through structures for the service of God and the benefit of creation, seeks naturally to overflow and reach out to those who are left out of the blessings that come through these orders. These institutional mediations of love and the encounters with the neighbor outside these orders are in fact the same love that seeks integration in a wider systemic flow. Actually, to love in such a way is not a human possibility but a divine one. Our love is the love with which God loves the loveless, for God wants to work with and through us.[42] To be capable of such love is only possible by faith, namely, by fulfilling the first and second commandments, rather than seeking fulfillment and healing from within ourselves. Faith honors God in that it takes us out of our selfish selves, and makes us available for God through our service to the neighbor and there rest of creation. It creates new networks where honoring God means defending the poor, the downtrodden and praying for our enemies.[43] Where faith is, good works ensue with happiness and freedom, with gratuitousness and responsibility.

In Luther's view, faith, love and orders are closely linked in how we participate in the dynamic of the sacred. In fact, it is better to speak of the participation of the sacred in the profane, of God's carving out God's space in existence, history and nature. While for Christians the sequence of faith-love-orders constitutes a dynamic integration of the sacred and the profane, of transcendence and immanence, for the "godless" this integration is broken. They already live in environments of holiness, yet in their natural perception it is just profane. They can neither see nor perceive that the spaces of sociability are instituted by God and sanctified by God's Word, even though they may live rightly and honorably in them. As Luther said, "even the godless may have much about them that is holy without being saved thereby."[44] Faith, on the other

[41] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," *op. cit.* (note 32), p. 365.

[42] See Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," *op. cit.* (note 38), p. 49.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[44] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," *op. cit.* (note 32), p. 365.

hand, creates its own cognitive domain that sees in the profane a new transparency of the divine.

Sanctification, thus, means not the overriding of the profane in the name of the sacred, nor the elevation of the profane into the sacred, but the recognition of the hidden presence of the sacred in and through the profane which constantly redraws customary ways of perceiving their relations.[45]

This Trinitarian theological vision establishes clear signs of differences with the Pentecostal experience. To begin with, sanctification does not refer to the spectacle of an extraordinary shower of charismas, or the fashioning of moral virtues, but to the form taken by lives and bodies when they are transparent to what is really holy, God. Sanctification is God working in and through creation for the sake of its (present) integrity and its (future) salvation. The opening up of lives, bodies and structures that are integrated with others mediates the sustaining and healing presence of God. This does not imply the cancellation of the profane, but its affirmation as the realm of creatureliness as the penultimate "natural material" which is called to be holy.

In this regard, the sacramental dimension of Luther's theology is significant, because through it the worldly and the natural acquire a new dignity and positive spiritual weight. Luther's understanding of Word and sacraments emphasized the essentially worldly mediation of the spiritual and the spiritual significance of all worldly things.[46] Again, it is the Word of God that institutes, and especially the word of Christ that addresses sinners with forgiveness and the promise of a fulfilled life as creatures, thus creating a new situation. The Word is not a magical substance, nor a transformational device on its own, but it realigns creatural elements in a new sacred circuitry. This is how the Word operates on us and on nature, creating faith and trust, in the same way as it does in other aspects of nature, mediating nurturance, blessings and well-being. The faith that stems from that Word also opens the ways and means by which God has blessed creation to flow back to us again

[45] Luther's so-called theory of the two kingdoms and regiments must be seen as an important restatement of relative autonomous spaces for political action. The being together around the gospel and the sacraments does not cancel the being together around goods and authorities. God operates in both realms, though through different means. Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Church, State, Resistance," in Henk de Vries and Lawrence Sullivan (eds), *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp. 102-112.

[46] See Oswald Bayer, "Nature and Institution: Luther's Doctrine of the Three Orders," *Lutheran Quarterly* XII/2 (Summer 1998), p. 134.

in a new network of relationships. The ecological, the social and the political thus acquire a new integration and relevance, placing justice in human to human relationships and balance in human to nature relations center stage in our comprehension of the sacred.

Second, the notion of sanctification elaborated by Luther is not limited to the intimate reaches of faith, but is a matter of faith and love throughout the created orders.[47] This is where faith overflows in love through the divinely assigned spheres of social life: politics, economics and religion. Sanctification involves bodies and nature in new, life-giving and sustaining constellations, making of them the external dimension of justification. Thus, Luther sees the work of the Holy Spirit as enacting the fulfillment of both tables of the law: on the one hand the Spirit makes a new "heart, soul, body, works and way of life," imprinting in us the true fear and love of God. This level of holiness comes when the Holy Spirit gives people faith in Christ, thus fulfilling the first table. On the other, the Spirit "sanctifies and awakens also the body to this new life, until it is completed in the life beyond."[48]

Against the antinomians, for example, Luther insists that the Holy Spirit is the subject that fulfills through our bodies and minds the commandments of the second table. For Luther, a preached Christ without the Holy Spirit is a blunt knife. The comfort consecrated by the first table is directly linked to the realization of creaturely existence. The Holy Spirit is an affirmation and fulfillment of creation, not its negation. It should be added, however, that this has to be amplified today to embrace the orders of nature that are beyond the historical and sociological, i.e., the complex systemic dynamisms that conform to the intricacies of the natural world and our common ecological existence.

Finally, Luther's insistence on the Word anchors all religious experience in the figure of Jesus Christ. The importance of this Christological concentration provides a different archetypical realization for the self than the one proposed by the Pentecostal experience. For, in effect, while Luther also had a strong pneumatological conception, it was clear that the Spirit without the Word can only lead to anomic, fanaticized existences, which not so much put in danger the gospel, as the integrity of creation and the viability of the body politic. Much has been said about Luther's

[47] See Wannenwetsch, *op. cit.* (note 31), p. 132.

[48] Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church" (1539), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 41 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 145f.

political ethic, but we should never forget that his political theology is one of the most admirable attempts to articulate an integral view of creation and redemption, distinguishing and relating the complex dynamic with which these two dimensions interpenetrate each other—an elaborated code of integration that deconstructs and reconstructs at the same time. The point here is that it is Luther's Christology, especially his *christologia crucis* (Christology of the cross), which sets clear direction and limits to religious experience.

There are at least two ways in which the Christological archetype operates. First, as the full identification with the archetype of the *Logos*/Son of God, the Nazarene bars us from any direct access to the Holy that circumvents his body and his story told through the canonical narratives. While, according to Luther, the Jesus' story must be told in its wholeness, that is, as both law and gospel, it is important to appreciate how this identification of the Son with Jesus helps believers to integrate an inner world of signification (justification) for dealing wholesomely with the outer world and its demands (justice). The act of faith in Jesus as the savior and Son, the "happy exchange" between Christ and our sin, counters any unconscious identification/possession of the sacred. Instead of condemning the world (sinners, lost, devil), it allows for the realization of a new self, centered on the crucified. As analytical psychology insists, one must never identify with an archetype, but integrate its contents in our fragile humanity. Exclusively pneumatological perspectives often lead to inflationary evaluations of self and a deflationary regard for creation and the world.

Second, the focus on the crucified Christ as the basis for any notion of the exalted makes us seek the holy not directly in the extraordinary, in the apparently miraculous, but in the lowly, in the marginal, in the debased. Curiously, some Pentecostal churches seem to be culturally and socially better situated to grasp this important fact. Yet, the mediation offered by the experience of the ecstasies in their own bodies instead of the communion with the body of Christ, contributes toward projections of glory apart from the archetype of the crucified. Only a being that "lacks" is vulnerable and capable of receiving and giving love. The ultimate mystery of the crucified is that this lack is, in a way, higher than immediate fulfillment.[49] Christian perfection and sanctification is being aware of this need, of this lack, making us penitents, begging for

[49] Cf. Zizek, *op. cit.* (note 29), p. 158.

fulfillment in all orders of life. This important Christological emphasis ensures that we understand ourselves not only from our own particular needs for healing, but from the need to be healed with the rest of our species and with the whole of nature. We cannot "be" without them, and we cannot be healed, made whole, apart from them.

At this point, Lutheranism must strongly reinstate the Christological anchorage of the experience and conception of God. Our place as creatures is to be situated not in the realm of an exalted recreation of the primordial Pentecost event, but in this gap left open between the Father and Jesus. We confess a God who is, simultaneously, a total heterogeneity and a total human being and the gulf that separates them. The latter is the space of the profane in the sense both of the "desecrated" and that which awaits final fulfillment in front of the temple. It is there, in this gap, that we receive the blessings of the Spirit.

Conclusion

Can we still dance? Have we not stepped on too many toes? Do we actually move to the same rhythms? As we look at the Pentecostal phenomena and seek to understand their causes and manifestations there is a point at which we must keep quiet and allow ourselves to be dumbstruck and in awe. Indeed, Pentecostal churches have unveiled the ever challenging force and vitality of the Holy. This pushes us to look anew at our stale rituals, our tedious sermons, our domesticated notions of God, our soft religious experiences. Through Pentecostalism, we have also become aware of the way in which rituals of salvation also bespeak the pressures exerted on bodies and minds by economic, social and cultural forces that often seem completely out of control. The fact that many of us do not mirror in our rituals a slackening of our bodies is also a social commentary on our churches at which crossroads we set our altars.

At the same time, however, we have noted that our own tradition witnesses also to a vital and living God, whose image may be held captive, but which is by no means dead. This is why we can and must look at the inordinate nature of Pentecostal phenomena and question the direct, immediate and sensible grasping of the Holy Spirit. Is it really the only and/or most appropriate way of relating to the sacred? Is it conductive to a wholesome relation to the larger environment that God has provided for us? This is not to deny that Pentecostalism carries a powerful

experience of the sacred, that contortions of the body are as legitimate a form of spiritual experience as are daily Bible readings or silent prayer. Nevertheless, there are certain forms of the manifestation of the sacred that, while acknowledged, must not necessarily be followed, approached, or worshipped with the same devotion and intensity. In *De Servo Arbitrio*, Luther's distinction between the hidden or inscrutable God and the preached or revealed God seems to offer an important caveat. God does much without God's Word telling us why. There is an inscrutable will of God, an amoral dimension. Many of the pneumatological codes of Pentecostalism seem closer to that type of God than the one clothed in Jesus and communicated to us through the Spirit. A naked God can also lead us to madness and to our denial of the world. It can be exciting, but is it a healing reality? Does it take me out of my self to see the emptiness of a world that begs for structures of justice and healing?

In the end, as we leave the dance floor, after looking at our partner, we depart with the sense that we have heard a different tune. Maybe this is how heaven is, an eccentric diversity that allows itself to be apprehended in different ways. Yet, as finite creatures, we cannot dance to all melodies and tunes. Our ears and perception must make a selection, must "filter" their environment. This is what theology does, or more accurately, the symbols and codes that serve to construct a theological vision. As with language, we cannot live outside the world set forth by our own cognitive categories. In the end, the question is, Which one of the dancers has enjoyed the presence of the other as another? Who has better integrated the movements of the other on the dance floor? Who has danced more *grace*fully?

Our world is in crisis, the old foundations seem to be all but dismantled and extraordinary phenomena occur in our midst. All these realities can be received as signals of doom or as opportunities for renewal. As stated previously, the irruption of the sacred is yet another way in which we can see the promise for the whole of our creation if we relate this irruption to the different ways in which God is already active in society and nature. An elaborated code allows us not only to hear a "No," but also God's "Yes." That can only be seen through something that happens in us as it is sent to us. The Holy Spirit seeks to fill this gap between potency and impotency, fullness and emptiness, healed and wounded. This is where we stand, empty and therefore able to say, *Veni Creator Spiritus*!

Some Biblical Understandings of Deliverance as Possession

Cheryl S. Pero

In the following, I shall explore and connect the Pentecostal understanding of deliverance as "holy possession" with the Lutheran understanding of sanctification in light of Scripture. To be possessed is to be taken over or dominated by an outside force. Possession, with or without the believer's consent, has three levels of intensity: inclination, strong urging and total submission. Holy possession or sanctification occurs when a believer is delivered from demonic possession.

The roots of Pentecostalism lie in the eighteenth-century Wesleyan "Holiness" tradition,[1] in the preaching and teaching of the Methodist churches during the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth-century US revival movements. Pentecostals claim spiritual gifts through possession or baptism by the Holy Spirit. The veracity of believers' Spirit baptism is ascertained by the actual demonstration of those spiritual gifts: speaking in tongues; healing, including deliverance; and prophecy, the Word of God spoken directly to individuals and congregations.

Pentecostals derive their biblical authority, the basis for Holy Spirit baptism and the ministries that are rendered and legitimated by that baptism, from Peter's words in Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:44-48a.[2]

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[1] For a brief overview of the Holiness Movement, see "Holiness Movement," at **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holiness_movement**

[2] "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

"While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:44-48a).

According to Arthur J. Clement, as long as the Christian Church has existed there have been charismatic Christians, that is, those who claim charismatic gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit.

> The true miraculous gifts of the spirit were confined mostly to the apostolic age, and carried over to some extent in the postapostolic age. Genuine displays of supernatural charismata—displays that can be properly identified and authenticated—are missing from most of church history.[3]

A core belief of Pentecostalism is baptism by the Holy Spirit, in which the believer receives the direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit, fully and personally. Three points inform this understanding. The believer,

> [first] receives the Holy Spirit fully, in a permanent and personal way, at the time he [sic] is baptized in the Spirit. Second, Holy Spirit baptism is received subsequent to and distinct from conversion. Third, at the time the believer is baptized in the spirit, he [sic] is *immersed* in the power of the Spirit.[4]

The Holy Spirit's gift of healing, often from illness, leads to deliverance.

> Included in the experience of providence and miracle, are healing and the expulsion of demons that bedevil lives. … The linkages of mind and body … are genuine, and the healing of body and mind offered by Pentecost is simultaneously shamanistic and holistic. … people cannot deal on their own with their inner oppressions, and cannot or dare not even name them so that a rite of authoritative naming and expulsion in the Almighty Name is their only efficacious resort.[5]

Deliverance is a process through which the believer is both sanctified (made clean/pure/holy and set apart) and made more like God.

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[3] Arthur J. Clement, *The Pentecostals and Charismatics. A Confessional Lutheran Evaluation* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), p. 21.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65, author's own italics.

[5] David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), p. 172.

The biblical witness

Leviticus 11:44a, 19:2

The Christian emphasis on holiness is based on fulfilling the Leviticus mandate to be holy because God is holy, allowing believers to become holier as they draw closer to God.

> For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. …you shall be holy, for I am holy (Lev 11:44a, 45b).

> Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy (Lev 19:2).

In the Old Testament, holiness is what God desires for the individual, the family, the community and the nation. Holiness is to be attained in order to become more like God. Sanctification, being set apart and made pure in time, place, space and practice, leads to holiness. The blood rituals performed by the high priest on behalf of the people on the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev 16:3-34) were the means by which the community was sanctified, cleansed from sin and made holy. By following the rules of the Torah, the people of Israel would follow the guidelines to maintain their sanctified or holiness status. The purpose of sanctification was to bear witness to YHWH, the one true God, to/for the rest of the nations of the earth.

Exodus 6:1-13

The spirit of God, *ruach*, pervades the Old Testament witness, from creation through the second temple period. YHWH as *ruach* speaks to the people of Israel through its ancestors, judges, kings and prophets. Through the words of God's servants, particularly in the wisdom and prophetic narratives, the promise of deliverance and thanksgiving for deliverance is recorded.

The most powerful and vivid images of God as deliverer appear in Exodus 6:1-13, the deliverance of God's chosen people from slavery in Egypt. The Exodus narrative depicts how God responded to the cries of the Israelites, who were oppressed and enslaved by the sociopolitical regime of Moses' stepbrother, Ramases II, the Egyptian pharaoh who

enslaved them. It is interesting to note that the author of Exodus based the Israelites' prayers and entreaties on the sociopolitical condition of the community and not solely on individual need. *Ruach*/YHWH led the chosen ones through the desert to Mount Sinai where they entered into the holiness covenant with God.

The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles

The New Testament witness begins with the canonical gospel record of Jesus' baptism.[6] In this one act, Jesus was sanctified through Holy Spirit possession: set apart and declared holy by God's voice and the Holy Spirit manifested in the shape of a dove descending on Jesus' head. Jesus' power originated in God's holiness and became active in Holy Spirit possession. God conferred an honor status on Jesus, God's Son. This indicated that he was not only a part of God's holy family, but also God's authorized agent. Jesus' authority over the spirits that oppressed and possessed people[7] demonstrated that his own baptismal possession by the Holy Spirit authorized him to spread holiness. The power, authority and honor that Jesus thereby acquired caused people to receive his ministry seriously and with credibility.

The gospels are replete with examples of people requesting deliverance and accounts of Jesus' subsequent deliverance ministry,[8] his teaching, healings and exorcisms. As the temple authorities began their campaign to discredit Jesus' deliverance ministry, we are informed in Matthew 12:32, Mark 3:29 and Luke 12:10 that Jesus declared the one unforgivable sin to be a sin against the Holy Spirit, that is, not recognizing God's sanctifying works and attributing them to demonic spirits instead of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' ultimate act of deliverance was his atoning blood sacrifice of death on the cross, a death that sanctified

[6] See Mt 3:13-17, Mk 1:9-11, Lk 3:21-22 and Jn 1:29-34. The Johannine record contains the eyewitness testimony of John the Baptist. See also Luke's recapitulation in Acts 1:5.

[7] The ninety-five percent peasant population of Jesus' day suffered a variety of interlocking systems of oppression: the temple system lodged in Jerusalem that often required of peasants that which they could not do; the economic system that levied a triple level of taxes on the peasants; the social system that legislated marginalization and ostracization in order to protect the purity of the nation; the cultural system that, for example, judged what people ate as clean and unclean (Jesus declared all foods clean in Mk 7:14-23); and the political system that expected loyalty to the empire and worship of the emperor.

[8] Please note that in a number of cases narrated in the gospel witness, the faith of the suppliant was not necessary for deliverance to happen.

God's people, delivering all from the oppressive, possessive power of sin, death and the devil, and bringing all God's people under the umbrella of God's holiness.

More than the other gospel narrators, the author of the Gospel of John finds it virtually impossible to separate the Triune God. John's Trinitarian perspective repeatedly acknowledges that Creator/Wisdom God was incarnated in Jesus, Son/Agent of God, who commends God's followers to the care of the Comforter/Holy Spirit God after his ascension. We overhear Jesus explaining to the disciples in John 14:16-17, 15:26 and 16:7[9] that it is necessary for him to go as the human sanctifier, the atonement sacrifice, so that the Holy Spirit may come and maintain the holiness of believers. The first two references also contain a definition of the Advocate: the Spirit of truth.[10]

As we eavesdrop on Jesus' conversation with God in what has become known as his high priestly prayer (especially Jn 17:17-19),[11] Jesus connects sanctification with the truth of the word he has been proclaiming to all. We are also given Jesus' own understanding of sanctification: those who understand God through Jesus are holy; they are set apart from the world because they bear witness to the truth of Jesus' word and the truth about his relationship to Creator God.[12] "Even those who know themselves to be God's holy people under the Mosaic covenant are challenged by Jesus' teaching to know God and share in his [sic] holiness in a new way."[13] Finally, in John 20:22-23, John links the power of the Holy Spirit with the forgiveness of sins.[14]

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[9] "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you" (Jn 14:16-17).

"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf" (Jn 15:26).

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you…" (Jn 16:7).

[10] This might be seen as a reminder of one point of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4:24: God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

[11] "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth" (Jn 17:17-19).

[12] David Peterson, *Possessed by God. A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*, (Leicester: Apollos, 1995), p. 32.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[14] "When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'"

In the book of Acts, Luke documents the Pentecost experience: God's gift of the Holy Spirit and the initial incident of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-4). Luke also records Peter's declaration about Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2:38: if the early believers, originally baptized by John the Baptist, were rebaptized in the name of Jesus, they would become sanctified, receiving forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. We are also able to comprehend narratively how the Holy Spirit worked in and through the early followers of the Way.

The writings of the Apostle Paul[15]

Paul, the first Christian theologian, recognized that deliverance came by way of the Holy Spirit. In Roman 5:1-5,[16] Paul explains his understanding of the connection between faith and the work of the Holy Spirit: God's love resides in human hearts because of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit; God's love challenges believers to live in the Spirit and not in the flesh. In Romans 8:1-17, 26-27 (especially vv 9-10),[17] Paul juxtaposes the Spirit with the flesh, situating the source of the Holy Spirit as Jesus Christ, in whose name all humanity is to be baptized. Paul suggests that the flesh emanates from other sources. Because the Holy Spirit possesses the human spirit through baptism, human beings are spiritual creatures belonging to Jesus. This is what for Paul constitutes Holy Spirit possession. In Romans 15:16, Paul is clear that all human beings, even the Gentiles, are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

(Jn 20:22-23).

[15] Because of space limitations, New Testament works not included in this survey are other authentic Pauline Epistles (2 Corinthians, Philippians and Philemon), Paul's pseudonymous Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians), the Pastoral Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, the Book of Hebrews, the Book of James, and the Johannine Epistles. However, I suggest reading the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Book of Hebrews, in particular, for additional insight into how the first Christians understood the role of the Holy Sprit and sanctification.

[16] "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:1-5).

[17] "But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom 8:9-10).

In 1 Corinthians, Paul is shocked by the Corinthian believers' behavior and chastises them for forgetting to whom they belong. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul reminds them that they were washed, sanctified and justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul addresses how spiritual gifts, particularly speaking in tongues and prophesy, ought to be received in the life of the Corinthian church: with respect and courtesy, acknowledging that these gifts originate in God for the building up of God's community and ought to be shared decently and in good order in community gatherings. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8,[18] Paul tells the Thessalonians that God desires their sanctification so that they refrain from doing what is antithetical to followers of Jesus.

In Galatians 5:16-25, Paul goes a step further when he contrasts the fruits of the Spirit with the fruits of the flesh, pleading with the believers to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit. Here we glean Paul's understanding regarding Holy Spirit possession: followers of the Way are described in terms of their behavior, demonstrated in the fruits of the Spirit.

> By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25).

The great New Testament work about deliverance, the Apocalypse of John, particularly chapters 18-22, discloses John's apocalyptic understanding: because God's people are sanctified and holy, they will be delivered.

Contrasting Lutheran and Pentecostal understandings

Like Paul, Lutherans cannot dismiss the human expressions of God's indwelling Spirit. Lutherans reject second baptism and understand hu-

[18] "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you" (1 Thess 4:3-8).

man assessments of Holy Spirit indwelling as adiaphora. Lutherans see sanctification/holiness as inseparably bound to the forgiveness of sins, where remembering one's baptism and the subsequent possession by the Holy Spirit are a Christian response to forgiveness. In baptism, the gift we receive is salvation, God's seal, through Holy Spirit possession. While Lutherans acknowledge that the sacrament of baptism is essential for salvation, they also recognize that salvation is God's gift of grace by faith, and not by works righteousness.

According to Luther, *ruach* YHWH is incorporated into the Church of God through baptism. Luther also understood that the Holy Spirit makes all people holy in a mystical and inexplicable way that is simultaneously real and actual. This is best explained by Luther's explanation of the third article of the creed.

> I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him [sic]; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His [sic] gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; … even as He [sic] calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; … in which Christian Church He [sic] daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers….[19]

For Pentecostals, holiness, as described in the Old Testament, is the spiritual goal. The ultimate state of grace to which they aspire is total holiness, as commanded by God. Holiness leads to the blessing of salvation, as conferred in baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit and demonstrated through particular spiritual gifts—glossolalia, prophecy and healing. Second baptism posits that sickness and illness are the consequences of sin, a position that makes null and void Jesus' healing miracles that announced the proximity of the kingdom of God. If healing does not occur, the supplicant's faith is called into question. Spirit baptism skirts justification by faith by lifting up Spirit baptism as an act instigated by humans (the second time around) and not as a once-for-all gift from God (the first time).

How might such points of contrast become departure points for dialogue and better understanding between Lutherans and Pentecostals?

[19] Martin Luther, *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism. A Handbook of Christian Doctrine* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 123.

Who's Afraid of Bible Believing Christians?

Sarojini Nadar

As someone who grew up in a Pentecostal church and who subsequently migrated to a Lutheran church,[1] I am arguably very well placed to reflect on this topic, but in a true, postmodernist "confession of subjectivity" fashion let me also admit the bias that may emerge from my own analysis of this topic.[2] I have come to this topic armed with my critical skills as a biblical and a feminist scholar, but also with my personal experience.

Following feminist theoretical models, I will begin by focusing on my personal experience of the ways in which the Bible is used in what we loosely term "neo-Pentecostal" communities of faith. I offer two personal narratives as case studies to illustrate how a limited understanding of the authority of the Bible in our lives can lead to life denying systems, particularly for women.

I shall then turn to an historical discussion of four hermeneutical models: (a) neo-Pentecostal; (b) the church fathers and the Reformers; (c) critical traditions of the Enlightenment; and (d) postmodernity. My intention in surveying these hermeneutical models is to determine to what extent these models have influenced one another, if at all. These phases of interpretation are by no means mutually exclusive, but I delineate them in how they function rather than to create strict chronological or academic boundaries between them. How they function in terms of life affirming or life denying principles is what is important in my assessment of them.

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[1] This migration led some of my colleagues to call me a "born-again" Lutheran.

[2] In their unpublished research, Peter Berger (Boston University), James Hunter (University of Virginia) and Ann Bernstein (Centre for Development and Enterprise, South Africa) point out that: "Four out of five South Africans claim membership of the Christian religion. Census statistics record a substantial growth trend in the numbers affiliated to Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. There is a mushrooming of congregations in the informal urban shack settlements, townships, inner cities and upmarket suburbs of Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and other major urban centers. Simultaneously, there has been no growth in numbers of adherents to traditional mainline Christian churches," at **www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/pentecostalism/papers/**, accessed 1 July 2008. So, my migration from a Pentecostal church to a mainline one is certainly not a commonplace occurrence. If anything there is a far greater migration the other way around.

Finally, I shall critically appraise these methods of interpretation and offer some ways in which they can be adapted, so that life affirming rather than life denying interpretations of Scripture can be encouraged and practiced.

I understand "neo-Pentecostal" to include some classical Pentecostal and charismatic theologies and beliefs but, for me, the term does not exclude mainline denominations. Research has demonstrated not only the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism as a denomination,[3] but also the "Pentecostalization" or "charismaticization" of traditional churches, particularly in Africa. In fact, Anderson and Tang[4] have argued that in Africa it is difficult to separate traditional churches as "mainline" from Pentecostal churches as "sects."

My own experience of migrating from a Pentecostal to a Lutheran church illustrates this point very clearly. Sitting today in the Lutheran church of which I am a member, you would sometimes be left wondering, particularly during worship, but also during sermons, whether you are indeed in a Lutheran church. In fact, there is a Presbyterian church in Pietermaritzburg which, apart from calling itself Presbyterian, does not seem to follow any Presbyterian tradition. The order of service, the sermons and, more importantly, the theologies are in line with traditional Pentecostal and charismatic beliefs. Therefore, the term neo-Pentecostal is helpful in that it describes for me the ways in which Pentecostalism has become such a global and penetrating phenomenon, that one can belong to a mainline church but share the same ideologies and beliefs as traditional Pentecostal and charismatic churches. What I am interested in here are the beliefs and practices of such "neo-Pentecostals" regarding Scripture, and how these can be either life affirming or life denying.

Through globalization, neo-Pentecostalism has reproduced itself all over the world. Whether one is in a village in Europe, or downtown Johannesburg, it is not unusual to tune into satellite beamed preachers churning out their versions of the gospel. Scholars have certainly made strong cases for how neo-Pentecostalism has been part of the process

[3] Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostalism and the Reshaping of Religion in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. xv. Cox asserts that Pentecostal churches are growing at a rate of up to 20 million new members a year.

[4] Allen Anderson and Edmond Tang, "Independency in Africa and Asia," in Hugh McLeod (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 9, *World Christianities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 115-116.

of Westernizing homogenization through globalization.[5] Because this phenomenon is so pervasive, it is important to assess its interpretive tradition. I do this now by turning my attention to the two autobiographical narrative case studies to illustrate how neo-Pentecostal interpretive approaches to Scripture can be life denying, particularly for women.

Narrative case studies of life denying biblical interpretations

I grew up in a Pentecostal church, the Full Gospel Church of God in Southern Africa. The Indian wing of the church to which I belonged was only an "adopted child," and was never fully regarded as part of the Full Gospel Church because of the segregation between White, Black, Colored and Indian congregations, which the church enforced. Thus, we were the adopted Indian children of predominantly white parents who ruled the church.[6]

As with most Pentecostals, the Bible was taken very seriously and literally in our home. As a teenager, I was not allowed to wear jeans, since jeans were considered a "man's garment" and the Bible said that it is an abomination unto God for a woman to wear a man's garment (Deut 22:5).[7] If the Bible says it, then it is God who is saying it, because the Bible is the Word of God. My mother relaxed the rules when my older brother (who was an evangelist) was not around. However, as soon as he came to visit she would hasten me to run upstairs and put on a skirt. One day, when I was about thirteen, I refused to go upstairs and to change into a skirt. Instead, I sat nervously waiting for him in the sitting room. When he came in he sternly asked me why I was deliberately defying the Word of God. Did I not know that what I was doing was "abhorrent to the Lord?" Plucking up all my courage, and defying all rules of acceptable behavior for younger siblings (particularly girls) toward older brothers, I asked

[5] See the collection of essays for a detailed exploration of how this impact is made even more pervasive through globalization. Sarojini Nadar and Gary S. D. Leonard, "Indentured Theology: White Souls/Black Skins? Decolonizing Pentecostals within the Indian Diaspora," in Sturla J. Stålsett (ed.), *Spirits of Globalization: The Growth of Pentecostalism and Spiritualities in a Global Age* (London: SCM Canterbury Press, 2006).

[6] Nadar and Leonard, *ibid.*, p. 65.

[7] "A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the Lord your God."

him if he knew whether Jesus wore trousers. He answered that Jesus wore a robe, as far as he knew, to which I responded with the question, Was Jesus defying God then, by wearing a woman's garment? The point was made very clearly and as fickle and simplistic as my argument was, it did drive the point home that I was beginning to look at the Bible from a critical perspective and had somehow traded in my hermeneutic of trust for a hermeneutic of suspicion. This move had ensured that I was never again questioned on my preference for jeans, even though they were still considered a man's garment.

The above example may seem frivolous, but it goes to the heart of the debate surrounding women's modest dress and the violence against women. Recently, I responded to a letter to the editor of *The Sunday Times*, in which a man promoted the dangerous myth that women are raped because of what they wear.[8] It is not uncommon to hear in Bible studies and group discussions that this understanding is obviously premised on the laws pertaining to women's dress found in sacred texts which, if and when transgressed, warrant violent acts such as rape and physical abuse. In 2007 and 2008, cases of women in townships such as Umlazi and the taxi rank in Noordhoek (South Africa) being stripped to their underwear and beaten because they were wearing pants or short skirts, became public. Notwithstanding cultural expectations, in a country that claims to be eighty-five percent Christian, it does not take a great leap of the imagination to see the contribution of biblical mandates regarding women's dress codes to these acts of violence.[9]

The second story is also a true story, and I have used it as a case study before to illustrate the ways in which particular interpretations of the Bible can be life denying to women.[10]

Kerina has been married for sixteen years. She has two children (boys aged fifteen and nine). Her husband, Peter, has been beating

[8] For a fuller discussion on why this link between rape and dress is so dangerous, see my letter, at **www.thetimes.co.za/PrintEdition/News/Article.aspx?id=788192**, accessed 1 July 2008.

[9] Read the full stories, at **www.dailynews.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=3532&fArticleId=vn20080312102437199C794050**, accessed 4 July 2008, and **www.mg.co.za/article/2008-03-12-short-shrift**, accessed 4 July 2008.

[10] Tinyiko Sam Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar, "Breaking the Covenant of Violence Against Women," in J*ournal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 114 (2002), pp. 5-17. It is also interesting to note that a number of my colleagues from different theological disciplines within the School of Religion and Theology in Pietermaritzburg, where I teach, have used this case study to co-teach a course called "Theory and Method." Some of those who taught on this course will reflect on their experiences in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Constructive Theology*,14:2 (2008) on feminist theological pedagogy.

her periodically for a number of years. Both come from working class backgrounds, with little education. She works in a shoe factory and he is a casual laborer. He is an alcoholic. They belong to an evangelical church, one that does not ordain women, nor allow them to participate equally in the life and activities of the church. Kerina is asthmatic, as is her youngest son who is also epileptic.

The last beating Kerina received from her husband was particularly severe. X-rays showed that her skull was cracked. She decided that she wanted to end their marriage. Because they were living with her mother, she asked Peter to move out. The pastor and the elder immediately came to visit, telling Kerina that (a) according to the Bible divorce is wrong; (b) the man is the head of the woman and therefore she is supposed to submit to him; and (c) that by not cooking and doing other household chores, which a wife is supposed to do for her husband, she inevitably brought on the abuse.

Kerina protested that she leaves home two and a half hours before Peter does, while it is still dark. She comes home after him and therefore it is difficult to have food ready on time before he gets home. She says that sometimes she has to take leave from work and spend the whole day in a public hospital with her youngest son. She is often very tired and sick.

Her protests fell on deaf ears. Her pastor told her that she should return to her husband, pray for him and submit to his will. She did and the following week he punched her in the face again.

Notwithstanding the cultural and economic factors that contributed to Kerina's abuse, it is patently clear that the pastor's interpretation of the texts concerning divorce, headship and submission are not life giving for Kerina. If left to continue in this situation, she will almost certainly die while continuing to pray for her husband.

The question is within which framework or approach to the interpretation of the Bible can we place both my brother's and the pastor's hermeneutic in the above stories?

Developing various approaches to the Bible

My brother, who was a Pentecostal evangelist, the pastor from the evangelical church in the second story and the pastor of the current Lutheran church I belong to would all describe themselves as "Bible believing"

Christians—Christians who live by what they would call "biblical values." As one who often gets the phrase "biblical values" thrown at any notion of gender equality I propose, I know too well that it has become a euphemism, used particularly by very conservative individuals and organizations, to deny people justice and their human dignity. My two case studies show how "biblical values" can be marginalizing for women in particular. This is also true for people who have a different sexual orientation, for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ and for people living with HIV and AIDS, etc.[11] The scope of this paper does not allow me to go into all these examples, but using the sustained example of how "biblical values" can be life denying to women, I want to explore alternative approaches to the Bible that can actually be life affirming. In order to do so, it is important first to establish what a neo-Pentecostal approach to the Bible is. I shall then trace how we got from the point of the early church fathers and their "four-senses" approach to Scripture, to the *sola scriptura* understanding of the early Reformers to the historical-critical and rational approaches of the Enlightenment and to the "four i's—inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy and immediacy" model of neo-Pentecostalism. A critical appraisal of these models may help us in our search for a life affirming rather than life denying hermeneutic.

The "four i's" of the neo-Pentecostal approach to Scripture

When one thinks of the Pentecostal and charismatic traditions the association of these traditions with the Spirit is sure to surface. It has traditionally been difficult to establish what a Pentecostal hermeneutic consisted of, because interpretation could only be understood through the role of the Spirit. John Christopher Thomas, a Pentecostal scholar, posits that there is no consensus on what a Pentecostal hermeneutic is, because

> ... it appears that many scholars working within the Pentecostal tradition are less content to adopt a system of interpretation that is heavily slanted toward rationalism and leaves little room for the work of the Holy Spirit. [12]

[11] One has simply to go to some TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network) or other such Christian Web sites to find such sentiments expressed in the content of the sites.

[12] John Christopher Thomas, "Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, vol. 5 (1994), pp. 41-56, here p. 41

Therefore, the suspicion of the rational and scientific in Pentecostal interpretive traditions has meant that there is very little focus on a critical reading of the Bible and it was almost considered blasphemous even to consider such a thought. The Pentecostal approach did not value critical or contextual interpretations, because it was assumed that the Spirit enables interpretation, and that the interpreter is simply an innocent, unmediated voice of the Spirit. As Mary McClintock Fulkerson points out, "I try to give them the Bible, not just what I think,"[13] is a typical statement made by Pentecostal preachers. Hence, in sermons or Bible studies, very little additional material apart from the Bible itself is used. McClintock Fulkerson further notes that,

> They do not use scholarly commentaries to prepare their sermons; when they use anything other than Scripture they are likely to use church literature. Their primary Biblical practices are ordered by prayer, fasting, much time spent reading the Bible, and trust in the Holy Spirit, whose anointing they understand to be essential to the success of their preaching.[14]

A focus on the Spirit is in and of itself not a problem. After all, if we are to believe that the Bible indeed does contain messages from God to us, then the role of the Spirit in guiding our interpretations cannot be underestimated. However, from this Pentecostal approach to Scripture has emerged a sustained and developed neo-Pentecostal[15] understanding of Scripture, which I have termed the "four i's" approach. This approach suggests that the Bible is inerrant, infallible, inspired and immediate.

The belief in the inerrancy of the Bible was first articulated in 1881 by Archibald Hodge and Benjamin Warfield.

> The Scriptures not only contain, but are the Word of God, and hence all their elements and all their affirmations are absolutely errorless and binding on the faith and obedience of men [sic].[16]

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[13] Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 280.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Again I am using this term to indicate that this worldview has infiltrated denominations that may not necessarily describe themselves as Pentecostal

[16] Quoted in Karen Armstrong, *The Bible: The Biography* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), p. 199.

Infallibility of the Bible, then, was a term introduced later to soften the blow of inerrancy as a principle, and the infallibility theory suggested that although the Bible may contain some factual or scientific errors, its central message could not be corrupted by fallible human authors.

This then brings us to the point of the Bible being the inspired "Word of God." Within Pentecostal traditions, inspiration is understood to mean that God or the Spirit influenced the human authors of the Scriptures to write what they wrote and, therefore, the word inspiration simply means "God breathed." This means that every word of the Bible is to be taken as directly given by God. This notion is, of course, found in the Bible itself. The most famous passage that indicates this is 2 Timothy 3:16.

> All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

This view of Scripture is often also taken to mean that the inspiration is not only of concepts and ideas, but of the very words themselves (what is known as verbal plenary inspiration).[17]

Finally, neo-Pentecostalism's defining relationship to the Bible is to be found in its focus on the immediate[18]—that the words of the Bible and its message can be directly and immediately (without need for critical interpretation) applied to our lives—so texts that for example prescribe a particular dress code for women must be obeyed.

This neo-Pentecostal approach is actually a development from the late 1800s and early 1900s. It certainly was not the approach to Scripture that prevailed in the early years of Christianity. I argue that this development, as filtered through the consciousness of "Bible believing" neo-Pentecostal Christians, is not the preferred approach given the ways in which it can be oppressive to marginalized groups. As McClintock Fulkerson points out,

[17] Edward J. Young, "The Verbal Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures, Part I: The Bible and Rome," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 121:482 (1964), pp. 117-124.

[18] I am grateful to my colleague, Prof. Steve de Gruchy, for "inspiring" this term to describe the "translatability" of the biblical world and ethos into our own.

> Pentecostal beliefs in the infallibility of the entire canon have important implications for the rules of reading. They implicitly require that all scriptures that refer to women [for example] must be obeyed.[19]

If this development toward the "four i's" has not been helpful in terms of social justice, are there approaches to Scripture which we can draw on such as the early Christian approach and perhaps even critical approaches? A brief examination of how some of these approaches were developed may not only help us in our task to develop a more ethical approach to reading the Bible,[20] but also to see, for example, how a concept such as *sola scriptura* has developed into something for which it may not have been originally intended.

The four senses approach to Scripture (literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical)

In his *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) spoke of the four senses of Scripture. The first he described is the literal sense, focusing on the actual words and their meaning in their most basic form—that is, the actual event or happening is taken literally (i.e., the story of Noah's Ark). The second sense is the allegorical that refers to the ways in which the literal sense of Scripture points to the deeper meaning and salvation found in Christ. The third sense is the moral or tropological sense, whose focus is on how the text relates to the life of the Christian in terms of guiding the Christian in making good and ethical choices. The final sense is the anagogical or eschatological. The focus in the fourth sense is on how the text points to the life hereafter. A Catholic Web site on the four senses of Scripture illuminates how it works through using the example of the temple in a helpful way:

> A study of the Jerusalem temple provides a classic example to demonstrate the four senses of Scripture. In the literal sense, the temple was the actual building that once stood in Jerusalem. There, the Israelite

[19] McClintock Fulkerson, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 254.

[20] Cf. Daniel Patte, *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A reevaluation* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminister/John Knox Press, 1995); John W. Rogerson, Margaret Davies and M. Daniel Carrol R. (eds), *The Bible in Ethics: The Second Sheffield Colloquium* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

> priests offered sacrifice, the people worshipped, and God dwelt in the Holy of Holies.
>
> This temple of the Old Testament has greater importance because God uses it as a sign to reveal important realities in the New Testament: Jesus and the Christian life. Allegorically, the temple points to Jesus, Who said He was the true temple which would be destroyed and raised up in three days (Jn. 2:19-21). Just as the Jerusalem temple was the place of sacrifice for the Jews, so does Jesus' body house the everlasting sacrifice on Calvary for all humanity.
>
> The moral sense of the temple is found in the Christian, whose body is "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19). Just as the temple contained the awesome presence of God, so do the bodies of Christians hold the presence of the Holy Spirit by virtue of their Baptism.
>
> Anagogically, the Jerusalem temple finds its eschatological meaning in the heavenly sanctuary, where God will dwell among us in our eternal home, as described in Book of Revelation (e.g., Rev. 21:22). [21]

These four senses of Scripture continue to hold value for Catholics today and they have their own section in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is clear from the above model of interpreting Scripture that different emphases were put in different areas, that the early church fathers recognized that certain texts were suitable for particular purposes and that they did not rely only on the literal interpretation of Scripture.[22] It is ironic therefore that the Catholic Church's main arguments against the ordination of women, for example, often appeal to Scripture in its literal sense without taking into consideration the other three senses.

Luther's sola scriptura

The history of s*ola scriptura* and its place in the Protestant Reformation is arguably the most important event in Christian history. The concept of Martin Luther's principle of *sola scriptura* originated in his state-

[21] See **www.cuf.org/faithfacts/details_view.asp?ffID=129**, accessed 4 July 2008

[22] In fact, Origen of Alexandria is noted for asking: "what man [sic] of intelligence will believe that the first and the second and the third day … existed without the sun and moon and stars?" Quoted in Colin E. Gunton, Stephen R. Holmes and Murray Rae, *The Practice of Theology. A Reader* (London: SCM, 2001), p. 17. He went on to argue that the creation narratives have to be understood metaphorically or they would not make any sense at all.

ment against the purchase of indulgences, a practice that stemmed from church tradition rather than the Bible. He understood repentance not as going to confession and buying indulgences, but as changing one's life, a "turning around." Hence, one did not require the priest or councils in matters of interpretation, but only an understanding of the simple truth that we are justified by faith and faith alone. Hence, believers did not require the pope and the councils to interpret the Bible for them; they could interpret it for themselves. One of his most famous quotes in this regard was, "A simple layman [sic] armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a council without it."[23]

Sola scriptura by no means implies a doctrinal commitment to literalism or infallibility, nor is it to be understood in the same way as modern Christians understand the term "Bible believing." Yet, this is precisely the concept that many "Bible believing" Christians draw on to advocate their belief in the infallibility, inspiration and inerrancy of the entire canon. If anything, Luther was rather impatient with books in the canon, which he thought should not be there, such as the Book of Esther which he claimed "Judaized" too much, not to mention the Epistles of James and Jude which he called an "epistle of straw." Luther operated within a very Christological hermeneutic: texts which did not point to Christ or Christ's saving grace were considered of less value than texts which did. Through this Christological hermeneutic then Luther developed a "canon within a canon."

It strikes me that one would be hard pressed to find such a view of the Bible within churches in general, but especially in Lutheran churches in Africa today. If anything, *sola scriptura* is understood more through the lenses of the "four i's" than through the Christological hermeneutic of Martin Luther. My sense is that the "four i's" tradition was born out of a reaction to a scientific, critical view of Scripture post-Reformation, from the time of the Enlightenment.

Critical tradition of the Enlightenment and beyond

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment ushered in a search for objective truth—for truth to be proven empirically and scientifically. The

[23] Quoted in, Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), p. 83.

search for this truth gave birth to what in biblical studies has become known as the historical-critical method. There were various pioneers of this method, but one of the most famous outcomes of the application of the historical-critical method to the Bible was the recognition that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses[24] but actually derived from a variety of sources. Historical-critical work on the Bible grew, and the search for the original intention of the author was made concrete through various methods such as source and form criticisms, redaction, rhetorical criticisms, etc.

After the historical-critical approach, the critical interpretative tradition made two more turns: the literary turn in the 1970s, with its focus on the text itself and secondly, in the current postmodern era, a turn to the reader. The critical tradition has fought its own internal battles between historical-critical scholars and scholars of the postmodern tradition, particularly those subscribing to the tenets of a hermeneutic of liberation. As the feminist biblical scholar, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, puts it:

> If scriptural texts have served not only noble causes but also to legitimate war, to nurture anti-Judaism and misogynism, to justify the exploitation of slavery, and to promote colonial dehumanization...then the responsibility of the Biblical scholar cannot be restricted to giving the readers of our time clear access to the original intentions of the writers. It must also include the elucidation of the ethical consequences and political functions of Biblical texts in their historical as well as in their contemporary socio-political contexts.[25]

Notwithstanding the internal battle between scholars of the critical tradition, the battle between those who advocate the critical tradition (whichever branch of it) and those who are anti-intellectual or anti-scholarly is even greater. The challenge is not for one to emerge victorious, but to find approaches to the Bible that are more life giving.

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[24] I was interested to note that my own church uses Sunday school material from a national body called SANSA (South African National Sunday School Association) which still teaches children this view.

[25] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Politics of Otherness. Biblical Interpretation as a Critical Praxis for Liberation," in Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro (eds), *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), p. 315.

In this second part, we have explored some of the approaches to Scripture from the early church fathers, to the Reformers, the critical thinkers of the Enlightenment and postmodern era and the neo-Pentecostal approaches to Scripture. Given the approaches that we have explored, the question I now want to turn to is, Is there a way of drawing on the approaches we have outlined above, so that we can begin to interpret the Bible in life affirming rather than life denying ways?

Who is afraid of the Bible believing Christian and what can we do?

I began by asking the question, Who is afraid of Bible believing Christians? Well, if the Bible believing Christian continues to insist that Kerina remain in an abusive marriage, because the Bible says that divorce is wrong, then I am very afraid of the Bible believing Christian. If the Bible believing Christian continues to perpetuate the myth that women are raped because of immodest dress, then I am very afraid of the Bible believing Christian. If the Bible believing Christian continues to deny women their right to answer the call of God to the ordained ministry, then I am very afraid of the Bible believing Christian. A cursory historical sketch of the approaches of the early church fathers[26] and the Reformers to the Bible reveals a far more open and liberal approach than the conservative approaches adopted by contemporary neo-Pentecostals, which have infiltrated churches that are not even Pentecostal.

The question then is, How do we interpret the Bible in the face of a trend which is taking us back to life denying interpretations rather than life affirming ones? Which models are helpful and which ones are not? It strikes me that at the heart of the matter is actually a question of biblical authority. Most, if not all Christians would say that the Bible does indeed have an authoritative role to play in the lives of Christians. The challenge lies in how we articulate, navigate and negotiate that authority. In this final section, I shall propose some approaches, which in combination can prove to be life affirming rather than life denying.

[26] Notwithstanding that the early church fathers had a generally more liberal view toward Scripture, they too slipped in terms of their Bible beliefs particularly with regard to women. Who can forget Tertullian's famous quote, drawing on the creation story to vilify and denigrate women: "You (Eve) are the devil's gateway ... you are the first deserter of the divine law. You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man."

William Brown's recent collection of essays on biblical authority[27] proposes some helpful models for engaging the ways in which we can navigate the issue of biblical authority. In the following, I shall focus on two proposals from this collection, and add a third as a way to inspire some reflection on how our interpretations can be more ethically accountable.

The Word behind the words

In his essay, "Biblical Authority and the Scandal of the Incarnation,"[28] Frank J. Matera argues that the best way to view biblical authority is through the analogy of the incarnation: both ideas (a) that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of God, and (b) that the Bible is also the Word of God, must be understood as scandalous in order to understand how God speaks to us. In other words, the fact that God became incarnate as human is as scandalous as the fact that God can use humans in their fallibility to impart God's thoughts. This needs to be embraced and understood in order fully to appreciate the "authority" of the Bible in our lives. He alludes to the difficulty the hearers of the Gospel of John may have had to understand how the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, because of Christ's scandalous humanity. This is most significant for me in that God makes Godself known through humans (in the writing of the Scripture) and God also makes Godself known though becoming human (through Jesus Christ). Luther made this point repeatedly in his emphasis on a Christological hermeneutic. For Luther, Christ as "the Word" acted as a grid in a sense to filter through "the words of the law." Therefore, the words of the law which could not match up to the gospel of the Word were considered less valuable.

In the same collection, Michael Joseph Brown points to a similar thesis.[29] He makes a convincing argument for why the Bible cannot simply be seen as a reference manual, but what we have to seek is the "Word

[27] William P. Brown (ed.), *Engaging Biblical Authority: Perspectives on the Bible as Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007).

[28] Frank J. Matera, "Biblical Authority and the Scandal of the Incarnation," in *ibid.*, pp. 98-105.

[29] Michael J. Brown, "Hearing the Master's Voice," in *ibid.*, pp. 10-17.

behind the words."[30] By declaring the Bible to be infallible and inerrant we have deified the words on the page, subordinating the Word of Life that was made flesh to life denying words on a page. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul is right to warn us that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Plurality of authority

A second way of viewing the Bible's authority in our lives is grounded in an understanding of authority as plural. Again, Reformers such as Luther, Calvin and Wesley are important in this regard. Two essays in Brown's collection, one by Luke Timothy Johnson, a former Roman Catholic monk, and the other by Sarah Heaner Lancaster, use the Wesleyan quadrilateral (Scripture, tradition, reason and experience), to make sense of biblical authority.[31] Johnson shows how Wesley created an imaginary quadrilateral with Scripture at the top in dialogical relationship with the other three elements. He then outlines his understanding of the other three elements of tradition, reason and experience. He understands tradition as encompassing not just the creeds and the church's teaching concerning authority, but also "the authentic realizations of Christian life based in Scripture and all the profound interpretations of Christian life by the theologians grounded in interpretations of Scripture."[32]

Under the element of reason, Johnson describes three factors that need to be considered. The first is the freedom of the mind to think rigorously and critically on matters, as "the meaning of Scripture both for the past and the present is not obvious and basic skills in logic (above all analogy) are required of interpreters."[33] The second factor is the information and insight on specific issues of human life in the world offered by the best of contemporary science, history and philosophy. The final element which he sees as important is possessing what Paul calls the "mind of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 2:16. Paul demands that interpreters do not think according to the "spirit of the world" but the Spirit that is from God. By "mind of Christ" Johnson means "the deeply instinctive

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[31] Luke T. Johnson, "The Bible's Authority for and in the Church," in *ibid.*, pp. 62-87; Sarah Heaner Lancaster, "Authority and Narrative," in *ibid.*, pp. 81-89.

[32] Johnson, *ibid.*, p. 81.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

sense for what is fitting for Christian thought and practice amongst the saints, shaped by the Holy Spirit."[34] He concludes this section by illustrating how this hermeneutical principle works through an example of the church's stance on homosexuality. Using a number of texts, he shows how Scripture does not speak in one voice regarding the matter; that tradition is varied with regard to marriage and sexuality; that reason through biology, psychology and the social sciences also provides varied responses to the issue; and finally that the experience of homosexual people themselves has to be engaged.

Staying with the Reformers, Jacqueline Lapsley's and Serene Jones's essays point to John Calvin's notion of the Bible being a "lens of faith" which points to God, with Jones using the metaphor of "pulling in" aptly to describe how the Bible tends more to read us than we read it.[35] Although not using Calvin's model of the lens or spectacles, the last essay by Seung Ai Yang makes creative use of a Buddhist narrative that talks of the Buddha pointing to the moon and asking his students whether the focus should be on his finger which is pointing to the moon or the moon itself.[36] She uses this as an example to illustrate that the Bible is like the finger which points to the moon—the focus has to be less on the finger and more on the moon.

Reading the Bible for transformation

Finally, a point not picked up in the essays, but one which I want to propose in relation to how we read and interpret the Bible, is with regard to the ultimate point of interpretation. Do we read our Bibles because we think we will go to heaven if we do and we therefore faithfully read a passage every day? Do we engage in the activity of interpreting our Bibles as intellectuals simply for the sake of scholarship? What is the purpose of our reading and interpreting the Bible? I would argue that if our reading and interpretation do not lead to the transformation of our lives, then there is no point to the practice of reading for spiritual discipline, or the art of interpretation for scholarship. Reading the Bible

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[35] Jacqueline Lapsley, "Alternative Worlds: Reading the Bible as Scripture," in *ibid.*, pp. 90-97; Serene Jones, "Inhabiting Scripture, Reading Bible," in *ibid.*, pp. 73-80.

[36] Seung Ai Yang, "The Word of Creative Love, Peace and Justice," in *ibid.*, pp. 132-140.

for transformation involves two steps. A first is to allow the Spirit to enable and assist us in our interpretations. This is not a purely subjective exercise. There are measures by which we can gauge whether our interpretations are guided by the Spirit or not.

Liberation scholar, José Comblin, posits five ways in which we can determine the presence of the Spirit in our interpretations.[37] He says that the Spirit should produce life, freedom, speech, community and action. In the case of Kerina, the interpretation of the Bible the pastor offers does not produce life and freedom for her but silences her by asking her to submit to her abusive husband and simply to pray for him? It certainly does not encourage her to seek out community or to take action to make her situation better. Such an interpretation cannot be regarded as an interpretation of the Spirit. As Elizabeth Castelli *et al.* argue,

> Reading is an ethical act that involves an encounter between reader and text, an encounter that is always situated within individual lives and institutional systems. This means that some readings are "better" than others. Better ideological readings are those that support and encourage positive social change that affirms difference and inclusion.[38]

Because our readings are ideological, there has to be a gauge for whether our readings are ethical, and the Spirit is this gauge. As Emmanuel Levinas asserts, "To say that all readings of a text are ideological is to insist that the act of reading is fundamentally ethical."[39]

The second element of reading for transformation involves being able to use the critical tools of biblical scholarship in our interpretation. Part of the reason why neo-Pentecostal interpretations (including in mainline churches) have proved to be less than life giving is a consistently anti-intellectual stance. If we do not have good tools for interpretation we tend to interpret uncritically, often drawing conclusions that serve our own beliefs and ideologies more than what the text itself is saying. When reading the Bible for transformation, we must be prepared to have our readings and interpretations face up to the challenge of rigorous judgment and reason. If our interpretations cannot stand up to the

[37] José Comblin, *The Holy Spirit and Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1989), p. 61.

[38] Elizabeth A. Castelli *et al.* (eds), *The Postmodern Bible*: *The Bible and Culture Collective* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 302.

[39] In *ibid.*, p. 275.

test of logic, then we run the risk of being "religious nuts" rather than producing "spiritual fruit."

Conclusion

Tariq Ramadan, the Swiss Muslim academic and theologian, is famously quoted as having said that although Osama Bin Laden and he read the same Qur'an, they just read it differently.[40] I suppose many of us would say that George Bush and I read the same Bible; we just read it differently. Given the pervasive impact of the neo-Pentecostal worldview in relation to the Bible on Christianity throughout the world, and its capacity for life denying biblical interpretation as shown in this article and through other research,[41] we would be wise to consider approaches to biblical interpretation that take seriously the role of the Spirit in the interpretative process, but also look for critical interpretations[42] which ultimately lead to transformation.

[40] Thanks to my dear friend Eliza Getman for alerting me to this quote

[41] A detailed study on domestic violence in (Pentecostal) Indian Christian homes was carried out in Phoenix by Isabel Phiri. Eighty-four percent of the twenty-five women who were interviewed admitted to having experienced domestic violence. They were all wives of leaders in the church. Her study concluded that it was biblical beliefs, such as those on submission, which made these women stay in abusive relationships. Isabel A. Phiri, "Domestic Violence in Christian Homes: A Durban Case Study," in *Journal of Constructive Theology*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2000), pp. 85-110. McClintock Fulkerson makes a similar point about the role of the "discourse of submission," when she asserts that "One of the most prominent oppressive outcomes of such discourse is the willingness of women to stay in battering situations. Women's willingness to be battered is often linked to the kind of ecclesiastically supported languages of submission that appear in Pentecostal women's stories." McClintock Fulkerson, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 296.

[42] It is important to note here that critical interpretations do not always lead to transformation and can also be life denying. Gerald Sheppard notes that in their pursuit of ultimate truth both critical scholars and fundamentalists have somehow managed to say the same thing at the end of the day: "that the original intention of the author can be located." Both "left and right wing modernist groups" are pursuing the same impossible task. Gerald Sheppard, "Biblical Interpretation After Gadamer," in *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies*, vol. 16 (1994), p. 121.

The Influence of Neo-Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Ibrahim Bitrus

In the 1980s, neo-Pentecostalism[1] emerged in Nigeria due to the spiritual stagnation of the historic and African Independent Churches (AICs). Since then, neo-Pentecostal churches have enjoyed unprecedented growth. Initially, their emphasis was on Spirit baptism and being "born again" as essential marks of salvation.

Lutheran youth, who were strongly influenced by this movement and wanted to introduce it into their local congregations, were met with staunch resistance by the church elders, who opposed speaking in tongues and shouting "praise the Lord" and "hallelujah" during worship. The bitter confrontation between them was such that some youth broke away from the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria and formed their own church.

In the 1990s, some neo-Pentecostals shifted from this initial emphasis on Spirit baptism to an emphasis on material prosperity. This shift was related to the political developments in Nigeria. In 1993, the president, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, annulled the freest and fairest presidential elections ever in the country, which had been won by Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, a Yoruba. This led to social, economic and political upheavals in the nation. Without addressing these crises, the president abruptly handed over the leadership of the country to Chief Ernest Shonekan who, three months later, in November 1993, was ousted from power in a military coup led by General Sani Abacha. During Abacha's rule, the majority of the population suffered abject poverty. Living conditions were miserable, corruption became institutionalized and pro-democracy activists were detained without trial.

In the face of these harsh realities, the neo-Pentecostal prosperity message gained ground. Churches preaching prosperity were planted

[1] I hesitate to call them Pentecostals. The universal Church of Christ was born at Pentecost, hence all churches that are part of the Church are "Pentecostals." Calling only these churches Pentecostal undermines the Pentecostal roots of the historic and AICs that also share in the Pentecost experience.

all over the country. Their message of prosperity brought hope and consolation to the majority of Nigerians. At the time, the evangelical crusades of the German charismatic evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, and the prosperity messages of the late Benson Idahosa (1938-1998), a charismatic Pentecostal preacher and founder of the Church of God Mission International, were instrumental in shifting the emphasis from spiritual blessings to material well-being.

The earliest Pentecostal churches to emerge in Nigeria were the so-called "classical" churches such as the Redeemed Church of God, Redeemed Peoples Mission, Assemblies of God and Deeper Life Bible Church. These churches emphasize baptism by the Holy Spirit, praying for healing and deliverance, holiness, evangelism and modest dress. Most campus fellowships and charismatic movements in historic churches belong to this type.

The "neoclassical" group of churches, including the Christ Embassy, Praise Chapel Living Faith, Church of God's Mission and Word of the Spirit, broke away from the "classical" and the AICs. They emphasize Spirit possession, often manifest in dramatic ways, and material prosperity. Adherents are said to become influential in all spheres of life, including politics; many of them are partisan politicians and standard bearers of political parties. They refer to themselves as the "winners" in contrast to the "losers." Being rich and healthy testifies to the goodness of God in their lives.

"Syncretic" combines indigenous African and Christian understandings in interpreting Scripture and contemporary events. Negative events are attributed to demonic influences that are named and ranked. Spiritual and physical problems are addressed through praying and fasting. Prominent in the group are the Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries.

Critiquing some neo-Pentecostal practices

Although neo-Pentecostalism is not a monolithic movement, the different streams share certain distinctive practices and features. First, they view God as the master servant of human needs. Thus, God tends to be reduced to an object to be manipulated by human beings in order to serve their self-interests. God becomes a genie expected to respond to human requests. The human being rather than God is sovereign.

Neo-Pentecostals emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit and baptism more than the person and work of Jesus Christ and Holy Communion.

Nevertheless, Jesus is frequently addressed and mentioned in prayers, and the blood of Christ is believed to protect effectively against evil spirits and misfortune. Signs on shops, houses and cars boast, "I am covered with the blood of Jesus."

The neo-Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture borders on literalism. Certain passages from the Bible, especially the Old Testament, are selected and overemphasized. In Nigeria, the literal interpretation of the Bible is the bedrock of neo-Pentecostalism, in as far as biblical passages referring to prosperity and Spirit baptism are interpreted literally. God is thus bound to do what these passages, which are considered absolute, say regardless of their cultural, socioeconomic, political or spiritual contexts. God is unchangeable and God's Word is valid for all ages. Spirit baptism opens the door for believers who are baptized by the Holy Spirit to be materially blessed with prosperity.

Neo-Pentecostals believe in and preach the reality of mystical forces. It is not enough to denounce the devil and all his works and ways and to believe in Jesus Christ. The mystical ways in which the devil works must be exposed so that Christ's victory over them can be experienced through prayer for healing and deliverance. It is preached that certain mystical forces at work in this life impede human aspirations and prosperity and cause poverty, barrenness, impotence, sickness and other forms of human suffering. For this reason, exorcism, healing and deliverance are practiced. Neo-Pentecostal pastors alert their members to the menaces of these mystical forces in their workplace and homes, and fervently minister to their members' needs through Sunday worship and revival meetings.

Holiness is considered evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus, they distance themselves from certain worldly activities that are considered to corrupt spiritual life, such as socializing with unbelievers, attending certain social and cultural gatherings, brewing and drinking beer and watching certain kinds of television programs. They believe that holy living means doing what is considered holy: mediation, prayer, Bible study and actively participating in evangelistic meetings. In effect, this means that they place a higher premium on puritanical and legalistic ethics than on the grace of God. They are good models for discipline and moral uprightness since they work diligently and faithfully and do not give or accept bribes. They also emphasize faithfulness in marriage and condemn all forms of pre-and extra-marital sexual relationships as unholy. Violators are often disciplined. They insist that members

dress modestly; women are not allowed to wear trousers, short skirts, earrings or anything thought to be suggestive.

Neo-Pentecostal worship is emotionally vibrant and expressive rather than bound by written liturgy, as well as "Spirit led." Worshippers are free to sing, clap their hands and dance during worship and freely to shout "hallelujah" and "amen" during prayers and sermons. They are free to choose any biblical text so as to address their members' current needs, rather than using prescribed texts for preaching. They are not confined to the chancel area, but move about freely as they preach and teach. Music is played to awaken the Spirit to take possession of the people, as in the ecstatic style of the Old Testament prophets. Songs are contemporary, short and to the point, with the little theology in them often being questionable.

In the New Testament, prophecy refers to forthtelling rather than foretelling, but it is the latter that tends to dominate neo-Pentecostal messages. Prophecies are often uttered not to warn members about God's judgment, but to give them hope for material blessings. Preachers typically prophesy success in business, family life and greater material possessions. They proclaim prosperity, even when they should be proclaiming judgment. The prophecies are often made to suit the interests of their audience, even when they are at variance with what God wills for life. They often echo the messages of the false prophets who lead people astray by saying "peace" when there is no peace (Ezek 6:10).

The media are used effectively to publicize their revivals, crusades and miracles, similar to how companies advertise and market their products. When Jesus performed healing miracles, he asked his followers not to publicize such. Neo-Pentecostals, rather than keeping miracles secret, expect those who have been healed to speak out publicly so the public learns about how God is at work in their churches.

Most neo-Pentecostal churches operate as the personal property of their founder. The church's account usually bears the founder's name and the board is made up of the founder's relatives. As personal enterprises, funds raised in these churches usually go into the pockets of the founder. The monies generated from tithes and offerings are being used by the founders as they deem fit, without being accountable to the members.

Preachers are aggressive in their preaching, teaching and methods for collecting tithes and offerings that will enhance their income. Offering time is often referred to as "blessing time," with the understanding that those who give bountifully will receive bountifully. God is seen as

a "money duplicator": those who give a hundred Naira will receive a hundredfold in return. Those who give sparingly or refuse to give are often threatened with curses.

Neo-Pentecostal influence on Lutheran churches

Neo-Pentecostals have exerted a strong influence on the historic churches. Many of their practices have crept into the Lutheran churches either overtly or covertly. Praise worship and contemporary music have been incorporated into worship services; it has become common to see people chapping their hands, dancing and shouting, "praise the Lord" and "hallelujah" in a typical Lutheran congregation. Most Lutheran pastors no longer confine themselves to the pulpit while preaching and teaching. They move about as they preach and teach during their worship services, just as neo-Pentecostals pastors do.

Many Lutheran congregations convene two to three-day-long revival programs to revitalize their members' spiritual lives. Special guest speakers, sometimes neo-Pentecostal preachers, are invited to speak at these revivals. In addition to preaching, prayers are offered to God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, healing, deliverance and prosperity. Altar calls often take place, in which those with particular personal social and spiritual problems as well as new converts are called to the altar for prayers. The whole congregation partakes in mass prayers similar to those of neo-Pentecostals.

Like neo-Pentecostals, many Lutheran congregations hold weekly or monthly "night vigils" for communal praise worship and prayers. Here prayers are said throughout the night for various physical and spiritual afflictions: sickness, revival, healing and deliverance from witchcraft, demonic attack, difficult marital and political problems, as well as for success in school or economic life. Everyone is involved in these mass prayers, which often are quite noisy as everyone raises their voices during prayers. Some urban Lutheran congregations also have praise worship and mass prayers in their regular Sunday worship. Those who have the gift of praying and speaking in tongues are welcome to do so. It is no longer strange to hear Lutheran members praying for themselves, their families, businesses, offices, cars and houses, just as neo-Pentecostals do. It is common to see signs such as "winner," "this house is covered with the blood of Jesus" and "this is the year of my shining."

The attractiveness of neo-Pentecostalism to Lutherans

Neo-Pentecostalism is especially attractive to youth, many of whom have left the Lutheran church for neo-Pentecostal churches, because of the static nature of much of Lutheran worship, with predetermined liturgical texts. Lutheran worship is associated with a cold formalism rather than vibrant worship. Besides, many Lutheran worship services are still centered on the pastor rather than the congregation, making people passive rather than active participants in worship services. In many places, the pastor still plans and carries out the worship service from beginning to end.

The congregation is kept from worshipping God with their whole spirit, soul and emotions, as led by the Spirit, and for many, especially the young, Lutheran worship has become obsolete. God has been reduced to a divine being who demands honor and order rather than encouraging celebration. No wonder then that younger Lutherans have been attracted to the more dynamic and participatory style of neo-Pentecostal worship.

Overall, Lutheran churches have emphasized suffering as opposed to prosperity. Because of the understanding that God is not only revealed in suffering but also suffers with all those who suffer, it is often preached that to suffer is divine while to prosper is "devilish," or that it is difficult for the rich to inherit the kingdom of God. To make matters worse, biblical passages referring to material prosperity are often interpreted to mean spiritual prosperity. George Kinoti accurately observes that,

> We failed to apply the gospel to the whole of life, limiting it to spiritual life only. We read the Scriptures selectively, placing emphasis on those that talked about salvation and neglecting those that talked about justice, peace and material well-being. We…must seek to apply the whole of the Word of God to the whole of life.[2]

Because Lutherans believe that suffering is an integral part of the divine, the effect of many sermons has been to accept rather than to question the unwarranted suffering of Nigerians or Africans as a whole. Therefore, when neo-Pentecostals preach prosperity, Lutheran members are easily attracted to such messages.

[2] As quoted in Wilbur O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), p. 65.

The closely knit social structures of the neo-Pentecostal churches also attract those from the historic churches. Neo-Pentecostal church members know, accept and relate to one another warmly, unlike some large historic churches that may not even know or adequately care for their members. Furthermore, people are accepted if they dress more casually than is the case in the historic churches. What also attracts people is the focus on solving individual personal, socioeconomic and spiritual problems.

Some challenges for Lutherans

Theology: Neo-Pentecostals have challenged Lutherans to revisit their theology and practices. Although the theology of the cross remains important for Lutherans, suffering and prospering should be viewed dialectically. It is not sufficient to tell people that God suffers with them; God is with us in our suffering, empowering us to change such.

Worship: Christ's church is dynamic, and has been since the first Pentecost. Thus, a dynamic Lutheran mode of worship is needed to meet the ever changing needs of the church and society. God remains the focus of our worship, but how we worship God is bound to change with time. We need vibrant Lutheran forms of worship with room for creativity, innovation and the participation of all worshippers. As there is unity and diversity in God, so there should be unity and diversity in our worship.

Priesthood of all believers: The Lutheran understanding of the priesthood of all believers seems to have been relegated to the background. It needs to be revitalized and applied without reservation. Lutherans should be taught their status, privileges and responsibility as priests of God, with direct access to God who empowers us to triumph over suffering and to prosper.

Public ministry: Jesus had a public ministry; he did not confine his ministry to the synagogue. He went everywhere in Judea proclaiming the gospel to the people. In the same way, the ministry of the church today is a public ministry. The church is sent out into the world to evangelize it. Hence, Lutheran churches should use contemporary media, whether print or electronic, to proclaim the gospel to the world. This should not

be misconstrued as the church blowing its own trumpet but giving glory to God through the means of the media. Any church that hesitates to use modern media to preach the gospel and publicize its programs will remain stagnant and will soon be forgotten.

Theological education: Neo-Pentecostalism challenges Lutheran seminaries to develop more practically oriented theological curricula. In addition to courses in Lutheran theology and practices, issues such as capacity building, job and wealth creation, dynamics of worship, charisma, Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, healing and deliverance should be incorporated in the curriculum. Students should be exposed to these practical issues, and those who have charismatic gifts should have the opportunity to exercise them. This will help to bridge the gap between Lutheranism and neo-Pentecostalism.

Conclusion

Over the last two decades, the impact of neo-Pentecostal practices on the historic churches, especially on the Lutheran church, has been unprecedented, whether positively or negatively. Neo-Pentecostal practices have certain weaknesses, but the secret behind their pervasive and irresistible influence is their ability to make their practices and the Bible relevant to the ever changing needs of the people, along with their strong emphasis on the supernatural power of the Christian faith to meet the needs of both the soul and the body.

One Church's Response to Pentecostalism

Galana Babusa Yako

Mainstream churches in Nairobi are being seriously challenged by Pentecostalism, and many members of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church have joined Pentecostal churches.

Faced with this challenge, we, as the parish council, have agreed to undertake the following:

- After the service and during intercessions we call our congregants to come to the altar to be prayed for by the leader of the service. Those with special needs can also request prayers after the service from the pastor.

- Once a month, during the Sunday sermon, the preacher leads a discussion with congregants on such topics as the Holy Spirit, in which they share their views and understandings with one another.

- Occasionally, during Sunday worship, sermons are preached by lay preachers with a special gift for preaching. They are prepared for this through a special seminar and other guidance from the pastor, and with feedback from members.

- In the afternoons, following Sunday worship, there is the opportunity for fellowships to meet and for people to pray and worship in ways that will satisfy their spiritual needs. Pastors are available during this time to learn from the people and to help them in their spiritual growth.

Since introducing these measures, members no longer leave for Pentecostal churches, and those who had left are coming back.

In Spirit and Truth: Liturgy in Dialogue with Pentecostalism

Musawenkosi Biyela

The quest for unity must be a concern of every Christian, and the church's liturgy can and must contribute something to the unity of the body of Christ. I use the two terms, liturgy and worship, interchangeably. Worship is about who God is. God is a ruler but also a loving parent. We pay homage to our majestic God while celebrating God's love for us. Worship is the affirmation of God's worthiness, a word originating from the old English word "worthship."[1] Worship is vertical since we, the creatures, ascribe to God what God deserves from us namely, glory, honor, praise and supplication.

The word liturgy, *leitourgia*, derives from the classical Greek words *laos* (people) and *ergon* (undertaking). Therefore, liturgy is horizontal. It is about the awareness of the other person before God. It is what a person does for the benefit of others.[2] Liturgy shows an interest in people in general, and other Christians in particular. It contributes to enhancing every person's spiritual, social, emotional and material well-being. Liturgy and worship must be both theocentric and anthropocentric, focusing on both God and human beings. In this way, worship and liturgy become intertwined and are therefore sometimes used synonymously.

The tension between confessionalism and ecumenicity in worship and liturgy

Liturgy and worship are strongly influenced by doctrine. In the act of worship, we demonstrate our convictions about God, or "sell our God to the public." We use our *ordo* to show how we are different from others. Every denomination is susceptible to the sin of claiming a monopoly on

[1] Louis Weil and Charles P. Price, *Liturgy for Living* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21

the truth. If this attitude is at work in us, we will not be able to reach our fellow Christians.

Faithful to our Lord's desire, we will work toward Christian unity. Our Lord prayed for unity among his followers (cf. Jn 17:11; 21; 22; 23). Disunity fails Christ's cause. Unity is the work of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, God is spirit and truth and those who worship God must worship God in spirit and truth. This is what liturgy and worship are about. They must be led by the Holy Spirit. Liturgy under the power of the Spirit will always lead toward Christian unity. The Holy Spirit brings unity through the Word and sacraments (1 Cor 12:13). A liturgy driven by the Holy Spirit will increase our interest in other people and thus, through our liturgy, bridges will be built as we become ecumenical bridge people.[3] Whenever I lead God's people in worship I ask myself, in spite of my loyalty to my confession, Am I doing anything to contribute to Christian unity?

Christian unity cannot grow on a shaky foundation. In what I call an eirenic approach to unity, we pretend not to see that with which we disagree. For the sake of peace (*eirene*), we turn a blind eye to what we should be critical of. The best approach is to acknowledge that as a Lutheran I can learn from other traditions, and that my tradition also has something to teach other traditions. This cannot be achieved by being uncritical or hypercritical. There must be an adherence to the Lutheran principle of *sola scriptura*. Therefore, before I copy from other Christians, I must ask, Does what I want to copy go against Scripture?

I contend that in terms of liturgy Lutherans can learn a lot from Pentecostals. We can take over some, or parts of some aspects, while others must be completely rejected. Pentecostals also can learn a lot from Lutherans.

Liturgy as drama

An incorrect, albeit popular, sense of worship is a set of things we say when worshipping. This is why those with no written altar book say that they are non-liturgical churches. Even if that were correct, it would not

[3] Thomas Best and Dagmar Heller, *Worship Today. Understanding, Practice, Ecumenical Implications* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2004), p. 153.

apply to Pentecostals, because they do follow a certain order in their services. In this sense, every church has a liturgy.

Liturgy is a drama, each scene of which requires bodily expression. In every drama, there are moments of happiness and of sadness. Sometimes we feel like laughing, at others like crying. Liturgy is like that. There are penitential sections where we show contrition, and celebratory sections where we express joy.

Lutheran liturgy is on the whole very dignified, while Pentecostal worship is characterized by expressions of joy and dancing.[4] Pentecostals are sometimes referred to as "happy clappies," but to choose between dignified and exciting worship is a false choice. Both belong to the liturgy. As Paul Tillich aptly put it,

> The Spiritual Presence can only be described in such a way that ecstasy does not disrupt structure. The unity of ecstasy and structure is classically expressed in Paul's doctrine of the Spirit.[5]

By structure, Tillich means order and dignity. Lutherans will feel at home with that, but this cannot be done at the expense of rejoicing in the Lord. We appropriately show dignity and remorse when we confess sins. We also allow people to rejoice, even by dancing, after absolution has been pronounced. The call for a solemn assembly in the Bible is juxtaposed with a call for rejoicing in the Lord. The Book of Leviticus calls for a "solemn assembly" or "holy convocation" (Lev 23:3, 7, 8, 21, 24, 27, 35, 36, 37), and furthermore a call to rejoice in the Lord (Lev 23:40). In Leviticus 23:4, 37 the word used for worship is "celebrate" which calls for joyful expression.

The problem with a typical Lutheran liturgy is that we are cerebral when we should celebrate. The problem with Pentecostals is that they celebrate when they should be cerebral. Liturgy must be both cognitive and emotional. To choose between the two is reductionist.

At Pentecost, the worship of the early Christians, who were filled with the Holy Spirit, made people think that they were drunk. Ecstasy made them do things which were strange to people. This is probably what

[4] J. G. Davies, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 43.

[5] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 118.

Tillich referred to as "psychologically determined overexcitement."[6] It is interesting to compare Acts 2:13 with 1 Corinthians 14, where in verses 33 and 40, Paul calls for orderliness and dignity in the worship service. On this basis, I disagree with Young-Hoon Lee, who said that "the worship service at the Yoido Full Gospel Church is a dynamic celebration rather than a ceremony."[7]

I believe that worship must be both celebration and ceremony. When David danced before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6:14-16) this was a celebration. Psalm 95 shows two modes of worship. Verse 1 calls us to "sing" and "make joyful noise." This means to rejoice, to be lost in ecstasy, while verse 6 calls us to "worship," "bow down" and "kneel." This implies dignity. In Christian worship, we keep alive the tension between Good Friday and Easter in every worship service. Good Friday calls for dignity and Easter calls for an explosion of joyful celebration.

Liturgy and glossolalia

Speaking in tongues is divisive. While it may be genuine or fake, it is biblical. In the Bible, there are two types of tongues. In Acts 2, tongues were languages spoken by certain people; they were amazed to hear the languages spoken by Galileans. In 1 Corinthians 12-14, tongues were not recognizable. The gift of tongues, glossolalia, is a special prayer language that God gives to people. In 1 Corinthians 14:4, Paul says "those who speak in a tongue build up themselves." This agrees with Romans 8:26, where he says that the Spirit intercedes for us with "groaning too deep for words." For me this means that when we pray, the Spirit takes control. We are, therefore, no longer in charge. "We can only pray to God who prays to himself through us."[8]

Lutherans should not fight against glossolalia in their services. In 1 Corinthians 39, Paul says, "do not forbid speaking in tongues." The problem is that among Pentecostals glossolalia is **the** sign of someone having been saved. That is making a mockery of God. Glossolalia is not God's only gift.

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[7] Best and Heller, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 204.

[8] Tillich, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 120.

I was once prayed for so that I could speak in tongues. It did not happen. Michael Green speaks for me when he says, "I have myself asked God for it [tongues] and have not received it; instead he [God] has given me other gifts."[9] Not receiving this gift when fellow Christians were earnestly praying for it frustrated me. I was depressed until a Lutheran pastor who speaks in tongues told me to forget about what God has not given me, and to develop what God has given me namely, preaching and teaching.

In our worship services, we must learn to accept people who speak in tongues. But they must not brag about this gift. Boasting about what God has given us is a temptation unleashed on us by the devil.

Participatory services

What usually makes our services boring is that they are a one-person show. The strength of Pentecostal services is that they are participatory. Young-Hoon Lee stresses that Pentecostal services are not clergy centered.[10] Daniel Albrecht observes that "one of the most significant functional elements of a Pentecostal, oral liturgy is the active participation of all members of the congregation."[11] Carol Noren suggests that even the architecture of the worship place allows for maximum participation of the congregation.[12]

The Lutheran understanding of the priesthood of all baptized calls for lay participation in liturgy. A minister who prepares the laity to play a role in the liturgy is enriching it. Plurality and the variety of voices enhance the beauty of the liturgy. One may find a minister with a poor command of music chanting the liturgy, while in the pew there sits the music teacher from the local school. People can also participate in the general prayers of the church. Doing liturgy in this way will make it a public undertaking.

[9] Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 199.

[10] Best and Heller, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 203.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[12] Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold and Paul Bradshaw (eds), *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1992), p. 47-

The pastoral nature of liturgy

Liturgy is pastoral care done in public. In the Lutheran churches, this aspect of liturgy is not as strongly emphasized as it should be. Among Pentecostals, every event, whether positive of negative, becomes a prayer concern. In most cases, the person concerned will come before the congregation and be prayed for. Lutheran liturgy must be more human centered rather than form centered. One example is by praying for the sick.

Jesus sent his disciples to proclaim the gospel and to heal (i.e., Mk 6:7-13). In verse 13 we are told that, "They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them." In Lutheran congregations, the laying on of hands is rarely practiced. Anointing the sick with oil has become even less frequent. Our members go to the Zionists and Pentecostal churches for both these acts.

There is a danger lurking in everything good we do. Praying for the sick is for the glory of God, and God alone. Many Pentecostal evangelists advertize their "miracle crusade" on billboards, in newspapers and on the radio. In 2008, a Nigerian evangelist, based in London, came to Soweto. Buses were hired from as far afield as Swaziland. Miracles were promised and, indeed, many people were "healed." The following day, a Soweto newspaper reported that some of those who were "healed" had been healthy. They had been hired to fake illnesses. For instance, some pretended to be crippled and, once healed, threw their wheelchairs away.

There are two problems here. One is working for self-glorification. If we work for the glory of God, we will do as God says in the Bible and allow God to determine the outcome. The second problem is confusing healing with curing. The two are not synonymous. To cure is to make the symptoms of a disease disappear. To heal is to go deeper. One may still have the symptoms but be healed inwardly and restored to community. Paul prayed for the removal of the thorn in his flesh. But God said, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor 12:9). Therefore, praying for the sick is part of our mission. We must do it faithfully and leave the result for God. It is interesting that Paul, who healed many sick people, cast out demons and raised one young man from the dead, left his friend, Trophimus, ill at Miletus. This means that we must minister to the sick and allow God to determine the outcome.

Praying for the sick, anointing them with oil and casting out demons are not foreign to the Lutheran tradition. Luther testified after this sick-

ness, "In all congregations they prayed for me according to St James 5:14-15.[13]

Prosperity gospel

God promises material well-being in Psalm 23:1: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Jesus has come so that we "may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Poverty is unacceptable to God; God is pro poor and anti poverty. Therefore, the prosperity gospel that is preached by most Pentecostals is not a lie, but rather an overstretched truth. Being rich is thought to be the mark of being saved. As a result, many people who do not become very rich in these churches end up having psychological problems. They doubt their faith. Why is God not making me rich? Does that mean that there is something wrong with my faith?

The prosperity gospel becomes a tool for the pastor to fundraise, to encourage people to make generous offerings. People are told to bring "seeds" (the word offering is not used). The more the seeds, the greater the harvest. The method used to solicit funds from believers is self-serving, and makes the evangelist rich. It also creates a wrong attitude in the person bringing the offering. If you give generously, God will make you prosper. Malachi 3:8-10 is usually misapplied. The problem is that those offering money are bargaining with God instead of being driven by love. The generous offering is now driven by greed. It is rather like playing the lottery, expecting a million Rand return on a five Rand investment.

Instead of the prosperity gospel, we should preach the cross of Christ. The cross leads to glory, but in God's time.

Ex corda or written prayers?

Some Pentecostals criticize us for reading prayers instead of praying. Some members of mainline churches cannot pray *ex corda* (from the heart) in public. We need to encourage our members to pray *ex corda et ex tempore*, from the heart and without preparation. But to be overly critical of written prayers is wrong. On the cross, Jesus did not pray in his own words. He prayed, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

[13] Bengt R. Hoffmann, *Luther and the Mystics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), p. 197.

(Ps 22:1; Mt 27:46; Mk 15:4). The Psalmist's words were so relevant to what Jesus was experiencing at the time that they became his own.

While Pentecostals criticize written prayers, the pastor says a prayer and instructs the congregation to repeat after him/her. In this way, the pastor wants the congregation to appropriate his/her words. This is part of the ministry. It is therefore strange that the same pastor criticizes Lutherans for reading prayers from the altar book.

Conclusion

The Triune God is great. God does not belong to one particular denomination. Everyone or every group worshipping God has something to teach others and to learn from others. No church has a liturgy that is so perfect that it cannot learn and borrow from other traditions. This does not mean that we should copy everything uncritically. That may result in losing the whole gospel, as some practices are foreign to it. Let us view Pentecostals as fellow travelers on the journey of faith. We can share experiences with them while remaining loyal to our own confessions.

A Lutheran Critique of Popular "Praise and Worship" Songs

Gertrud Tönsing

Arising out of the charismatic movement, the "praise and worship movement" has had a global impact. According to Robert Webber, this movement is characterized by a "concern for the immediacy of the Spirit, a desire for intimacy and a persuasion that music and informality must connect with people of a post-Christian culture."[1] A distinguishing feature of the movement is its tendency to distinguish praise from worship and to see worship as a process that moves people into an evermore intimate experience of God. Praise is offered first. It extols God for what God does and is offered to God in the "forecourt of the temple."[2] Praise leads to more intimate "worship" focusing on the relationship with God and on who God is. This experience is likened to being in the Holy of Holies, and is often accompanied by intense emotional experiences of God's presence and blessing.[3]

Much of the music comes from mega-churches in the USA, the UK and Australia and effective marketing ensures that the music has international impact. My experience is that these songs indeed "connect with the people." They are sung in many congregations across South Africa, including in mainline churches. The impact of this movement on the Lutheran churches has been dramatic, and there have inevitably been conflicts around what our worship culture should be. English speaking Lutheran congregations are turning away from services dominated by organ music and the hymnal and are celebrating services with worship teams, guitars, drums and visual presentations. While some worship leaders are careful about what they teach, others simply use what is commercially available. This is sometimes rather questionable in terms of theology.

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[1] Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New*, revised and expanded edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p 128

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

I shall evaluate this movement from a Lutheran perspective, but many of the issues I raise are relevant also for other denominational traditions. My perspective is that of an academic in the discipline of hymnology, but also that of a participant in the movement in as far as I have used many of the songs in my congregation and in worship with children and young people. I welcome much of what this movement has brought to our church, but feel that people must critically engage with it and use the songs selectively. I firmly believe and have experienced many times that the songs we sing shape our personal theology much more profoundly than what we hear in sermons, or read about in books or theological papers. This also means that we must resist the cultural shift towards globalizing worship in the American style and the trend to push aside local and indigenous singing traditions.

There where worship teams have formed, services have become more participatory. Intense preparatory processes precede Sunday services, including engaging with the theme of the Sunday and musical rehearsals. There is much creativity, and young people are being drawn both to the teams and to the services. The movement has unleashed energy and passion and has led many people into experiencing something in worship they had never thought possible. Some people leave services feeling that they have experienced something of God's presence and are uplifted and encouraged, while others are frustrated because of what they experience as a shallow worship. I shall not discuss theology in the abstract, but would like to let the songs speak for themselves.

I have intensively studied the fifty songs on the CD, *50 Greatest Praise and Worship Songs—The Ultimate Collection.*[4] The CD represents a broad cross section of what is actually sung in congregations that use contemporary worship forms and includes some of the best of what has been produced in this movement over the last two decades. I have devised a simple technique to analyze these songs and have come up with fifty simple statements about faith that are either found in the songs or are important in Christian teaching. Subsequently, I have looked at each song in terms of content. I gave two marks if the statement is a main or dominant theme in the song; one mark if it occurs or is mentioned; half a mark if it is implied, even though not specifically stated. The results of this survey can be found in the appendix.

[4] The pamphlet in the CD describes the collection as follows "The songs recorded on 50 Greatest Praise & Worship Songs are the most-used worship songs in Christian fellowships around South Africa, as reported by the majority of congregations and denominations, and can be said to have played, and are still playing, a major part in the revival of worship as a lifestyle in the Church."

"I surrender my life"

With 44.5 percent, this statement scores highest and is perhaps most descriptive of what these songs are about. Praise and worship songs are about offering oneself, one's life, feelings, love and adoration to God.[5] I stand before God and I "pour out my life" is a favorite phrase in worship songs. I am the giver, God is the recipient of my sacrifice of worship. I am the actor, the subject and God the audience, the object of my adoration. The audience we are trying to attract is not the people, but God. [6]

This is the first problem in terms of the theology of these songs. While there may be nothing wrong with the statement in itself or with the urge to offer oneself up to God, according to a Lutheran understanding I am always the recipient of God's love and God's grace before. In return, I offer my small gifts and offerings during worship and in my whole life. My surrender is only the second step; it is a response to what God has done first. Worship always begins with God's action, not with our's. In his book, *The Great Worship Awakening*, Robb Redman writes that "worship is a movement of God among his people to draw them closer to himself."[7] In a divine service, God serves us first. We are not the actors and God the audience, but we are given a small part in a wonderful drama in which God is both director and principal actor. We should surrender our lives to God and sing about this, remembering that this is only the second act. Consequently, I suggest that in many worship songs the order of importance is reversed. The first part of Matt Redman's song, *I will Offer up my Life*, is an expression of surrender and adoration:

> I will offer up my life
> in spirit and truth,
> pouring out the oil of love
> as my worship to You.
> I surrender I must give
> my ev'ry part;
> Lord, receive the sacrifice
> of a broken heart.

[5] Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism—Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), p. 47.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[7] Robb Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening—Singing a New Song in the Postmodern Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), pp. 178–179.

The reason for my surrender is mentioned only at the end of the song, where Jesus' saving death is mentioned. This is not the case in many other songs.

> You deserve my every breath
> For You've paid the great cost;
> Giving up Your life to death,
> Even death on a cross. (CD 2, 14)

I am far less comfortable with this song than with Richard's *You Laid Aside your Majesty*, where a description of Christ's work is followed by the response of the believer, placing the elements of the drama in order of importance:

> You laid aside your majesty, gave up everything for me
> suffered at the hands of those you had created....

And then comes the adoration:

> I really want to worship you, my Lord.
> You have won my heart and I am yours.
> Forever and ever I will love you. (CD 3, 9)

"I (want to) feel God's presence"

With 41.5 percent, this statement is the second most prominent. While there is far too great an emphasis on feeling in the praise and worship movement, Lutherans, especially German Lutherans, have done themselves a great disservice by frowning too much on emotion. Emotion, too, has been created by God. It moves people to faith and action; lives can be touched and changed if emotions are roused. However, we need to be wary of excessive emotionalism. Emotions can be manipulated. An emotional "high" can be orchestrated though a certain kind of music and atmosphere. If people begin to equate an emotional high and almost orgasmic experience with the experience of God's presence then their faith is jeopardized. How can such a faith be sustained in daily life, where such feelings quickly dissipate? Is God only present when I feel something wonderful?

The praise and worship service builds on "ushering people into God's presence" through evermore intimate, emotional music and lyrics aimed at getting people to feel this presence. Often this process is successful. Nonetheless, the question remains whether God is left behind in the Holy of Holies when we move out of that intimate space, when we no longer feel God's presence? Whereas positive emotions are a wonderful byproduct of genuine worship, we are on dangerous ground when they become the goal of our worship services. No human relationship can endure if people are always searching for emotional highs. The same goes for our relationship to God. *The Happy Song* illustrates this:

> O I could sing unending songs of how you saved my soul.
> Well I could dance a thousand miles because of your great love.
> My heart is bursting, Lord, to tell of all you\ve done.
> Of how you changed my life and wiped away the past.
> I wanna shout it out, from every rooftop wing.
> For now I know that God is for me, not against me.
> Ev'rybody's singing now, 'coz we're so happy!
> Ev'rybody's dancing now, 'coz we're so happy!
> If only we could see your face and see you smiling over us
> and unseen angels celebrate,
> for joy is in this place! (CD 3, 5)

What happens if I am unhappy? If I am sick, have lost my job or a loved one? Even if I can enter into an upbeat worship service on Sunday morning, what happens when I am back home and no longer feel God's presence?

Despite the dangers of emotional manipulation, we should not refrain completely from allowing the expression of emotions in a service. According to Redman,

> Unleashing human emotion in worship can be healthy or destructive. It is true that many Pentecostals and charismatics try to manipulate the emotional state of the congregation by suggesting what worshipers should feel or how they should respond. In fairness it should be pointed out that charismatics are not alone in this, many Protestant churches also attempt to control expression by suggesting the kind of emotional state that is appropriate (it is acceptable to feel reverent and thankful,

but not joyful and celebrative; fine to be humble and contrite, but inappropriate to reveal brokenness and pain). [8]

"I am saved/we are saved"

This important Christian statement scores 39.5 percent. I focus here on the relationship between the "I" and the "we." Only ten of the top fifty songs have some "we " content and some change between the "I" and the "we ," such as the well-known *Lord I Lift your Name on High:*

Lord, I love to sing Your praises;
I'm so glad You're in my life,
I'm so glad You came to save us. (CD 1, 4)

The ratio is even more skewed with regard to other statements. In the case of "God loves me" versus "God loves us/the world" the ratio is 22 to 5. Praise and worship are primarily about "my" relationship to God, not "our" relationship to God and even less our relationship to one another.

"I worship Jesus/God"

This subjective statement scores thirty-nine percent. Once again, the individual is the primary actor and God the passive recipient, needing us to "give him worth" [the roots of the word worship]. There is less of a sense that God is always the initiator of the relationship between us:

I worship You, Almighty God,
there is none like You.
I worship You, O Prince of Peace,
that is what I love to do.
I give You praise,
for You are my righteousness.
I worship You, Almighty God,
there is none like you. (CD 1, 7)

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

While a few of God's attributes are mentioned, the focus is completely on what I do and on the action of worshipping and praising. God is not an actor but a passive recipient and God's attributes such as righteousness seem clichéd, devoid of a force of their own. One gets the feeling that it is not God who is being worshipped but the experience of worship.[9] In this collection there are notable exceptions to this general trend, songs which remember that everything, even what we do, is initiated by God. For example, the song *Only by Grace* has quite a Lutheran thrust:

> Only by grace can we enter,
> only by grace can we stand;
> not by our human endeavor,
> but by the blood of the Lamb.
> Into Your presence You call us,
> You call us to come.
> Into Your presence You draw us,
> and now by Your grace we come. (CD 2, 6)

"Jesus the exalted king reigns in glory"

In fifth place, the statement about Jesus being the glorious and exalted king, emphasizes the glory and kingship of Jesus, rather than his incarnation, suffering and death. While in this particular collection there are very notable exceptions to this trend, generally praise and worship music proclaims, in Luther's terms, a theology of glory rather than a theology of the cross. There is an exaltation of glory and power, and a tendency to ignore the hiddenness of God, and the vulnerability and suffering of the human Christ.

> Majesty, worship His majesty
> unto Jesus be all glory, honor and praise.
> Majesty, Kingdom authority,
> flows from His throne
> unto His own,
> His anthem raise. (CD 1, 8)

[9] Peter Ward, *Selling Worship—How what we Sing has Changed the Church* (Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2005), p. 210

Images of dazzling power, beauty, gold, jewels and the hierarchy that royalty implies, feature prominently in the metaphors used in these songs. Solid masculine imagery and language are used for Jesus and God. Such theology often results in a church centered on powerful personalities. Of course, Lutherans have their own problematic tradition regarding hierarchies. A favorite text used in these worship songs is the second part of Philippians 2, about Jesus being exalted and knees bowing, but the reason why he was exalted is largely ignored. As Lutherans, we need to affirm that Jesus is undoubtedly the exalted king, but the whole of Philippians 2 needs to be included in our songs. Jesus "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name" (Phil 2:8-9).

Fortunately, there are some songs that strike a balance between cross and glory, such as *Above all:*

> Above all powers, above all kings,
> Above all nature and all created things; …
> Above all wealth and treasures of the earth,
> There's no way to measure what You're worth.
> Crucified, laid behind a stone;
> You lived to die,
> rejected and alone. (CD 2, 5)

"Jesus is the lover of the soul": erotic imagery

The sixth characteristic of worship songs is their sometimes highly erotic imagery. Many worship songs fall into the category of "religious love songs." A classic example is the very popular, *Lord I come to You:*

> Hold me close,
> let your love surround me.
> Bring me near,
> draw me to your side.
> And as I wait
> I'll rise up like the eagle
> and I will soar with You,
> Your spirit leads me on
> in the power of your love. (CD 1, 5)

Modeled quite unapologetically on secular love songs, these songs use the erotic energy present in music and people and channel it to express love of God. Discussing this phenomenon in his book *Selling Worship*, Ward speaks of "sublimated eroticism" and "sexual imagery" that is used quite deliberately in songs.[10] An atmosphere of intimacy and excitement is established, where people are more likely to "feel" something. This is not new. Using the imagery of lovers has a long tradition, in Christian mysticism and pietism. It draws on the biblical imagery in the *Song of Songs* and interprets these as images of the love between Christ and the individual soul. Examples in the traditional Lutheran hymnbook include the famous, *How Brightly Shines the Morning Star*.

We must ask ourselves whether it is wrong to take especially young people's yearning for romance and passion and to channel it in the direction of intimacy with Jesus. In any healthy human relationship, we need to be able to express our love, our longing for closeness, our appreciation of the other and for being who they are. However, if this becomes the only way of communicating with one another, if conflicts are not voiced and negatives suppressed, the language of lovers becomes oppressive. In much of the praise and worship music, we find such language devoid of honesty, without the pain and conflict that life in faith brings, without an acknowledgement that life with God is not always a honeymoon. Such language quickly becomes shallow, papering over the struggles of faith.

This is also a problem in public worship, where not everyone feels the same intensity of faith and devotion to Jesus. In the genuine biblical images that use the language of lovers or of bride and groom, the bride is always Israel or the church as a collective—not the individual soul (Eph 5:22-33). Moreover, in the Old Testament, this image is usually used to accuse Israel of unfaithfulness (e.g., Hos 2:1-18), not to promote intimacy with God.

Most scholars agree that the poems in the *Song of Songs* refer to the love between man and woman. Transposing this relationship to Jesus and me as an individual can result in two things: either it levels out the difference in status between Jesus and me or, more likely, it cements the hierarchies in lovers' relationships and transposes them to the divine-human relationship. In the presence of my lover, Jesus, I am powerless and dependent. Jesus is greater than I am, he cares for me and protects me

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

but he also determines what I should do and where I should go. This then becomes a model for my relationship to my husband. The charismatic movement openly teaches the so-called "biblical" view of a woman's role in house and home. The marriage imagery in Ephesians largely justifies this. While religious love songs have their place, an overdose greatly undermines genuinely egalitarian human relationships. Unfortunately, in the theology of the praise and worship movement, a love song or, as praise and worship pioneer John Wimber calls it, a "lovemaking to God,"[11] is seen as the genuine, most authentic and intimate way to worship.

"Jesus died for me/us"

As already indicated, this collection focuses more strongly on the cross than is the case in the average worship song. While "Jesus died for me or us" scores a respectable thirty percent, there is little reflection on the meaning and the actual suffering involved. It happened in the past, and Jesus' presence now is much more important. The song, *I Believe in Jesus*, is typical and its theology probably better than most:

> I believe He is the Son of God
> I believe He died and rose again
> I believe He paid for us all
> And I believe He's here now,
> standing in our midst
> Here with the power to heal now
> and the grace to forgive. (CD 1, 2)

Only a few songs (11.5 percent) have the cross, which is central for Lutherans, as their main theme. It is important to have songs where the cross of Christ becomes real and present since otherwise the cross loses its transforming effect. If Jesus' death on the cross has no more meaning in the present, his suffering has no power to comfort me in mine, nor does his resurrection give me hope today.

In the songbook, *Songs of Fellowship*, the skewed relationship is quite pronounced, in spite of the fact that a number of traditional hymns are included. Ninety-six songs are listed under "kingship;" thirty-six

[11] Quoted in Webber, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 131.

under "cross and redemption;" and only fifteen under "resurrection."[12] If the cross is an event that has no relevance in the present except for the fact that it saved us, then the resurrection as an event is also no longer important. All that is important is that Jesus reigns. It may seem like a paradox, but a theology of glory actually hollows out rather than reinforces the central Christian message of Jesus' resurrection and the conquering of the forces of death.

"God transforms my life from sorrow into joy"

One of my strongest criticisms of praise and worship songs is that they ignore the sufferings and trials of this life, and pretend that these ended when I found Christ. Most of the worship songs do not mention human suffering at all. Of those that do, most (17.5 percent) speak of it as having been overcome: My life was full of pain and darkness until I met Jesus, and now my life is full of light, life and joy. Only four percent of the songs in this collection speak of God being present or comforting me in my sorrow, and only few admit that Christians may still have problems and face trials and pain. In this collection, there is no hint of lament at all. In theological terms, the worst lines in the songs in this collection read as follows:

> His Spirit in us releases us from fear,
> The way to Him is open, with boldness we draw near.
> And in His presence our problems disappear;
> Our hearts responding to His love. (CD 3, 2)

In reaction to such lines, suffering people are likely to feel alone in their pain. We plunge them into faith crises if we do not publicly acknowledge that suffering is part of Christian life. God holds us, even if we do not feel it, even if we doubt and even if our faith does not conquer our fear. Lutheran worship scholar, Marva Dawn, writes:

> I have counseled numerous people whose experience of worship that focused only on happy praise left them with huge feelings of inadequacy. "Why do

[12] Stuart Townend *et al.* (eds), *Songs of Fellowship*, Music edition (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1995), pp. 1158-1161.

> I feel so discouraged? I know I should praise God, but I just can't" they say. That is because the worship has not dealt with their feelings of guilt, their doubts and fears, their sense of hypocrisy and sinfulness. Many question their faith because they are not able to be as happy as their fellow believers. They can't enter into upbeat worship if their life is in shambles. Instead of recognizing the inadequacy of worship that teaches only one aspect of our relationship to God, they blame themselves for inadequate faith.[13]

This is where we Lutherans have a great contribution to make. More than most other faith traditions, our theology is able to affirm the cross as part of our Christian existence and to find comfort in it.

Fortunately, several more thoughtful songwriters have recognized this as a problem and are writing songs which allow lament and the expression of pain, doubt and fear. Notable are Graham Kendrick and Stuart Townend and to some extent Brian Doerksen. Nonetheless, it will probably be a while before this tendency enters the mainstream praise and worship movement.

"God wants to save the world; we are saved by the grace of God"

In a Lutheran worship service we should be primarily celebrating what Christ has done and will still do. If we continually emphasize what we are doing and will still do, God's saving will for the world and Christ's saving action are not much proclaimed. This is where the heartbeat of Lutheran worship should lie; it has been the heartbeat of Lutheran hymnody throughout the ages. We need to discover the contemporary songs that do this well. In the theology of the praise and worship movement a distinction is made between praise songs, which can have a proclamation element, praising God for what God has done, and worship songs, which should be the expression of a loving relationship.[14] This distinction does not exist in the Bible. Proclamation, praise and worship flow naturally into one another and our praise is always directed at God and at those around us who should hear about God's mighty deeds. Some

[13] Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down - A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), p. 88.

[14] Redman, *op. cit.* (note 7), pp. 37-38.

biblical psalms and hymns are almost pure adoration (i.e., Psalm 63) while others are almost entirely objective proclamation and teaching (i.e., Psalm 107). Many more flow from proclamation to joyous response and back again. The very narrow definition of worship, which is not biblically based, is impoverishing the content of these songs. What is there to say to God about what the relationship means to me much beyond "I love you," "you are wonderful" and "there is no one like you"? Biblical praise and worship are so much richer than that and are always rooted in what God has done and will still do.

"God is the creator of heaven and earth"

This statement scores a relatively low eight percent. Creation and the world as a whole are not considered as the vision restricted to me and my relationship with God. The other extreme could be found in Germany, during the era of rationalism, where songs focused almost exclusively on two themes: praise of creation and God the Creator, and the challenge to humans to live ethically responsible (morally good) lives. This was all the church had to say. Every age is one-sided in its own way, and the best way to guard against one-sidedness is to have in one's treasury of songs from many ages, with a great variety of themes.

"The Spirit is God's presence in our lives"

There is surprisingly little emphasis in the songs themselves on the Holy Spirit. Most of the songs are sung not about, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit is meant to witness and allow faith in Jesus is not far from the Lutheran understanding of the Holy Spirit and, in my opinion, the songs in this collection with the Holy Spirit as their theme are not problematic.

> Holy Spirit rain down, rain down.
> O Comforter and Friend,
> how we need Your touch again.
> Holy Spirit, rain down, rain down.
> Let Your power fall,
> let Your voice be heard,

come and change our hearts,
as we stand on Your word.
Holy Spirit rain down, rain down. (CD 2, 8)

Bottom of the range

The lowest scores are telling and quite disturbing: three percent for "God has compassion with those who suffer"; two percent for "Jesus died for the world"; and a mere one percent for "God wants us to love and serve others" and "God calls his church to be a sign of peace and love." A notable exception is *Shout to the North and the South:*

Rise up women of the truth,
stand and sing to broken hearts,
who can know the healing pow'r
of our glorious King of love.
Refrain:
Shout to the north and the south,
sing to the east and the west:
Jesus is Saviour to all,
Lord of heaven and earth. (CD 2, 17)

This is not radical social content, but at least this particular song is not completely devoid of social content as is the case in the large majority of praise and worship songs. Fortunately, there are a number of more honorable exceptions out there.

A future focus on a new heaven and new earth and restoration is also low in this theology centered on the "now" and my present experiences. While in the past an emphasis on the future has often functioned to trivialize present suffering, losing the element of hope for God's future also has negative consequences. What if I am facing death, my hopes and dreams are shattered and I have no hope for a future beyond this earthly existence? While Christian faith is about much more than simply saving souls for the hereafter, we should never lose our faith's transcendent dimension. If there is no hope beyond this life, we leave those alone who are facing death or an incurable illness. Eternity and the hope for the restoration of the earth need to remain part of what we preach and sing about at least on the Sunday at the end of the church year.

The statement "God is a God of justice" earns half a percent at most. Actually, in conservative Christian circles, "righteousness" seldom means the same as "justice" (CD 3, 3). There is very little awareness of social injustice and the fact that Christians may have a responsibility to act in this world. The statements, "Jesus healed and fed the hungry"; Jesus went to the outcasts"; "God hears the cry of the oppressed"; "Jesus meets us in our brothers and sisters"; and "we are the body of Christ" scored **zero** percent in this song collection.

The horizontal dimension of worship gets very short shrift in praise and worship songs. Many advocates of this movement would admit to that but they argue that Sunday worship is about the relationship of the believer to God. If that is right, so they argue, Christian love and service flow from there. Worship is the priority, everything else follows. Morgenthaler, a theologian of the praise and worship movement, writes that worship should be a priority, just as the commandment to love the Lord your God is the most important commandment. "Jesus knew and taught that God desires our worship above anything else. It should be number one on each of our agendas."[15]

But is the strong vertical focus of this movement justified? Did God really create us primarily in order for us to tell him how wonderful God is? Does God need us to "give him worth"? Do we "minister to the heart of God," as Morgenthaler puts it?[16] Is the picture painted not one of a narcissistic God, more like the idols of Israel's neighbors? Those gods wanted offerings and sacrifices and promised blessings and fertility if they were worshiped in the right way. But that is not the God who meets us in Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not accompany people into the Holy of Holies and teach them there to worship God. He went out into the streets, into unclean houses, sharing the lives of those who have been rejected and were outcast (Mk 2:15-17). He celebrated with them and brought God to them. He taught that loving the neighbor is as important as loving God. He held up the Samaritan as an example for us and not the priest and Levite who had just been to worship (Lk 20:25-37). He taught us that we serve him by serving others (Mt 25:31-46). And when he died, the gospels tell us, the curtain hiding the sanctuary was torn from top to bottom, breaking forever the division between God and his people (Mt 27:51).

[15] Morgenthaler, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 38.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

I do not believe that God created us so that we tell him how wonderful God is. God created us, because God loves life, and loves to be giving and creative. God wants us to be in the world, loving, serving and carrying out God's work. We need worship because we need to be filled again. God wants us to spend time in God's presence, to give us the message of love, and is glad when we respond in praise, adoration and thanksgiving. This is how I see God, and this is what our worship and particularly our songs should equip us for: to live the life God intended us to lead, sharing in God's love and creativity.

In our response to praise and worship music we should not be afraid to use drums, guitars and keyboards in our worship. We are following the best Lutheran tradition if we say that any instrument and any style of music can be used to worship God. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all worship music can be allowed into our sanctuaries. Some lyrics are so appalling that they should simply not be allowed. Fortunately, most of what is out there is not so much wrong as one-sided. One can allow a one-sided theology, provided one finds good songs or older hymns and choruses that can restore the balance. My experience with working with students is that they understand and react well to the concept of balance. We need to strike a balance in our themes, even if every generation has its favorites.

Furthermore, we need to make the effort to find the good songs out there, and there are many to discover. It is not easy, but well worth the time invested. Let us remember that the songs we sing shape us deeply. Let us not forget that it is the songs people will probably remember, long after the sermons have been forgotten. Let us make sure these memories are worthwhile.

The theology of the "Fifty Greatest Praise and Worship Songs"

Statement	Implied (1/2 point)	Direct reference (1 point)	Main theme (2 points)	Percentage
01. I Surrender My Life	13	12	13	44.5
02. I (want to) Feel God's Presence	11	15	10	41.5
03. I Am Saved/We Are	5/2	5/4	9/4	25.5/14 (39.5)
04. I Worship Jesus/ God	6	10	13	39
05. Jesus is the Exalted King, Reigns in Glory	1	14	12	38.5
06. Jesus is the Lover of My Soul (Erotic Language)	2	13	10	34
07. I Love Jesus/God	5	10	10	32.5
08. Jesus Died for Me/Us	0/3	3/4	8/3	19/11.5 (30.5)
09. God is Love (General Reference)	2	15	4	24
10. I Believe in Jesus	10	11	3	22
11. God/Jesus Loves Me	17	6	4	22.5
12. I Am Small, Weak, Undeserving	10	9	3	20
13. God Transforms My Life From Sorrow to Joy	5	7	4	17.5
14. I Am Joyful in God's Presence	5	4	5	16.5
15. I Want to Praise/ Sing to God	2	3	6	16
16. God Makes me Strong, Gives Me Power	5	8	2	14.5
17. God is Holy and Mighty, He Rules the Earth		6	4	14
18. God/ Jesus Forgives Our Sins	6	3	4	14
19. Jesus became Human	3	3	4	12.5
20. Jesus Rose from the Dead	3	5	3	12.5
21. Jesus Suffered, Experienced Pain and Humiliation	1	3	4	11. 5
22. Calling People to Praise/Worship		1	5	11
23. God Wants to Save the World	3	4	2	10.5
24. We are Saved by the Grace of God	2	2	3	9
25. God is the Creator of Heaven and Earth	6	3	1	8
26. God/the Holy Spirit Transforms us to be a Pure, Holy People.		2	3	8
27. God Wants Us to do His Will	3	3	1	6.5
28. God is my Guide through Life		3	2	5.5
29. God is Beyond Understanding /Description	1	3	1	5.5
30. God/Jesus Loves the World	5	3		5.5
31. The Spirit is God's Presence in Our Lives	2		2	5
32. God Will Give me Eternal Life	2	2	1	5
33. God Comforts me in Sorrow	2	1	1	4
34. Jesus Heals		4		4
35. God has Compassion with those who Suffer		1	1	3
36. The Powers of God Will Drive back the Powers of Evil		3		3
37. The Spirit Motivates us to Witness	3	1		2.5
38. I Am Sorry for Concrete Sins/ Wrongdoing	1	2		2.5
39. The Spirit Comforts and Guides			1	2
40. Jesus Died for the World	2	1		2
41. God Calls Us Into Fellowship and Unity	2	1		2
42. God Will Restore the Earth and Call All People to Himself	1	1		1.5
43. God Wants Us to Love and Serve Others		1		1
44. God Calls His Church to be a Sign of Peace and Love		1		1
45. All Nations will be Gathered before Christ		1		1
46. God is a God of Justice	1			0.5
47. Jesus Healed, Fed the Hungry, Went to the Outcasts				0
48. God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed				0
49. Jesus Meets us in our Brothers and Sisters				0
50. We are the Body of Christ				0

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Christian Life and in the Church: Lutheran Theological Reflections

Hans-Peter Grosshans

Given the unity in diversity of the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, it is appropriate to consider specific Lutheran theological insights into the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians as well as that of the church. What can Lutherans contribute to the present worldwide discourse on the Holy Spirit? What gifts of the Spirit do Christians experience in Lutheran churches? What is the Holy Spirit doing in our midst? What is the distinctive Lutheran witness regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the world in general and to other churches and traditions?

Lutheran spirituality and the life of Lutheran churches generally can be characterized by open-mindedness. Typically, Lutherans are curious to learn about everything that is real and possible in our world, and to understand what is going on. This open-mindedness is a result of the Holy Spirit, who liberates believers from earthly restrictions. In his *Small Catechism*, Luther answered what it means to believe in the Holy Spirit:

> I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus my LORD or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith … .[1]

It is clear that Lutherans experience the Holy Spirit in their coming to believe. We cannot on our own come to faith and trust in God. In fact, if people seek faith and trust in God through their own reason or strength, life becomes confused. Faith and trust result from God acting as the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, all earthly affairs and powers fall into the realm of

[1] Martin Luther, "The Small Catechism," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 200), p. 355.

the human mind, which deals with all that is real and possible on earth, because we as human beings are given the task to cultivate and make the social and natural world a better place for all creatures.

This understanding of the relation of the Holy Spirit and the human mind, as expressed in Luther's *Small Catechism*, has left its marks on Lutheran spirituality. One result is the open-mindedness of Lutherans, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

A second observation regarding how Lutherans experience the work of the Holy Spirit is that Lutheran churches are well organized. One can discern this not only at the Lutheran World Federation but in most Lutheran churches worldwide, whether in the north, south, east or west. Because of this, some critics falsely assume that Lutheran churches are missing the creative work of the Holy Spirit or even suppressing the work of the Holy Spirit with an excessive organization and regulation of church life. Because of the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches' popularity, some Lutheran churches are giving more attention to neglected aspects of the gifts and work of the Holy Spirit. These new movements and challenges dominate our awareness, and we overlook what we have already. We therefore need to interpret Lutheran churches and theology from the perspective of the continuing work of the Holy Spirit. What can we learn from them about how the Holy Spirit works?

As a German Lutheran, I am sometimes asked by Lutherans from other parts of the world how I can explain the lack of the Holy Spirit in the German churches. Because the German churches are declining in numbers, some have the impression that the Holy Spirit is no longer active in them. I think of the Protestant churches in Germany in terms of a marathon runner. Whereas the churches in the Global South are still running the first lap, feeling fresh and breathing easily, the German Protestant churches have already run half a marathon. They have had to find a rhythm in order to reach their goal. They have had to organize themselves for sustainability.

An example of this are the churches' excellent diaconal initiatives during the nineteenth century. These activities, which were certainly the work of the Holy Spirit, have been highly successful. In many cases today they have grown into huge organizations with hundreds of salaried employees. Although inspired by the Holy Spirit, their activities have had to be organized in ways that are sustainable. Doing this in long-term and sustainable ways and providing high quality services are the results of the work of the Holy Spirit. Even if the impression seems professional rather than enthusiastic, in striving to render high quality service, the work of the

Holy Spirit is experienced. This applies not only to the churches' diaconal work but also to pastoral care, Christian education, worship, etc.

Why define the works of the Holy Spirit theologically, rather than merely experience them?

I shall now turn to some Lutheran theological understandings of the Holy Spirit. First, we might wonder why we should define the work of the Holy Spirit theologically, and whether it would not be more appropriate to resist such theological reflection and instead be satisfied with the experiences of the Holy Spirit.

Neo-Pentecostals seem to be most interested in direct, immediate experiences of the Holy Spirit and of faith. What matters is living out the faith; theology seems like an unnecessary, often rather disturbing activity. While there are ways of doing theology that are quite distant from living out faith, good theology does not oppose faith but is a part of faith or an instrument of it. Because faith seeks understanding, faith wants to be informed about its own foundation. To do that, we have to step back a little from our immediate experiences or spiritual activities. We need some distance from living out the faith and the experiences of the Spirit to see and understand what is going on. It is in this sense that I want to reflect on the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians and that of the Church.

Who does not want to be inspired? Who does not want the church we belong to to be inspired? "To be inspired" means that the Spirit is given. When we speak that way, we do not refer to our own spirit, the spirit dwelling in us. Rather, the Spirit has to come from outside us. We receive a spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit—time and again. We never own the Spirit but receive the Spirit. The Spirit is like the water we have to receive time and again in order to survive. When we receive the Spirit, we do not possess it. The passive phrase, "to be inspired," expresses that the Spirit is not in our hands or of our making. The Spirit is life and communication, invisible, inconceivable, dynamic and ecstatic. The Spirit causes people to feel out of control and frightened. But the Spirit is also at work when people are gathering and are together in one spirit. We would call that team spirit.

What I have considered so far is not restricted to the Holy Spirit but applies to spirits in general. There are many spirits around, not all of which are good spirits. People experience being inspired by a spirit, but is it a good spirit? How do we distinguish between good and evil spirits? What are demons and

what are angels? And even if we are told that the spirit people experience is life promoting, we must still ask, What promotes life? What is true life?

What then characterizes the Holy Spirit? What distinguishes the Holy Spirit from other spirits? How can we tell and be certain that we experience the work of the Holy Spirit instead of the work of another spirit? By what criteria can good and evil spirits be discerned?

The first is that true life cannot be made by us; it can only be received and kept. The second is that although the individual may experience the Spirit and be inspired, transformed and created anew, this spiritual event aims at communion with others. The Spirit aims to relate a person with others, through communication and communion.

Starting points for reflecting on the work of the Holy Spirit

First, we could look at past experiences of the Holy Spirit. The main sources for that would be the Old and the New Testaments. Based on the experiences of the divine Spirit, we could discern what characterizes the work of the Holy Spirit and furthermore look at our ancestors' experiences in faith with the Holy Spirit.

Second, we could take the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, and consider how in those fundamental Christian creeds the Holy Spirit and its work are characterized. For example, in his interpretation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in the *Large Catechism*, Martin Luther described the work of the Holy Spirit.

Third, we could characterize the Holy Spirit's work by reflecting on the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is one of the divine persons, or one way in which God presents Godself to us. To reflect on this can help avoid some reductionist ways of considering God's activities, as when they are reduced to very specific activities of the Holy Spirit. Instead, we have to consider the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the works of the Father and the Son.

Experiences of the Spirit in the witness of the Old and New Testaments

In the past, as in the present, people have experienced the Spirit in many different ways. The Old Testament bears witness to many works of the divine Spirit. The Hebrew word *ruach* reflects the manifold and rich experiences

of the Spirit in Israel. As the Spirit of life, *ruach* was already there before God started the work of creation. *Ruach* is the breath of life, but also its power and energy. It is a divine and prophetic force. Israel experienced the divine Spirit in several of God's actions through which Israel was kept alive. They experienced the divine Spirit in the charismatic leaders of pre-kingdom times (e.g., in the Book of Judges), and in the ecstatic prophecy of early Israel (e.g., in 1 and 2 Samuel). Later, Israel experienced the divine Spirit in being bound to the kingdom, then in the prophets and the exile. In the exile, the Spirit was experienced as God, the Lord of life, who creates new life. Israel experienced receiving a new spirit and new life. God's Spirit empowered Israel to a new sense of life and created a community of people who were filled with the Spirit (e.g., in Ezekiel).

The richness of the experiences of the Spirit continues in the New Testament. The fundamental spiritual experience of the early Christians is best described by the apostle Paul in Galatians 4:4-7:

> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

In experiencing the Spirit, we believe that we are free, the children of God, no longer belonging to anyone as slaves but sitting at the table in the father's house like sons and daughters.

We find many experiences of the divine Spirit described in the synoptic Gospels. For instance, when John baptized Jesus, the heavens were torn apart and the Spirit descended like a dove on him, with a voice from heaven declaring Jesus to be God's beloved son (see Mk 1:10f.). Already at the beginning of Mark's Gospel, Jesus is presented as a charismatic person, filled with and driven by the divine spirit. Therefore we read in Mark 1:12, "And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness." In the New Testament witness, Jesus of Nazareth is "the" charismatic; he is the anointed of the Spirit, the messiah, the Christ.

Therefore, in his first sermon given in Nazareth, Jesus referred to the prophet Isaiah (61:1f.):

> The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the

> brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Lk 4:18f.).

When Jesus sat down after reading the text, they all looked at him expecting his interpretation. But Jesus said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). Jesus is "the" bearer of the divine Spirit on earth; he is "the" charismatic. If Christians want to have an example of a charismatic life, then the only example that can provide us orientation is that of Jesus. Jesus' entire life is the result of the divine Spirit's activities: starting with his baptism and temptation in the desert and ending with his last breath, when the Spirit leaves him (Mk 15:37). Not only was his public life Spirit filled, but also the fulfillment of his life in his resurrection, "who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 1:4).

After Easter, the divine Spirit was experienced in the formation of the first Christian congregations. There is a similarity between the incarnation of the divine Son and the "incarnation" of the divine Spirit in the formation of the church. The first Christians experienced the fulfillment of the Spirit's promise in the Old Testament in many phenomena, such as the Spirit being present in the church as it also had been in the temple; in women as well as men receiving the Spirit; in Scripture making sense as interpreted through Christ and the Spirit; in how the law was used in a spiritual sense; in the Spirit empowering people to witness to the faith; in ecstatic prayers (speaking in tongues) and prophetic speeches; in healings and in many more phenomena.

Especially the apostle Paul describes the pneumatic existence of Christ and the Christians. The Risen Crucified Christ appears to those who belong to him through the power of the Spirit. Through Christ in the Spirit they experience God's living presence. Therefore, in his writings Paul presents the gospel of the Spirit, who gives true life. With that he reminds Christians that they came to faith through the Spirit of Christ. He also calls for living in ways corresponding to that same Spirit. On the one hand, the Spirit is given by faith while, on the other, the Spirit is the principle of life for believers. The Spirit transforms their personal and social lives. Life is opened for divine creativity, a life in love with people who are close as well as far away.

From a Lutheran perspective, some essential characteristics of the Holy Spirit's work, as was experienced in the very early church and discerned in the New Testament, are especially relevant.

The Holy Spirit ensures Jesus Christ's presence in the church. In John 14:16-26, we read that when Jesus leaves his followers to return to reign over the world at the divine Father's right hand, the Spirit will come. The Spirit will comfort all those who long for Jesus Christ and his immediate presence, and the Spirit will advocate for believers in heaven before Jesus Christ and the divine Father. This is the Holy Spirit's most important work, although for us it is invisible.

The Holy Spirit enables communication among those who are separated from each other by language, culture and ethnicity. In Acts 2, the famous story about the foundation of the Christian church, the Holy Spirit unites and reconciles people through communication. Where the Holy Spirit is at work, the separations between human beings, which according the Old Testament were due to the attempt to build the tower of Babel (Gen 11), are overcome. The Lord confused the language of all the earth and the Holy Spirit ends this confusion and enables possible global communication. We could say that the Holy Spirit is globalizing the believers' minds and directing their awareness toward all other creatures on earth.

By ending the confusion in human communication, the Holy Spirit unites human beings as God's people, as a congregation of believers. The Holy Spirit has the power to found and form communions or congregations (see especially Acts 2:42), and to integrate their ethnic, gender, cultural, political and even religious differences. In this experience of the Spirit, Christians realize the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and promises, such as, for example, formulated by the prophet Joel (see Acts 2:17-21). The divine Spirit is present here and now. This not only applies to New Testament times. Christians at all times live in the awareness of the presence of the divine Spirit.

From a Lutheran perspective, the experience of the divine Spirit is very important in the formation of the Christian congregation. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ gathers the congregation of believers—the Church—as his body on earth. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ builds up the Church as his body on earth—both extensively and intensively. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ sends the Church as his body on earth into the world, to those who are not part of his body.

The Holy Spirit gives freedom. In the Spirit, believers can live in the presence of God. 2 Corinthians 3:3ff. is a very revealing text with regard to the experience of the divine Spirit, showing also that the experience of

the Spirit is a fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. Yet, the Christian experience of the Spirit opens up a new way of living in God's presence. Moses had to cover his face in God's presence because nobody can stand God's holiness. But now, with the Holy Spirit, it is possible to live in the presence of God. However, this is not an immediate presence, because in the Spirit we see God only as in a mirror. Life in the presence of God, created by the Spirit, is life in freedom. To create freedom is one of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. With this characteristic the Holy Spirit is clearly different from many other spirits which try to bind people. A very effective way of binding people is to fascinate them. Fascination is clearly a characteristic of bad and evil spirits. If people are bound by spirits, if spirits try to fascinate them, this is not the Holy Spirit at work.

The Holy Spirit leads believers into a close relationship with the divine Father. The Holy Spirit makes believers realize that they are the sons and daughters of God. In Galatians 4:1-11, Paul uses the distinction between slave and son. Both belong to the same house, but the slave has to work outside the house, in the field, and the son (or daughter) can sit at the table in the house. Although the social reality Paul is referring to here is what was experienced in former times, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that enables people to address God as "Abba."

When the Spirit sets believers free and makes them heirs of God, then the whole creation is positively affected. In Romans 8:1ff., we see the wider scope of the Spirit's work. Since all creatures, not only human beings, long for freedom from the bondage of decay, the suffering creation hopes, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. The Holy Spirit increases in the believer an awareness of creation's suffering and the responsibility for all creatures. Violating the unawareness of the intrinsic rights of all creatures and the necessity of dealing irresponsibly with creation are the work of bad or evil spirits.

The Holy Spirit is always directed to the common good. In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul shows very clearly that a variety of spiritual gifts are given by the same Spirit:

> To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to an-

> other miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:8-10).

Paul argues for accepting the different spiritual gifts rather than favoring only one or a few of them. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, he argues that "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." The main purpose and aim of every single spiritual gift is the common good. At the end of chapter 12, Paul argues for a division of spiritual labor by asking certain rhetorical questions. Are all apostles? No. Does not one Spirit give all spiritual gifts to everybody? They are given by the Spirit to each one individually as the Spirit chooses (1 Cor 12:11). Interestingly, 1 Corinthians 12:31 points to greater gifts than the ones mentioned before. Subsequently, it talks about an even better way, which is then explained in 1 Corinthians 13: the way of love. All spiritual gifts are of no use—neither for the individual nor the common good—if they are not practiced with love.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul summarizes his discussions in the previous two chapters: "Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts." One of the criteria for a good use of spiritual gifts is whether they contribute to building up the church. Experiencing the purely supernatural phenomenon of speaking in tongues is not satisfying for Paul. "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive" (1 Cor 14:14).

Paul recommends a more holistic approach that takes into account the natural capacities of a human being, as given by God the Creator. "I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also" (1 Cor 14:15). Nobody can say "amen" to a thanksgiving spoken in a tongue they do not understand. Again Paul uses as a criterion whether such activities "build up," in this case the other person.

The riches of the gifts and works of the Holy Spirit have to be ordered if they are to become fruitful for the building up of the church and every single believer. If all the inspired prophets in a congregation speak at the same time, only they themselves are built up by that spiritual gift. An ordered life of the church should not be viewed negatively, for it is a consequence of the richness of spiritual experiences and gifts, which have to be ordered to become fruitful for the common good.

The Holy Spirit has various effects on human beings which inspire and transform human life and that of all creation. Beside the already

mentioned gifts, Paul mentions some fruits or works of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22f.). The Holy Spirit

- Comforts believers and advocates for them in the world and before God
- Gives faith, love and hope to us. These three theological virtues are the threefold ways in which to live out Christian life
- Brings about certainty about their faith in the believers' hearts—the certainty of being a child of God, enabling one to address God personally
- Directs us forward into the future, rather than backward into the past or bound to past traditions
- Inspires people's hope, so that they are able to strive to make changes for the sake of a better life
- Activates the natural abilities and talents of people for the sake of life together. On the one hand, human reason is a capacity of the human soul, created by God, to explore and shape the world. On the other, it is the ability to love, believe and hope with all other human beings and creatures
- Gives spiritual gifts which might be called supernatural. They are given to contribute to the building up of the common good in the church. However, these spiritual gifts are only used well if they are in combination with human beings' natural capacities.

The creative work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's work also has to be considered in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity and in relation to all of God's work. Attention must be given to the so-called "economic Trinity," the work of God in the world. The one God carries out different work in the mode of the three "persons" of the Trinity. This is also Martin Luther's approach in

his explanation of the Apostles' Creed in the *Small Catechism*. God the Father creates at the beginning of everything that is and continually in the course of the world. God the Son reconciles and God the Holy Spirit gives new life. These different works of the Triune God do not contradict one another. If we believe that the Holy Spirit always renews life, then this is not in contradiction to God's creative work. As Paul says, praying in the Spirit does not go against our natural capacity; it only makes sense if it corresponds to our mind. We can say that with the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, our natural capabilities are also renewed, such that we use them with the intent of building up the church and others. Making positive use of our natural capacities in contributing to the common good is an effect of the work of the Holy Spirit: we use our abilities to serve God and our neighbor.

Martin Luther saw a very close relation between creation and the work of the Holy Spirit. In his view, even our natural gifts and works cannot be conceived without taking the activity of the Holy Spirit into consideration—as he developed in his interpretation of Gal 3,3:

> Therefore all the duties of Christians—such as loving one's wife, rearing one's children, governing one's family, honoring one's parents obeying the magistrate, etc., which they regard as secular and fleshly - are fruits of the Spirit.[2]

This remark clearly shows that the Holy Spirit is not directing Christians to special spiritual realms of life, but involves them more deeply in worldly life as creatures within the whole of creation. Sometimes people think that the Holy Spirit opens the door to a spiritual life for us which we cannot apprehend through our natural capacities. But, according Luther, this is wrong. Instead, the Holy Spirit opens up a new way of perceiving our natural world and our own natural capacities. With the Holy Spirit we learn to understand ourselves and all there is as being part of God's good creation. Therefore, the Holy Spirit increases our involvement in creation and raises our awareness of and sensitivity toward the creatures that are with us in this world. With such sensitivity, Christians who are inspired by the Holy Spirit contribute to the renewal of life in a world

[2] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), in Jaroslav Pelikan (ed.), *Luther's Works* , vol. 26 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), p. 217; see also *WA 40/I*, 348, 2-5: "*Ergo omnia officia et fructus spiritus sancti: alere prolem, diligere uxorem, obedire maistratui sunt fructus spiritus. Aput Papistas sunt carnalia, quia non intelligunt, quid creatura.*"

which does not have the power to renew itself. The Holy Spirit is a divine gift to us, to direct us to become more human and to realize humanity on earth. There where people are working to strengthen humanity in this world, the Holy Spirit is the inspiring force behind such efforts. Nonetheless, this is often the more hidden rather than the obvious work of the Triune God who reigns in a gentle way over our world.

In classical theology, the Holy Spirit is referred to as *spiritus vivicans*, the Spirit who makes alive. The Spirit is creative not in the sense of God the Father, who creates out of nothing but in that he brings to life that which is dead and renews that which is old. The Holy Spirit is the power of love in life, which renews everything. As the power of love, the Holy Spirit heals that which is hurt, injured and divided. The Spirit sanctifies sinners and transforms "old Adams" into new human beings. The Holy Spirit is the power of faith, giving witness to us and guaranteeing that God is our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our brother. Finally, the Holy Spirit fulfills, completes and brings to its goal the world reconciled with God, by renewing and transforming it totally as the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is the power of hope, empowering people to overcome the evil and oppression in this world and to work and fight for a life in freedom, justice and the participation of all.

In all of this, the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers as individuals and as a communion that is the Church. The Holy Spirit makes Christians and the Church as a whole holy. It is a holiness that we receive.

The Church responds to this given holiness in its threefold diaconal ministry:[3] the diaconate of love, the diaconate of truth and the diaconate of hope. As a result of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of the Church, the Church names its own guilt and that of humanity as a whole in its diaconate of truth. In its diaconate of love, the church resists injustice in all its forms, and through acts of love, tries to prevent injustice from recurring. In its diaconate of hope, the church testifies to the power of God's grace over sin and so encourages believers to work for the coming reign of God.

[3] Cf. Eberhard Jüngel, "Belief in the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," in Hans-Peter Grosshans (ed.), *One Holy, Catholic, Apostolic: Lutheran Perspectives on the Church. LWF Studies 1/2009* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation), forthcoming.

Spirituality and Social Activism: Insights from Luther

Paul John Isaak

In the history of Christianity the word "spirituality" is as challenging, if not as threatening, as the words "social activism." Both are subject to misunderstanding and misuse. When we speak of a spiritual person, we generally understand this as being someone whose "head is in the clouds." When we speak of an activist, we sometimes intend it as a warning: here is a person at the forefront, inevitably causing problems.

But such thinking is out of place, for according to Thomas Merton there is a close link between spirituality and theology (and ethics), which must be affirmed and recognized for the mutual good of each.

Contemplation, far from being opposed to theology, is in fact the normal perfection of theology. We must not separate intellectual study of divinely revealed truth and contemplative experience of that truth as if they had nothing to do with each other. On the contrary, they are simply two aspects of the same thing. Unless they are united there is no fervor, no life and no spiritual value in theology; no substance, no meaning and no sure orientation in the contemplative life.[1]

Therefore, here we aim to reconcile the ways in which we understand our world and God to bring healing to a world and religious traditions that have dissociated spirituality and social activism, to bring together the struggle of holy people sharing in holy things (*communio sanctorum*) and the struggle for social, political and ethical justice.

Consider the following down-to-earth example, vividly described by Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu:

> It is only a "living God" interested in the everyday concerns of his children who can also make his mind known to them through prophecy, visions and dreams. It was also striking to see how such belief in the reality of God had

[1] Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation* (Wheathampstead, Herts: Anthony Clark, 1972), pp. 197-198.

> influenced and been incorporated into the popular Ghanaian imagination. Thus in Ghana, car bumper stickers carry biblical and religious slogans like "Angels on guard keep off" and "Satan is a loser." A number of small businesses also advertise their ventures in religious language: "Anointed Hands Hairdressing Saloon," "Jesus is a Winner Restaurant" and "Blessed Hands Tyre Repair Services." What makes such spirituality distinctive is that the African traditional heritage within which such spirituality is expressed is itself intensely and pervasively religious.[2]

Against this background, I will address three key aspects of Lutheran responses to neo-Pentecostal influences. First, the present era is witnessing an ever-increasing interest in the phenomenon of spirituality. Prayer and meditation groups are burgeoning; retreat centers cater to an increasing number of lay women and men in addition to professional religious workers who are seeking a deeper spiritual life; radio and television documentaries, seminars and conferences, centers for the study of spirituality—all of these have come to the fore in the last decades.[3]

This fascinating growth of and widespread interest in spirituality reflect important global trends. The fact that spirituality is generating so much interest all over the world today provides an interesting perspective on the limitations of contemporary theology as a discipline and on the needs of those who are involved in the church. In some ways, significant correctives to traditional Western theologies are to be noted in this regard. Spirituality or orthokardia (right heart) has become something of a buzz word, along with orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxis (right action). We shall focus on how these three terms are related and what challenges they present to Lutherans as they encounter Pentecostalism.

Second, we shall reflect on Lutheran responses to the so-called "prosperity gospel" of churches which, in their preaching and ministries, emphasize the importance of believers becoming prosperous, being delivered from the devil in their personal lives and being healed from the misfortunes they face.

Finally, we shall examine from a Lutheran perspective whether Pentecostals are merely focusing on personal holiness at the expense of wider transformation. Put differently, do privatized and internalized faith and

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[2] J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), p. 235.

[3] Celia Kourie, "The Turn to Spirituality," in P. G. R. de Villiers (ed.), *The Spirit that Moves: Orientation and Issues in Spirituality* (Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2006), p. 21.

spirituality avoid the global, externalized aspects of social activism? In short, what undergirds social activism within Christianity?

Orthokardia, orthodoxy and orthopraxis

During the twentieth century, mainline churches were divided between those emphasizing ecclesiological issues and those emphasizing sociopolitical and ethical issues, or between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, and three theological approaches were developed. The first two approaches were developed mainly by European and North American theologians, namely neo-orthodox and liberal theologies. The third approach was developed by various liberation theologies, such as Black, African, Latin American, Minjung, Feminist, and Womanist theologies. But most of these theologies did not directly or adequately address the matter of spirituality. These mostly academic theologies were mainly preoccupied with the issues of orthodoxy or/and orthopraxis and only secondarily with orthokardia.[4] And it is precisely the factor of orthokardia that has emerged in the twenty-first century.

Meanwhile, we have witnessed the rapid growth of neo-Pentecostal, Evangelical and African Initiated Churches (AICs). The questions that member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church have been pondering are, Why are these churches growing so rapidly? and, Why are Pentecostal churches making such inroads in other churches? Although there might be many answers, I believe that such growth is due to the rediscovery of spirituality or the "thirst for God." At the outset, we can state that the "secret" of the growth of Pentecostalism is that this movement has made the church and the experience of God more relevant to the laity.

Three media—the biblical, the oral and the musical—function as channels through which the communal experience of spirituality is transmitted and experienced. The fundamental symbols of Pentecostal spirituality are biblical. Pentecostals consciously attempt to understand the biblical messages and appropriate them in their communities. Biblical terms and images abound in their worship, language and lifestyle. Any doctrine, practice, or innovation faces the question of whether it is biblical. Pentecostals see themselves as a "People of the Book," and

[4] In the last few decades, the study of spirituality as an academic discipline has come increasingly to the fore, with a number of courses and programs in spirituality at tertiary level, particularly at universities and seminaries.

as such, their understanding of the book shapes their lives and their community experience. Pentecostals seek to transmit their spirituality in the framework of biblical images, and they filter their experience of God through their "reading" of the book.

Pentecostals use oral tradition as a second important medium of their experience of God. The oral dimension of their spirituality appears most obviously in Pentecostals in the Global South. They are people of the book and of the spoken word, but also people of music and movement. Pentecostals seek to worship their God with their whole being. They intuitively present their physical bodies as instruments of worship. They seek to move with the Spirit. Pentecostals experience God as embodied people propelled by the Spirit, which is expressed through their songs. Thus, Pentecostal communal spirituality is borne in and conveyed through biblical symbols, oral exchanges and musical expressions.

Spirituality is generally understood to mean experiencing God and the transformation of life as outcomes of that experience. Spirituality or orthokardia refers to a lived experience of God (thirst for God), and the life of prayer and action which results from this. At the same time, it cannot be conceived apart from orthodoxy and orthopraxis. All these three aspects are essential, so that the divine human encounter might acquire greater depth and meaning. Therefore, a true understanding of the nature of spirituality will effect personal, societal and structural transformation, and help to bring about more united, peaceful, reconciling and healing communities. In short, in contrast to former views of spirituality, according to which spirituality was to be separated from earthly concerns, contemporary spirituality together with orthodoxy and orthopraxis fully embrace the phenomenal world and enter passionately into its affairs.

One further aspect of orthokardia that comes, to be sure, from Jesus of Nazareth is its radicalism. Jesus goes to the "root" of things; he does not accept worldly equilibrium but is daring in denouncing the old and proclaiming the new. The gospel shows us that Jesus was, in Christian terms, a radical. The good news is radical; the response to it must be a radical *metanoia*. Jesus lived a radical spirituality and undertook a radical mission because he knew that the crisis of his time needed a radical answer; he answered a radical call from the Father (Lk 4:18ff.).

Today's crises demand a radical response—a response of radical change that gets at the roots of individual, social and structural sins. This is not simply a radical political option; it is a radical spirituality. Whenever we embrace such orthokardia we no longer narrow our scope to our con-

cerns, our desires and ourselves, but it is our vocation to transform the entire creation of God. The confession of Augustine of Hippo becomes our deeper longing:

> I no longer desire a better world because I am thinking of the present creation as a whole. And, in the light of this more balanced discernment, I come to see that higher things are better than the lower, but that the sum of all creation is better than the higher things alone.[5]

Faith and the "prosperity gospel"

Jesus Christ is the Savior, Victor and Liberator, and we humans are minor liberators engaged in securing provisional and relative yet joyful victories over such sins as economic exploitation, racism, slavery, sexism and political oppression. At the same time, we must ask how God is concretely dealing with humanity. Or, alternatively, How are the Bible, the newspapers and the banks related in the divine human encounter? To put the question even more directly, Is there salvation in the message of the "prosperity gospel"?

These important questions have everything to do with justice. Justice is of such importance to God that we cannot imagine that theologians would leave economics to economists and politicians. Ulrich Duchrow notes that Matthew 25:31-46 answers Bonhoeffer's important question, "Who and where is Jesus Christ for us today?"[6] Jesus comes to us in those who are hungry, homeless, sick and imprisoned. Basic human needs are listed here—food, clothing, shelter, health care and, by implication, the basic political need for human dignity and integrity.

This question of Bonhoeffer's is especially important today because there are churches whose religious leaders personally enjoy the prosperity gospel, sometimes at the expense of their churches' impoverished members. Today, the fastest growing movement within neo-Pentecostalism are these "health and wealth" churches.[7] Especially in poor communities

[5] Quoted by Emmanuel Clapsis (ed.), *The Orthodox Churches in a Pluralistic World: An Ecumenical Conversation* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2004), p. 137

[6] Charles Villa-Vicencio and John W. de Gruchy, *Doing Ethics in Context: South African Perspectives* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1994), p. 200.

[7] Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 29-31 and 175-177.

this prosperity gospel promises the two things that are so badly needed: health and wealth. People are promised that God's miraculous power will heal incurable diseases and bring wealth to those who faithfully support the church's ministry.

Unfortunately, those who preach the prosperity gospel exploit the poor, who give money expecting that they will be blessed a hundredfold, as well those who are desperately ill and are willing to grasp anything that promises relief from suffering. The strategy is most obvious when people are emotionally aroused by music, the pastor's or bishop's rhetoric and the collective effervescence of crowd behavior at such rallies or church gatherings. People come forward in great numbers to offer their money in order to be touched or prayed over. But, what is questionable is the extent to which such a prosperity gospel is in line with the message of Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is pure manipulation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let us contrast this with Martin Luther, the son of an early capitalist entrepreneur, who was nonetheless still conscious of his peasant forebears.[8] Luther's entry into university, the monastery and, finally, to becoming a university professor, meant that he had moved from one social class into another. Today, we would probably describe Luther's lifestyle as middle class.

In Luther's time, capitalist practices were openly promoted by the church, government, society and, most importantly, by a few great banking houses. Luther was conscious of the impact these practices had on the poor, and did not mince his words when condemning the capitalistic practices he believed to be wrong. For example, Luther's writings, far from sanctioning the new capitalist society, contain a strong element of revolt against the exploitation of the people by the church and banks. It is noteworthy that the pope who clashed with Luther was a Medici banker, and that the indulgence salesmen were of the Fugger banking house. The bankers had a great stake in the collection of indulgence money.[9]

With his usual bluntness, Luther called those who promoted such practices "murderers and stranglers" because they were engaged in various "tricks and evil practices" by which the poor became beggars and the church and rulers became a "dangerous class." [10] In short, Luther's economic writings reveal a deep compassion for the poor and a strong concern and commit-

[8] George Forell, *Faith Active in Love* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1954), pp. 26-27.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[10] Walter Altmann, *Luther and Liberation: A Latin American Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992), pp. 102-103 and 108.

ment to justice. According to Walter Altmann, Luther's economic views were centered on people's basic needs rather than on profit.[11] It is within such a context that Luther started his revolutionary activities in church and society, customarily and inadequately known as the Reformation.[12]

In my view, Luther's two most significant contributions were his opposition to the selling of indulgences and the translation of the Bible so that people could have direct access to God's Word.

Through direct contact with his parishioners, Luther became aware of the jubilee indulgence announced by Pope Julius in 1510. The proceeds from this were to be used to build the new basilica of St Peter in Rome. Luther did not agree with the selling of indulgences and stated that "Christians are to be taught" that it is much better that the basilica of St Peter "were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones" of the people.[13]

It would be wrong to understand Luther's position only in terms of his theological dispute with the Roman Catholic Church. Luther's clash with church authority was over a pastoral and not only a doctrinal matter. Indulgences had theological, sociopolitical and economic connections. Indeed, the Reformation movement began with Luther's concern for the people who were exploited by the purchase of indulgences to assure them of salvation. Thus, 1517 marks the beginning of the Reformation fight against the claim that the human soul's destiny after death could be determined by the purchase of indulgences, as well as against the purchase of indulgences that contributed economically to a system that benefited the ecclesiastical and political elite. The far-reaching theological, political and economic implications of the Ninety-Five Theses became obvious to everyone concerned, with direct implications for how we view the prosperity gospel today.

Why were Christians purchasing indulgences? In Luther's view, the church appeared to promote them as a cure to heal the sinner and an attempt to vanquish sin. He viewed them as the attempt by human beings to heal themselves, to make themselves righteous or to be in control of their own salvation. To gain this healing, forgiveness of sins and righteousness, people were willing to buy indulgences.

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[12] Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), p. 16.

[13] Martin Luther, "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," (1517), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 30.

For Luther, such human remedies were nothing more than "smoke and mirrors." The suffering that concerned Luther the most—resulting from humanity's broken relationship with God—can efficaciously be addressed by God alone. Much to the dismay of theologians of glory, such as the preachers of today's prosperity gospel, every possible human avenue toward righteousness is cut off; we cannot fulfill the law, nor choose freely that which is pleasing to God. [14] Consequently, Luther could not keep silent; he raised his prophetic voice against this assault on the power of God. If the charge of degrading God were not enough, Luther also accused the papacy of robbing the poor who bought indulgences in order to fund the great basilicas in Rome.

The second aspect has to do with the Holy Scriptures. The message of the Bible was something to be proclaimed: the joyous news of salvation and liberation that requires the *viva vox* of the church as a *Mundhaus*. In other words, the church is the place of the mouth where the gospel is shouted by the preacher and the congregation; it is not a *Federhaus/ Tintenhaus*, a domain of theologians and politicians.[15] Most importantly, if we ignore the social and religious roots of Luther's protest, the true essence and meaning of the Reformation is bound to be misinterpreted, and the figure of the reformer himself distorted.

All of Luther's most characteristic actions—translating the Bible, drafting and posting the Ninety-Five Theses, his struggle against how the church was dealing with its financial affairs and his opposition to other social practices of his day—can only be seen in their true light when we recognize in them the work of a man who lived and perceived the immense catastrophe of his time in economic, pastoral and theological terms and, in that light, firmly grasped the Word of God. In short, he gravitated theologically between gospel and praxis. He insisted that faith, inspired by the gospel, must express itself in love for the neighbor.

Social activism

We need to be mindful of the criticisms that have been raised against classical Pentecostalism: its escapist theology that makes it insensitive

[14] Deanna A. Thompson, *Crossing the Divide: Luther, Feminism, and the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 20-21

[15] Robert M. Fowler, Edith Blumhofer, and Fernando F. Segovia (eds), *New Paradigms for Bible Study: The Bible in the Third Millennium* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 261.

to structural and social problems; its dualistic conception of life in which the world is viewed negatively; the legalism and fundamentalism that denies its members evangelical freedom; and the neo-Pentecostal theology of prosperity that gives false hope to the poor.[16]

As Luther observes, "he who wants to be a true Christian … must be truly a believer. But he does not truly believe if works of love do not follow his faith."[17] To put it differently, having been made righteous by Christ, we become "a Christ" toward the neighbor by enabling the poor to have their daily bread.[18] According to Luther, "love your neighbor as yourself" has nothing to do with "childish toys" such as "walking around with a sour face and a downcast head" or "wearing dirty clothes." [19] Such religiosity and moral posturing is basically done out of self-interest. Against such a motive, God sets God's Word of justification by faith alone, which makes us righteous before God. At the same time, all human deeds and good works are redirected to earth, where we ought to be engaged in love seeking justice, reconciliation, healing and peace.

How then might churches and Christians react to situations of injustice? Recently I wrote the following letter to a Namibian newspaper:

> As a Namibian and a theologian, I want to make the following comments on the role of the church or religious leadership regarding the situation of Zimbabwe. The leadership of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) faced a dilemma concerning the situation in Zimbabwe. According to media reports some of the church leaders opted to be in favor of prophetic theology while others followed the state theology.
>
> Those who followed the prophetic theology are followers of the dictum: if you want peace, work for justice and thus against social, political and economic injustice. The church that works for justice in the world is an integral part of the church's missionary work, equal in importance to sharing faith, worship, friendship and comradeship. At the same time, such a leadership must make clear that justice is a wide and holistic concept, ranging from economic and political liberation to basic human rights

[16] Rafael Malpica-Padila "Re-counter and Reconciliation: The Task for Latin America," in Paul Varo Martinson (ed.), *Mission at the Dawn of the 21st Century: A Vision for the Church* (Minneapolis: Kirk House, 1999), p 154.

[17] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), in Jaroslav Pelikan (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 27 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 30.

[18] Luther, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 367.

[19] *Luther*, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 57.

> and human dignity, to peace activism and equal gender relationships. Like the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, and like Jesus' ministry, the church's mission is about cooperating with God in the call of all people always and everywhere, including Zimbabwe, to justice, peace, and to avoid theft, corruption and civilian persecutions.
>
> There are also those church leaders, unfortunately inside the CCN, who have aligned themselves with the state theology. They want to dance to the tune of the government or the ruling parties and their propaganda. At best, in their religious garb, such church and religious leaders want to be politically correct and to be honored by the boss (Baas). They will sing more loudly "viva aluta" rather than "viva Christus." They want to promote a theological justification for supporting the status quo, for example in the case of Zimbabwe, by dancing to President Robert Mugabe's tune. Such church leaders misuse theology and the mission of the church for their own purposes and should never have been in leadership positions in the first place.
>
> Looking through the eyes of the world we can only say to these two types of leadership the following: The church perceives itself as a mystery, as the incorruptible body of believers on earth, in the face of human frailty. Yet in the face of such temptations as diamonds, gold and the good life some of our religious leaders are aligning themselves with ideologies of political correctness and dancing to the tune of the ruling parties, the elite and their propaganda machines.[20]

Put plainly, a Christian's zeal for God's honor and dignity must show itself in corresponding action that is directed toward the neighbor. Such an understanding of Christian ministry means that God breaks into our world and invites us to be involved in the creative and liberating dynamics of God's love in history. Moreover, while human efforts cannot remove sin from the world, God's creativity involves us in these dynamics, so that we engage in seeking partial, provisional and relative victories today.

Finally, in our theological reflections and practical applications, we have stressed that orthokardia, orthodoxy and orthopraxis are interwoven. We are convinced that the Spirit is the one who moves us on our journey to take orthokardia more seriously.

[20] *The New Era*, at **www.newera.com.na**, 8 May 2008.

On not Limiting the Scope of the Spirit's Activity

Karen L. Bloomquist

The rise of Pentecostalism, among other things, has provoked Lutherans and other Christians to give more attention to the power and work of the Holy Spirit. Usually we tend to focus on how the Spirit is received by and active within human beings, whether individually or collectively. This is certainly pervasive in many passages of both the Old and New Testaments, where individuals received the power of the Spirit in order to carry out certain callings, most pivotally Jesus at the onset of his ministry (e.g., Lk 4), or where the Spirit is the power holding together the early church (such as in Acts 2 and in Paul's letters). From this follows the tendency to focus especially on whether a person or faith community does or does not "have the Spirit," and to make judgments on that basis.

This is troubling, first of all, because of the implication that the Spirit is something some Christians possess and others do not. Furthermore, it seriously limits the scope of where and how God's Spirit is active. The Spirit is not merely a private, interior pipeline to God, nor are the power and presence of the Spirit confined to the hurch. Our faith is too limited if it is not caught up in the whole sweep of how the Triune God continues to be involved in all that is, has been and will be.

As Christians, we cannot conceive of the Spirit apart from the Triune God, who is deeply and comprehensively involved in the whole of creation and the fulfillment of all that is. "God's presence permeates and comprehends all things."[1] God's creating, redeeming, enlivening and consummating activities are interrelated aspects of who we confess God to be as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the principle of God's immanence in creation and of the participation of creation in the life of God.[2] The Spirit is an essential aspect of the entire sweeping, transcendent, mysterious, interconnected life and activity of the Triune God, who is both glimpsed and veiled throughout creation. "The same

[1] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1991), p. 411.

[2] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "The Working of the Spirit of God in Creation and in the People of God: The Pneumatology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," in *Pneuma* 26:1 (Spring 2004), p. 25.

Spirit who brings forth life in God's creation also raises the Son from the dead, dwells in believers, and finally glorifies God's creation."[3]

But do we really believe that the Spirit of God is active in the particular social, economic, political and environmental challenges we face today? Or do we become agnostics in this regard, assuming that God has exited from the scene? Do we really believe that the Spirit of God is alive and at work not only in the hearts and lives of believers but also in cultures and societies and nature itself?

"Blaspheming the Spirit" has been described as "not wanting to perceive and to take seriously the clear and concrete demonstrations of divine action under the conditions of earthly life."[4] How is the Spirit of God active in the midst of injustices, oppression and the other death generating forces that surround us? Can we sense this pulsating activity of God's, participate with God in this, and believe and live in light of how the Spirit of God is actually transforming creation and society in our times? Or, do we succumb instead to cynicism, fear and hopelessness?

God's Spirit takes effect in human beings and in other creatures as the breath of life. *Ruach* (usually translated as breath, wind or spirit of God) is found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, or as *pneuma* in the New Testament. This is the power that accompanies God's Word. The Israelites experienced the power of the One they called YHWH reaching not only into their lives but also into the entire created world, as the essential movement or energy of God.[5] *Ruach* is the inexhaustible, ever-creative power of God, the life-bestowing force of creation and re-creation (redemption). God is alive and active as *ruach*, giving life to all that is. God's "breath" expresses God's life-creating, life-preserving goodness. Through God's *ruach* we live in a pattern of interconnections that is personally enlivening and in common with all that is creaturely.[6]

As the Psalmist praises God,

> you ride on the wings of the wind. … you make springs gush forth in the valleys. … you cause the grass to grow for the cattle …when you send

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[4] Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, transl. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), p. 219.

[5] Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, "The Holy Spirit: Power for Confessing Faith in the Midst of Empire," in Karen L. Bloomquist (ed.), *Being the Church in the Midst of Empire* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2007), p. 132.

[6] Welker, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 160.

> forth your spirit (or breath) they are created; and you renew the face of the ground (Ps 104:3, 10, 14, 30).

On these matters there are obviously significant differences among Christians in various parts of the world, based on whether their allegiances are primarily to worldviews and practices of modernity, or whether they are in touch with indigenous sensitivities and worldviews in which the sacred also permeates these other arenas of life. Modern worldviews and practices have emphasized what human beings can do, over and often against nature, as exemplified in various technological and economic "developments." This is in contrast to older worldviews, in which human beings act in ways that reflect that they are a part of the rest of creation. Under historic mission influences, these older worldviews have often been mistakenly labeled as "pagan" or "not Christian" and thus ruled out of bounds. Some interpretations of Christian missionary movements that were brought to Africa and other parts of the world in the past, and focused almost exclusively on Jesus Christ and the salvation of human beings, have contributed to truncated, narrow understandings of who God is and what God is about, rather than the wider views suggested above.

In addition, dualistic tendencies throughout the history of the church, but especially in some European based theologies, have tended to separate spirit and body, elevating the former over the latter. The bodily and material are then associated with what is considered spirit-less and hence, "God-less." Yet the Bible cannot be read, beginning with the first chapters of Genesis, without discerning how much the Spirit of God is intertwined with what is created, physical, embodied. "Biblical imagery constructs the universe as all-together 'inspirited.'"[7] Africans, for example, knew this long before the Bible was brought to them. The original, holistic, biblical sensitivities were not lost here in the same way as has occurred in much of the Global North. The challenge is to consider how this can be reappropriated, revalued in ways that will again open up a wider, richer scope of what God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is doing in our own day.

Consider how a more all-encompassing view of God's Spirit has developed in some African Independent Churches (AICs) in Zimbabwe,

[7] Catherine Keller, "The Flesh of God," in *Theology That Matters* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), p. 97.

for example. Drawing upon the earlier Spirit empowered involvement of Zionist and Apostolic churches in that country's liberation struggles for independence, as well as Western environmental theologies, the emphasis later shifted to "the earth-keeping Spirit," with healing and restoring of nature seen as vital aspects of salvation. Wider cosmic dimensions of salvation have gained prominence, along with the commitment to form an ecological world community through the indwelling of the Spirit. A tree planting Eucharist indicates that Christ not only saves human beings but also heals and protects nature as it agonizingly awaits redemption.[8]

A further matter is that of how God is conceptualized, referred to, or addressed. It is striking how consistently God is addressed in prayers as "Father," to the exclusion of a rich variety of other ways Christians might address God. It has been observed that this first became prominent in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in turn influenced what missionary movements of this era took to other parts of the world. Jesus' own address of God as "Abba" (a familiar version of "father") conveyed a relationship of intimacy. But removed from that original setting and used in societal contexts that are deeply patriarchal, exclusively "Father" references for God tend to reinforce and give legitimacy to hierarchical, patriarchal arrangements in churches, families and societies. If the connotation associated with "Father" is of a transcendent God removed from earthly realities, the deep sense of God being interrelated with all is lost. What is needed is a diversity of images, metaphors and concepts for referring to and addressing God, including from local cultures and traditions.

Although the salvation of human beings was an obvious focus in Martin Luther's theology, he refused to limit the scope of God's presence and activity in this way. He considered God to be active throughout society and the rest of creation—in and all around us. This is why so many of his writings were addressed to the social, economic and political issues of his day. Traditional Lutheran theology (à la "two kingdoms") has not reduced God's activity to a "spiritual" realm, but insists that God is also active in the wider "secular" world of economics and politics.

[8] Marthinus L. Daneel, "African Independent Church Pneumatology and the Salvation of All Creation," in *International Review of Mission* 83:326 (April 1993), pp. 143-166 (especially pp. 160ff.).

> God acts creatively and redemptively both in our hearts through the Word of God and in the structures of society through institutions and offices … in both dimensions of life there can be only one criterion of God's will, namely the sustaining and redeeming love of God in action."[9]

Furthermore, Luther insisted that God is "present in every single creature in its innermost and outermost being. ...so that nothing can be more truly present and within all creatures than God with his power."[10]

The Spirit of God helps us to perceive God in the midst of creation. The expansive scope of the work of God's Spirit is conveyed especially in Roman 8:19ff. Here the redemption of all creation is at stake, not human redemption from creation.[11] The background to this text are vast structures (economic, political, etc.) that imprison us and creation within time, nature and history and, as we are realizing today, the very climate of the planet itself. Creation itself is in pain and suffering, waiting and hoping with us for God's redemption. The increasing signs of environmental devastation are evoking a new awareness of how the relationships that God intended between plants, animals, the sea and the air—the earth as a whole—have been disrupted by human sin.

In summary, I suggest that if Lutherans and others who may have underemphasized the power of the Holy Spirit are effectively to address the challenges coming to them from Pentecostals, they need to give more attention to how the Holy Spirit is powerfully present connecting, empowering and transforming:

- **Connecting**: The Spirit is the effective force connecting people across all the assumptions, distinctions and barriers that would separate them from each other—such as those of different tribes, genders, lifestyles and moral convictions. "The Spirit becomes knowable as the power of God that creates new life relations and peace in situations…where each side has written off the other."[12] A

[9] Klaus Nürnberger, *Martin Luther's Message for Today: A Perspective from the South* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2005), p. 3.

[10] Martin Luther, "That These Words of Christ, 'This is My Body," etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," (1527), in Helmut T. Lehmann, *Luther's Works*, vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961), p. 58.

[11] Douglas John Hall, *Professing the Faith. Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), p. 167.

[12] Welker, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 173.

profoundly relational understanding of human life is inspired by deeply Trinitarian understandings of who God is (*periochoresis*). The power of the Spirit was present in the early church (at Pentecost), in the church as a communion throughout the ages, and is an icon of the interconnections throughout creation. Through such connections we are able to be with one another, accompanying, suffering with, sharing burdens and joys, not being alone.

- **Empowering**: Social, economic and political challenges facing people in Africa and elsewhere have, for far too long, led to a sense of helplessness, dependency, victimization, infighting and power grabbing. Too often the result has been a pervasive sense of powerlessness and despair. In the midst of this, the Spirit of God is active as a Spirit of truth telling, of breaking through the veil of vested interests, lies and false spirits. The empowering Spirit unleashes courage for communities to name what is going on and to begin to change it. The Spirit frees people from the consequences of powerlessness due to sin and raises up those beaten down by oppression.

- **Transforming**: For Christians, the Resurrection is the most central, radical way in which God's transformation occurs: death is transformed into new life, destruction into new creation. Those joined together by God's Spirit participate in the power of the resurrected Christ (Rom 1:4); they become one Spirit with the Risen and Crucified One.[13] The transformation, healing and redemption of bodies and minds, of earth and society is an ongoing activity of the Spirit in and among us, if only we have the eyes of faith in God's promises to see and to live in that hope:

> [For] the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the children of God….the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom 8:21-23).

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

The Holy Spirit Strengthens Us[1]

Rogate R. Mshana

The Hebrew Bible refers to the Spirit as *ruach*, the motherly power alive in wild storms and gentle breezes, the breath of life and therefore, as incarnated in Jesus, the true image of creative, unremitting love. This dimension of the Spirit connects the cosmic, the personal and the social—that is, all of God's creation. Clearly, the Holy Spirit is the power of all that lives—creative energy, breath, air, wind and tempest.

I believe that women understand better than men the power of the Holy Spirit because they are themselves an embodiment of God's creation of whom Jesus was born by the power of the Holy Spirit. When, early in the morning, my non-Christian neighbor milks her cow, she always puts the first drops of milk into her mouth and then spits into the sky in the four points of the compass—north, south, east and west—to thank the spirit or the creator for the blessing of life that she finds in the milk. I call this the cosmic Spirit.

In Matthew 9, when the woman craved for the healing Spirit in Jesus, she touched his garment and Jesus realized the power of the Spirit moving from him to her. This I call the healing Spirit. This is the same Spirit the churches called out to in 1991 at the Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), "Come, Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation" and, in 2005, at the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Athens, "Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile."

This same Spirit enabled the apostles in Acts to share with one another, each one according to their need. Those who did not share were punished. I call this the Spirit of a sustainable, egalitarian community. This is the same Spirit we receive in Holy Communion.

This is the same Spirit who moves an Indian woman, picking a lemon during the night because guests have come, to apologize to the tree that had expected to sleep without disturbance. Or, when after planting beans my mother prays to ask God for the creative germinating power. I call

[1] A Pentecost homily delivered on 13 May 2008, chapel of the Ecumenical Center, Geneva. Much of this was inspired by insights in Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, *God's Spirit: Transforming a World in Crisis* (New York: Continuum and Geneva: WCC Publications, 1995).

this the Spirit of all living things. This is the same Spirit who inspires women in the Amazon to embrace trees, and the Cochabamba people, struggling against the privatization of water, to engage in active non-violent resistance. I call this the Spirit of respecting the common good. This is the same Spirit who led Archbishop Desmond Tutu to initiate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a solution to the legacy of apartheid in South Africa. This I call the Spirit of reconciliation.

The Holy Spirit is God's creative and transforming power encompassing all creation and is not confined to Christians only.

As Christians we affirm the Holy Spirit in the Apostles' Creed and in the virgin birth of Jesus. In other words, Jesus Christ's DNA is the Holy Spirit. So, when we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we receive the Holy Spirit who is cosmic, personal and social. Through baptism, the Holy Spirit empowers us to see more clearly the world around us. We can use our minds in ways that exceed our human capacity. The truth is revealed in us because the Holy Spirit is the truth.

Speaking to his disciples shortly before his death, Jesus characterizes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:15-18). Jesus Christ also describes the Holy Spirit as "advocate," as the one who "strengthens" and "fortifies" (Jn 14: 26).

What then are the fruits of the Spirit that will enable us to discern the presence of the Holy Spirit? The fruits of the Spirit are revealed in love/agape, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5: 22-23).

The coming of the Holy Spirit on that first day of Pentecost had a powerful effect on the disciples. The fearful, intimidated disciples, who met behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, now felt free to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, the despised and hated Nazarene. And it was not merely a passing phase of momentary enthusiasm. Peter's sober preaching in Acts 2 and the testimony of the rest of the early Christians show how deeply rooted the Spirit's influence was. The Spirit now dwelt in them and armed those who were in themselves weak with divine healing power.

They left the closed upper room and spoke about the love of Christ and lived out that love. Their listeners also sensed this power. The words they heard penetrated their hearts and awoke their consciences; there was hope for the people. They obeyed the disciples' instructions, turned to God, believed the gospel and received the Holy Spirit themselves. We are told that 3,000 of them were baptized that day.

The Holy Spirit continues to demonstrate that love of Jesus still today. To the present day, the Spirit has been working through the churches to touch the lives of the vulnerable and marginalized in our countries.

What is the Holy Spirit in Christ calling on us, who receive her power, to do?

Essentially, we are called to be bold and not to submit to intimidation and fear. We are told to leave our protective upper rooms and to move down to the people. The Holy Spirit is God's active force and helps dispel our fears. The tasks to which we are called, with the help of the Holy Spirit, are those to which Jesus was called:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Lk 4: 18-19).

This is what Jesus commissioned us to do. Today we face a severe ecological crisis due to unsustainable patterns of production and growth that have been driven and promoted by both capitalism and Communism. Powerful nations wage imperialistic wars to control resources; the powerful exploit small farmers, fisher folk, women and unemployed youth. The powerful usurp, occupy and destroy the lands of Indigenous Peoples. Corporate corruption is rampant around the world.

The superpowers point their fingers at one another over the exploitation of Africa's resources (the new repartitioning of Africa). China, India and Brazil want to sit at the capitalists' table as new members in order to share in the spoils of their natural resources, trade and finance. Meanwhile, Western voices are arguing that the populous China's thirst for oil and other African resources threatens their interests in an increasingly competitive market. A greedy business community is allowed to speculate on finance, as well as oil, commodities and food prices. The rapidly growing gap between the rich and the poor is threatening peace. But these are not regarded as problems because the liberalized market is like a religion. Today, corporations control more than seventy-two percent of global trade and continue to plunder in Africa, Asia and Latin America, creating an enormous ecological debt, destroying people's liveli-

hoods by playing around with food prices. Segregation and xenophobia have intensified with migration. Human trafficking targeting women and children is also on the increase.

I am afraid that many of our churches have not been bold enough to point to the main culprits. This is so because there are elements of intimidation by those who finance the life of the churches, and the churches are fearful of the powerful governments or corporations who are their donors.

Using language that includes all, the churches avoid pointing to who the real culprits are. They refuse to touch the root of the problem and take refuge in making vague statements and generalizations. Thus the churches allow a "theology of cynicism" to destroy what the ecumenical movement has achieved over the last sixty years.

We have not allowed the Holy Spirit to break us out of our fear filled and closed upper rooms. Only a few church leaders have had the courage and personal fortitude boldly to confront the earthly empires today. I am afraid that members of the ecumenical family prefer to focus on internal power struggles. There is a tendency to marginalize those who are critical; we give them labels that discredit them and put them down.

This ecumenical family lives in fear, yet we had the Holy Spirit with us when we prayed in Porto Alegre, "God, in Your Grace, Transform the World." We have prayed together for the healing power of God in the Holy Spirit when we gathered in Athens, in Accra, in Winnipeg, in Sibiu, in Nairobi and in many other church gatherings around the world. Our statements continue to remain brave words on paper. We need more actions inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Like the disciples let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, come and energize us, break us out of our fear. Let us be bolder than we have been. The main fruits of the Holy Spirit are faith, hope and love. The most delicious fruit of all is love, for love is never satisfied with injustice but rejoices when the truth wins! May the Holy Spirit continue to transform us and the world so that all may have life and life in abundance. Amen.

Responding as Lutheran Churches to Pentecostal Influences Today[1]

As Lutheran churches in Africa, and in many places throughout the world, we are surrounded by various types of Pentecostal churches. These churches emphasize the importance of accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Savior and being "born again" through "Spirit baptism," gifts of the Spirit such as speaking in tongues, deliverance from the forces of evil and the ills of daily life, inspired lay leadership and expressive praise worship with powerful preaching and praying. In addition, more recent forms of neo-Pentecostalism also emphasize material prosperity as a sign of God's blessing.

As Lutherans, we often experience these rapidly growing churches as competitive threats since their popular appeal may attract some of our members. Sometimes charismatic features associated with Pentecostal churches—such as testimonials, healing, exorcism and praise worship—have been incorporated into the life of our churches. Spiritual gifts practiced by some members, such as speaking in tongues, may be tolerated rather than rejected. This is not new, since throughout church history, established churches have often been challenged by various renewal movements of the Spirit, which at first tended to be rejected, but later were incorporated, or became sources of learning and renewal for the whole Church.

We are thankful and praise the Triune God for all the spiritual gifts and fruits of the Spirit with which God has blessed the whole Church, including faith itself. Lutherans need not react defensively to those who question whether the Spirit is active in and among us, or feel in competition with Pentecostal churches. Our rich theology of the Holy Spirit is central to how the Triune God is active in our lives and world, creating, redeeming and sustaining all of life.

As Christians, we receive the fullness of God's Spirit in many ways, but especially through baptism with water and through the Word. God's

[1] This message is based on the presentations and discussions at the Lutheran World Federation, Department for Theology and Studies' theological seminar, "Critical Lutheran Beliefs and Practices in Relation to neo-Pentecostalism," meeting 6-11 July 2008 in Soweto, South Africa.

decisive action through baptism, apart from any initiative on our part, rules out the need for any second ("believers" or "Spirit") baptism. In baptism, we are buried and rise with Christ, a drama which is repeatedly reenacted in worship. Luther certainly knew the power of demons. Consequently, in Lutheran baptismal liturgies, the congregation denounces the powers of evil, the devil and all the ways in which sin draws us from God, and confidently confesses faith in the Triune God. Through baptism, we are "possessed" by the Spirit to live in communion; spiritual gifts flow from this indwelling. Liturgies explicitly remembering baptism remind us of the power we received when we were baptized. This power continues to be renewed in us today, especially through Holy Communion.

The Spirit who animated the church at Pentecost is active in many ways today. We need to acknowledge and affirm more clearly the many ways in which the Spirit is active in our lives, in churches and beyond the church. There is no deficit of the Spirit's gifts and fruits in Lutheran churches. We only need to confess boldly what we believe, teach it and live it out.

Some theological questions and concerns

We appreciate and can learn from the vitality and some of the practices of the Pentecostal churches. At the same time, we must raise some theological questions about what is being taught and practiced by some of these churches, and what this implies for us as Lutherans. For example:

- In Pentecostal churches, is there an overemphasis on personal, immediate spiritual experience to the neglect of critical theological reflection, that is, faith seeking understanding? While theology is important for communicating the faith meaningfully to people today, have Lutherans sometimes overly emphasized theology and undervalued spiritual experiences?

- Is there too much focus on ecstatic "spiritual highs" to the neglect of the many less dramatic ways in which the Spirit is continually enlivening, sustaining and empowering human beings, communities and the rest of creation?

- How active the Spirit is in a church is sometimes measured by a dramatic increase in membership, but is the Spirit necessarily less

active when this is not the case? The Spirit is also active in forming structures that can sustain churches over the long term.

- We receive God's Spirit through the Word and sacraments. Have the life transforming and healing powers of baptism and Holy Communion been overlooked?

- Is the Holy Spirit emphasized to the neglect of the other ways in which the Triune God is active in our lives and in the rest of creation? Do Pentecostals have a sufficiently Triune understanding of who God is and the different ways in which God acts in the world?

- The heart of the gospel, God's undeserved gift of grace, is, for example, compromised by implying that blessings of prosperity or healing will come to people because of their faith, prayers, or works.

- Does concentrating on whether individuals are saved or blessed limit the scope of how God is involved in our lives and world? Where is the prophetic critique and call to transform social, economic, political and environmental injustices?

- While the Bible is the privileged witness to God's Word, it must not itself be deified. We must question tendencies to read the Bible in literalistic ways, or apart from its wider context, or in ways that deny rather than affirm life for all today. A Christological hermeneutic is central for Lutherans. The Spirit is present as we read and interpret the Bible in community with one another, thereby counterbalancing our own subjective readings.

- Central for Lutherans is the cross, transforming our present experiences of suffering and death. In some Pentecostal churches, a theology of glory seems to overshadow a theology of the cross; Easter is emphasized to the neglect of Good Friday. Some Lutherans, on the other hand, may overly emphasize the cross instead of the new life and joyful exuberance of the resurrection.

- Some Pentecostals seem to focus primarily on life after death, whereas others focus too much on material prosperity and success

in this world. How can material well-being and eschatological hope be kept in tension with each other, such as through the Lutheran paradox of being both "in but not of this world"?

- Is there sufficient appreciation of how both the sacred/holy and the secular/profane are arenas in which God is active, or does the sacred tend to "take over" all that is secular? How can a Lutheran "two governances" framework help?

- What audience do neo-Pentecostals appeal to—the poor or the upwardly mobile—and what are they being offered? What does emphasizing that God provides material blessings say to those who continue to struggle for their basic survival? On the other hand, what does a focus on the spiritual to the neglect of material needs imply about the scope of God's concern?

- Prosperity has to do with how resources are rightly distributed among all. If we do not prosper together there is no prosperity. Giving or sacrificing to God should not be done in order to prosper.

- Being blessed by God should not be measured by what people "have." A person's health and wealth should not be seen as indications of a right relationship with God. On the other hand, poverty must not be glorified. When people move up, they sometimes move out of the Lutheran church. How do we relate to those who are prospering?

- Placing too much emphasis on healing through prayer and the laying on of hands, and trusting in God alone to heal, can lead to the danger of no longer seeking medical care and treatment. As Lutherans, we disagree with this. On the other hand, if churches only provide medical care, without addressing people's spiritual needs, they become only secular NGOs. The healing powers of both God and medicine are needed.

- If exorcism is to be practiced, then criteria, guidelines and training are needed. There is a great danger of exorcism being misused. A focus on casting out demons can avoid going to the root of the problem. Dialogue beforehand with the person affected, along with careful discernment and psychological assessment are necessary.

Further, the demonic may be present not only in persons but also in oppressive social, economic and political realities. How can these be exorcised?

- Some assume that neo-Pentecostalism is popular in Africa because it draws upon African spirituality. On the contrary, it typically rejects indigenous cultural beliefs and practices. Instead, its popularity may be due to a globalized "Americanization." Neo-colonizing, homogenizing forces are at work here, including in the kind of worship and songs commonly used.

- Do some leaders of Pentecostal churches reflect roles previously played by religious shamans or political rulers? Are some Pentecostal leaders too self-absorbed and focused on building their own "kingdoms" in competition with other churches to the neglect of being ecumenically involved? Is this also the case for some Lutherans?

Lutherans especially need to give further attention to the following:

- **To relate theology to people's daily life challenges:** many of Luther's writings addressed the challenges of his day; we need to do the same today.

- **To understand and appreciate the whole scope of how the Holy Spirit is active: the Spirit is active in our lives,** in how we relate to one another in church and society and throughout creation. The Spirit may use us, for example, to speak the truth even at great risk. Renewal movements, where the power of God's Spirit has been especially evident, have often emerged in times of economic turmoil and political persecution.

- **To explore more deeply the meaning of sanctification:** the Holy Spirit makes us "good"—we are not so on our own. The Holy Spirit empowers us to forgive and to do good, even to our enemies. But is sanctification totally the work of God in us, or is there a sense in which we participate with God? Might this be understood as God cracking open our self-centeredness and turning us toward others, so that we participate in God who is love?

Recommendations for those planning and leading worship

Worship should be dynamic, creative and participatory and not a "one-person show" led only by the pastor or evangelist. Bring the altar and the people closer together. Encourage members to exercise their various gifts in worship and other activities of the congregation.

A good balance is needed between order/tradition and spontaneity/experience. Although the apostle Paul had concern for good order, he still did not prohibit speaking in tongues. Be open to spontaneous expressions of emotions, such as lament or joy.

Concentrate less on set forms or structures and more on how effectively to communicate the faith in relation to the daily concerns, needs and problems facing the people. Luther had a sense of the holy pressing into the ordinary aspects of life; incorporate this more into worship. Use local languages whenever possible. Sermons should provide the opportunity for responses from or dialogue with the people.

The power of the Holy Spirit is experienced especially through prayer. It is personally empowering when persons and concerns are named specifically in the church's intercessory prayers.

Be creative with different parts of the liturgy, bringing in fresh symbols and dramatic actions. For example, consider how absolution itself is a holy *kairos*. Emphasize what can be seen and touched, as well as that which can be heard. Consider incorporating ancestral traditions in appropriate but not uncritical ways. Appreciate that not only the sermon but also the whole liturgy and our participation in it give us a foretaste of God's salvation.

Songs used in worship should be theologically sound, drawing upon the rich Lutheran and other historic traditions, as well as being lively and creative, engaging people and local cultures today. Intentional efforts should be made to find, select and create appropriate music for worship. The theology conveyed in popular songs associated with Pentecostal praise and worship, also used in many Lutheran congregations, should be carefully examined. For example, are the words focused mostly on the intimate relationships with Jesus, to the neglect of *agape* love that overflows to the neighbor? Are there gender differences in how women and men relate to the erotic imagery in these songs? Why do so few songs express anger toward God, or invite us to wrestle with God, or remind God of what God has promised? How can a wider array of human emotions and responses to God be reflected in the music used in worship?

Recommendations related to education

There is an urgent need for all church members to understand distinctive theological emphases associated with Lutheranism, and how these speak to their daily lives and challenges today. What does it mean not only to worship Jesus but also to follow him? The Lutheran church has been known as a teaching church, but in many congregations today there are almost no educational programs beyond Sunday worship. Consider weekday educational opportunities, workshops, home visits, Bible studies and discipleship groups.

Relating to people, caring for their actual needs and educating all members are all important but impossible for the pastor to carry out when one pastor is serving a number of congregations. Training more lay persons to carry out this work is essential. Teaching centers for ordinary Christians need to be built up and strengthened in order to prepare them to take over various responsibilities as volunteers in the church. The gifts and ministries of all God's people need to be nurtured and developed.

Too often Lutherans turn to the widely marketed and readily available publications from Pentecostal perspectives that are inconsistent with Lutheran theology. We need to develop and publish educational resources that discuss basic questions of faith, doctrine, ethics and spirituality in ways that are easily accessible and available, so that people will be better informed about what Lutherans believe and practice.

In theological institutions, deepen the basis for theological encounters with Pentecostals. Invite them to participate with us in theological education, aware that as such movements mature, the need for theological work becomes more important.

Dialogue with Pentecostals

Finally, we should make efforts to pursue dialogue with Pentecostals on questions such as those raised above, when and where appropriate. We yearn that the unity of the Triune God might be seen in us, Christ's one Church. With that hope, we seek to communicate and build bridges with those with whom we have differences. We do so with critical discernment yet in the strong conviction that the Spirit is actively working through our efforts.

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The spread and influence of diverse expressions of Pentecostalism through out the world, especially in Africa, is posing significant challenges to Lutheran as well as other churches. At a seminar of the Lutheran World Federation in South Africa, theologians discussed how they are responding to these challenges. Articles in this book highlight how some Lutheran convictions and understandings can counter, balance or expand upon Pentecostal beliefs and practices.

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