

Critical Methodologies and the Pentecostal Movement: Some Initial Observations

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Why should Pentecostals re-invent the theological wheel, especially since their approach to Christianity can be relegated to a few theological addenda? Maybe all that Pentecostals need to bring to the table is the pickles after all? Such thinking misunderstands both the task of theology and the life-invading presence of the Spirit. While Pentecostals share many theological tenets in common with other Christians, we have experienced God in ways others do not confess. Rather than viewing theology as a description of our distinctives, we need to understand the all-encompassing difference which our experience of God makes in every area of our lives – especially those that are theological. For Pentecostals, the beginning and end of theological reflection will be infused with our experience of God through his Spirit. This may (and I believe must) radically shift our *loci communes* (common places) and theological method. We may be evangelical in that we hold to the common truths of the faith handed down for generations, but we are not just evangelicals who speak in tongues! We are a people invaded by the Spirit, knocked off our horses as was Saul (Acts 9); therefore, we cannot think, live or write as if this experience of the living God were peripheral. Pentecostal theology will reflect the reality of God's encounter with humans, developing the recipe with a special ingredient that flavors the whole dish, not just a relish that complements the main course prepared by someone else."¹

Introduction:

Years ago while I was studying in Seminary, I read an article about the great potential that Pentecostalism held for the furtherance of Christian Theology. I believe the article had been written back in the 50s and yet at the time of my reading, none of the "potentials" had been fulfilled. It was really not till the late 80s and 90s that the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement began to show its potential in the arena of Biblical and Theological studies.²

In this study I would like to clarify some problematic areas in Pentecostal Biblical and Theological articulations in the past. Then I will turn to the more recent area and look at new developments that are taking place. I will attempt to concentrate more on the Old Testament where possible, since this is a "path less traveled."

1. Six Major Problems in Pentecostal Biblical-Theological Articulations:

1.1 Anti-intellectualism

The well-known advent of Pentecostalism has its roots firmly wrapped around an aspect of American Fundamentalism that may be called "anti-intellectualism." On the one hand this

¹ Terry L. Cross, "The Rich Feast of Theology: Can Pentecostals Bring the Main Course or Only the Relish?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (April, 2000), 33-34.

² Several important summary articles of have appeared of late: John Christopher Thomas, "Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century," *Pneuma* 20:1 (Spring, 1998), 3-19; Rickie D. Moore, John Christopher and Thomas, Steven J. L. and, "Editorial," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (October, 1992); Hollenweger, Walter J., "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (October, 1992), 7-17.

implicit ethos joins hands with American pragmatism and produces a hearty and robust faith. This view may be summed up kindly, as siding more with James than Paul -- a rationale that says "faith without works is dead." This produces a Christianity that is great in evangelization but poor in Christian maturity. Its most problematic component is that, being theologically disinterested, heresies and teachings of dubious importance begin to take center stage.

Pentecostalism was especially susceptible to anti-intellectualism because academic training was considered a hindrance to "being led by the Spirit." This very tendency put Pentecostalism at odds with traditional Christianity. For as one author put it: "Christianity is a religion of teaching or doctrine. Throughout church history, Christians were as concerned with the intellectual content of their religion as they were with its rituals or its ethical issues."³

Because of this strong anti-intellectualism, Pentecostalism in its early days did not encourage scholarly or academic interests. The Bible Institute movement, originally intended for lay-training,⁴ while ministerial training was to be done at Seminaries, was the preferred method to equip future ministers in the Pentecostal movement. The academic level of these schools was notoriously low. This can be exemplified by the fact that the esteemed president of Assemblies of God, U.S.A.'s most prestigious Bible school, Central Bible Institute in the years 1929-1931 and again between 1939-1948, Ernest S. Williams had only an eighth grade education.⁵ It was this very same Williams who wrote a 3 volume Systematic Theology which was to be the main theological expression of the Pentecostal movement.

Anti-intellectualism still maintains a strong hold in Pentecostalism.⁶ Since the late 60s and early 70s, it has added a deceptive component in which has developed a love-hate relationship with the external forms of academia. This is seen through the proliferation of Honoree Doctorates and the seduction of easy degrees through diploma mills.

Two scholars, one a pentecostal statesmen-scholar, Russell Spittler and one an ex-pentecostal theologian, Roger Olson have highlighted this problem. Spittler states

³ Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education*, Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990, p. 11-12.

⁴ See Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God's Army: The American Bible School 1880-1940*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990.

⁵ Brereton, *Training God's Army: The American Bible School 1880-1940*, 13.

⁶ Contra W. J. Wollenweger, "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), 7, 17, who wrote, "Pentecostalism is anti-intellectual, to the left of the evangelical spectrum and anti-ecumenical. These are three criticisms which can no longer be accepted without qualification . . . Pentecostalism has come of age. It is now possible to be filled with the Spirit, to enjoy the specific Pentecostal charismata and Pentecostal spirituality, to believe in Pentecostal mission, and at the same time to use one's critical faculties, to develop them and to use them -- as any other charism -- for the kingdom of God."

Abiding anti-intellectualism is one of our flaws. In the Assemblies of God, when you apply annually for credentials, you have to identify your ministry: pastor, chaplain, missionary, evangelist, other. For years, I had to check "other." I was always an "other" because a teacher is not highly respected [so it's not on the list]. If the Holy Spirit is teaching you, why would you have any regard for this or that teacher? There's a kind of theological independence that scoffs at education. Yet you can't do theology without intellect. You can't.⁷

While Olson writes:

Endemic to Pentecostalism is a profoundly anti-intellectual ethos. It is manifested in a deep suspicion of scholars and educators and especially biblical scholars and theologians. Yes, there are some Pentecostal scholars who are respected outside of the movement. . . . Yet too many Pentecostal leaders hold even their own scholars at arms length and view them with suspicion. Merely being a member of the Society for Pentecostal Studies often brings a Pentecostal scholar's commitment to the movement into question.⁸

1.2 Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism⁹ is the second problematic area. Dispensationalism teaches that the Bible is to be understood by dividing its teaching into different time periods. This means that certain areas of the Bible are applicable only for that time period. Some have used the King James Version of 2 Timothy 2.15 as their proof-text for this methodology. It reads in the English: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." As can be easily seen in most modern translations the word "divided" is misunderstood. The Greek in no way teaches a dispensational hermeneutic. In fact dispensationalism is denied as can be seen by continuing to read the text through chapter 3, where Timothy is told that "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." (2 Tim 3.16-17)

Dispensationalism was the preferred way of interpretation for Pentecostals because it was closely attached to a Premillennial Eschatology and it was a basic ingredient of Fundamentalism in those early days. An "Immanent Return" doctrine which Steven Land claims to be the center of early Pentecostal Spirituality¹⁰ was easily supported by this Premillennial Dispensationalism. To add to these two areas, Dispensational-Fundamentalism was seen as the strongest opponent to the "Liberalism" was found in the "Social Gospel."

However, Dispensationalism just does not go well with the Pentecostal and Charismatic

⁷ Spittler in Madison Trammel and Rob Moll, "Three leaders talk frankly about Pentecostalism: grading the movement: the good, bad, and the unpredictable," *Christianity Today* 50, no. 4 (2006), 41.

⁸ Roger Olson, "Pentecostalism's Dark Side," *Christian Century* 123, no. 5 (2006), 27-28.

⁹ See for example Frank M. Boyd, *Ages and Dispensations* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1955), and the use of both Larkin's works and Scofield's Bible.

¹⁰ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

experiences. Dispensationalism teaches that the early church period was basically unique and that the gifts, tongues, etc. are not applicable today. At this stage in history it is easy to ask "Why would any Pentecostal ever hold to a hermeneutic such as Dispensationalism that would basically deny its central teaching?" However, this has already been answered. If you were a conservative-evangelistic Christian, living in expectation of the soon to return Christ, you had to be Dispensational!¹¹

The most destructive aspect of Dispensationalism is that the Old Testament is *ipso facto* denied as "useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." To compensate for this Marcion like heresy, Pentecostalism had to follow the Fundamentalism of its time and reinterpret the Old Testament via Typology.¹² The important doctrines that find their origins in the Old Testament had to be read back into the texts via the New Testament. Joseph in Genesis becomes a type of Jesus, the Tabernacle¹³ becomes the wellspring for Pentecostal teaching concerning the doctrine of Atonement, and even speaking in tongues appears in Isaiah. All this violence to the text and breach of basic exegetical and hermeneutical principles were forced on the Pentecostal for accepting the dangerous teaching of Dispensationalism.

1.3 The Proof-texting methodology

The actual defense of the Pentecostal distinctive was supported also by the dubious methodology of "proof-texting." Proof-texting is basically the quick application of Biblical texts to teachings that one would like to support. There is little concern for context or authorial intent. Therefore, although the biblical pericope may be dealing with something altogether different, proof-texting allows the individual to apply it in a different way. One of the best examples of this usage can be seen in the volume, *"What Meaneth This?": A Pentecostal Answer to a Pentecostal Question* by Carl Brumback.¹⁴ This work goes about to defend to the Pentecostal believer the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. This was felt necessary because fellow Dispensational-Fundamentalists were viewing it as both

¹¹ See Gerald Shepherd's important article: "Pentecostalism and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: An Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship," *Pneuma*, Volume 6:2 (Fall 1984), 5-34.

¹² See J. Robert Ashcroft, *Ways of Understanding God's Words* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1960), pp. 69-73.

¹³ See Hilary Arthur Nixon, *Typology of the Mosaic Tabernacle and its Articles as Interpreted by Authors of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University, 1984).

¹⁴ Carl Brumback, *"What Meaneth This?": A Pentecostal Answer to a Pentecostal Question* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1947).

heretical and as psychologically aberrant behavior.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars of the 80s and 90s have specifically replaced this methodology. In fact much time is spent in exegesis and the establishing of authorial intention. This means that one can now speak about a Lukan theology and a Pauline theology. Although Pentecostals from the early days espoused a preference for Lukan theology, it was not until recently that the necessary replacement of "proof-texting" took place.¹⁵

1.4 Repristinatism or Restorationism

In a recent article Gary McGee discusses the hermeneutics of early Pentecostals and how they had sought for a consistent pattern in the Book of Acts concerning the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and its connection to *glossolalia*. He writes, "The elevation of implied statements (the "pattern"), however, to the same level of authority as explicit scriptural propositions constitutes a departure from the manner of interpretation advocated by Lutheran and Reformed theologians since the sixteenth century" ¹⁶ These searches for patterns are the tell-tale sign of restorationism.¹⁷

McGee appropriately traces this trajectory through Church History. When he turns to the American scene he writes:

Restorationism quickly became a powerful force on the American scene, with each advocate claiming some distinctive insight either in doctrine and/or church practice based in part on a model in the book of Acts. Biblical scholars Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart contended that when restorationists interpret the New Testament, they "look back to the church and Christian experience in the first century either as the norm to be restored or the ideal to be approximated." Ironically, however, what each movement has declared to be the definitive pattern of early Christianity or the "plain teaching" of Acts has not been equally apparent to all. . .¹⁸

Scott Stephens notes that Edith Blumhofer also lays emphasis on this aspect of Pentecostalism. He writes, "As Edith Blumhofer advances in her study of the origins of the American Assemblies of God, restorationism/primitivism – which she defines as, 'The impulse to restore the primitive or original order of things as revealed in the Scripture, free from the accretions of church history and tradition' – was one of the formative ideologies of early Pentecostalism."¹⁹

¹⁵ See Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Press, 1972), 336. Also Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Press, 1987), 23.

¹⁶ Gary B. McGee, "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Tongues as Evidence in the Book of Acts," in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Press, 1991), 97.

¹⁷ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 24.

¹⁸ McGee, "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Tongues as Evidence in the Book of Acts," 99.

¹⁹ Scott T. Stephens, "Postmodernism, Poetry and a (Pentecostal) Text: An Approach to the Book of Joel," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 1 (March, 1998), 55. Blumhofer's quote is from her *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993) in which she cites the *Dictionary of*

1.5 Existentialism and/or Phenomenology

It is probably quite shocking to hear that Pentecostalism has a problem with Existentialism. When one considers Hermeneutics, the champion of Existentialism is none other than Rudolf Bultmann. His specific blend of Heideggerian existential philosophy which produced the de-mythologizing hermeneutic is infamous. In a hearty defense of his use of existentialism he writes:

But now the objection is brought forward that exegesis falls under the control of philosophy. This is the case indeed, but we must ask in what sense it is so. It is an illusion to hold that any exegesis can be independent of secular conceptions. Every interpreter is inescapably dependent on conceptions which he has inherited from a tradition, consciously or unconsciously, and every tradition is dependent on some philosophy or other. . . . It follows, then, that historical and exegetical study should not be practiced without reflection and without giving an account of the conceptions which guide the exegesis. In other words, the question of the "right" philosophy arises.

At this point we must realize that there will never be a right philosophy in the sense of an absolutely perfect system, a philosophy which could give answers to all questions and clear up all riddles of human existence. Our question is simply which philosophy today offers the most adequate perspective and conceptions for understanding human existence. Here it seems to me that we should learn from existential philosophy, because in this philosophical school human existence is directly the object of attention.²⁰

For Pentecostals, no matter how one reads the historical account of what happened at the turn of the century in Topeka, Kansas, hermeneutics begins with his or her experience rather than from than the scriptures. Pentecostals may not be Heideggerian existentialist, but the often heard adage, "one should not preach what one has not experienced" attests to a folk or popular version of existentialism.

Gordon Fee recognized this problem in the mid-80s when he wrote:

Pentecostals have often been accused of exegizing their own experience and then looking to the Bible to support it. In part this may be true; but it is important to know *why* they have done so. On the one hand, their experience itself has been so empowering, so thoroughly life-changing, both in terms of personal obedience to God and readiness and empowerment for witness, that they instinctively know that it *must* be of God – and therefore must be biblical.

But since, on the other hand, for *them* that experience was subsequent to their conversion, they turned to the New Testament for the basis *both* of the experience itself *and* its timing. Their reasons for this are clear. All the early Pentecostals carried with them to their experience the traditional Protestant view of Scripture, as inspired *of* the Spirit and made effective *by* the Spirit through Spirit-anointed preaching. Thus the Pentecostals felt a great urgency to verify their experience by the interpretation of Scripture. For them the Bible was still central; and since their own experience of the Spirit was so vital, they knew that the God of the Bible and the God of their experience had to be *one God*. Hence they automatically expected to find the evidence for their experience in Scripture. Their understanding of Scripture, therefore, seemed both reasonable – and perfectly plain.

Christianity in America.

²⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 54-55. It is interesting to note that Bultmann proceeds these paragraphs by a short discussion as to how "spirit" (πνεῦμα) was understood in the nineteenth century under the influence of Kant and Hegel, while Gunkel, basing his understanding on "psychological conceptions" differs radically. See pages 46-49.

In the course of articulating this experience biblically, however, they felt a special urgency to press for *all* the aspects of the experience – not only the experience itself, but also especially its necessity as a work of grace subsequent to salvation. But in so doing, they exposed their flanks to some exegetical and hermeneutical weaknesses; and they ended up trying to persuade others of the rightness of their experience on grounds different from their *own* experience of the Spirit.²¹

In this case we may be more accurate to claim Phenomenology as the philosophical presuppositions to Pentecostal Hermeneutics. It is interesting to note that back in 1981, Howard M. Ervin, modified this very Pentecostal perspective and presented it as a solution to the Hermeneutical impasse that was and is being experienced under the rubric of the "New Hermeneutic." He argued that the epistemological dichotomy of the western mind, faith verses reason, could be solved by

. . . . an epistemology firmly rooted in the Biblical faith with a phenomenology that meets the criteria of empirically verifiable sensory experience (healing, miracles, etc.) and does not violate the coherence of rational categories. A pneumatic epistemology meets these criteria, and provides a resolution of (a) the dichotomy between faith and reason that existentialism consciously seeks to bridge, though at the expense of the pneumatic; (b) the antidote to a destructive rationalism that often accompanies a critical-historical exegesis; and (c) a rational accountability for the mysticism by a piety grounded in *sola fidei*.²²

1.6 Borrowed Scholarship

A most disturbing aspect of Pentecostal Biblical-Theology is its tendency to borrow presuppositions and systematic structures from non-compatible sources. The early attempts to fuse Pentecostalism with Fundamentalist-Dispensationalism is only one example. A careful look at the majority of early doctrinal or so-called "Systematic Theologies" reveal that the basic structure and concepts were borrowed wholesale.

William Menzies best describes the situation in an article on Pentecostal hermeneutics back in 1979. He writes:

To begin with, is there a Pentecostal theology? In one sense, the answer is "no!" The great contribution of the modern Pentecostal movement has been to demonstrate that orthodox theology *and* a large place for the ministry of the Spirit in the life of the church goes well together.

In this sense, one may say that the Pentecostal movement has simply underscored the historic creedal statements which announced, howbeit briefly, belief in the Holy Spirit. In fact, the unique contribution of the mainstream theology, together with its survival long enough to gain the respect and attention of the larger church world. So one may say that nothing new has been added; the church has been recalled to historic belief.

Yet in another sense there *is* a uniqueness to Pentecostal theology. There is a precision and definiteness

²¹ Gordon D. Fee, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Issue of Separability and Subsequence," *Pneuma* 7:2 (Fall, 1985), 88-89. Fee's observation here is essentially valid whether you follow him in his questioning of the Pentecostal understanding of "Subsequence" like J. D. G. Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* or argue on the side of Roger Stronstad or Robert Menzies.

²² Howard M. Ervin, "Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option," *Pneuma* 3:2 (Fall, 1981), 12.

about Pentecostal Theology – a doctrine to be proclaimed and an experience to be expected.²³

The bottom-line is that Pentecostal Biblical-Theological articulation has been viewed as Evangelical Theology or Hermeneutics plus one ingredient. That is the experience of the Holy Spirit. And yet in the late 80s and 90s this was to be brought into question. The problem is the very nature of "Theology" and Hermeneutics (or should we say Epistemology). Menzies, himself writes in the above article, "Theology, therefore, is an ongoing enterprise. If a "perfect" theology were contrived, one could dispense with the Bible!"²⁴

2. New Scholarly Trajectories:

The late 90s and the early 2000s are bringing an unprecedented harvest of Pentecostal scholarly fruit. The great success of the Sheffield based, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* and its monograph series, *JTPS* or the advent of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* to say nothing of the *EPTA Bulletin* (the journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association) and even the *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* illustrate the present boom. As John Thomas quips "now, despite the best efforts of William Faupel, and Peter Hocken before him, it is difficult to keep up with the many theses and dissertations that either address Pentecostal topics or take a Pentecostal approach to a given topic."²⁵

In the next section I will attempt to describe some major trajectories within recent Pentecostal scholarship. I will not deal with those scholars who have continued to take a more traditional approach as depicted in section 1,²⁶ nor will I be able to give a full account of those scholars that have had advanced critical educations but have not fully published in their respective areas of expertise.

Stanley Horton, although a third generation Pentecostal, is probably one of the few first generation academics of the Pentecostal movement that must be mentioned before moving on.²⁷ Gary McGee summarizes Horton's academic contributions by stating that he "became an influential writer in the AG at a time when only a few were professionally trained at the graduate level in

²³ William W. Menzies, "Synoptic Theology: An Essay on Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Paraclete* 13:1 (Winter, 1979), 14-15.

²⁴ Menzies, "Synoptic Theology: An Essay on Pentecostal Hermeneutics," 16.

²⁵ John Christopher Thomas, "Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century," 4.

²⁶ An example of this type is seen in Stanley Monroe Horton, "Old Testament Foundations of the Pentecostal Faith," *Pneuma* 1:1 (Spring, 1979), 21-30 or many of the articles in the earlier editions of the *Paraclete*.

²⁷ Horton received his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1944, his S.T.M. from Harvard University in 1945 and his Th.D. from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in 1959.

theology and the biblical languages. Theologically, his firm commitment to the entire trustworthiness of Scripture, concern for evangelism, Pentecostal pneumatology, and nondispensational premillennialism have had a profound influence on the course of AG theology in the last four decades."²⁸ His works, whether the *Adult Teacher's Quarterly* or his voluminous popular books epitomize the best in in-house apologetic writing, fighting against the general anti-intellectualism and Dispensationalism²⁹ that was characteristic of the early era.

Although his works were foundational for what would be a whole new generation of Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars, his writings are substantively different from theirs. This can be seen by comparing two areas of Horton's studies. First, is to look at Horton's Doctoral dissertation³⁰ and his long awaited commentary on Isaiah³¹ in contrast with third generation Pentecostal academic, Wonsuk Ma's works.³² The second is to compare Horton's Biblical Pneumatology³³ with that of Robert Menzies³⁴ and once again Wonsuk Ma.³⁵ Menzies and Ma differ from the older works of Horton in both Old and New Testament studies in their use of critical methodologies. Their moderate use of redaction criticism, history of religion and a modified canonical criticism has been dubbed "evangelicalization" by some.³⁶ However, the greatest benefits of such methodologies is that their works engage the larger so-called Evangelical world and at the same time the whole scholarly arena, whereas Horton's works interacted with the Fundamentalist³⁷ academy along with speaking primarily to Classical Pentecostals and interested neo-Pentecostals. Contrary to Horton's proclivity

²⁸ Gary B. McGee, "Horton, Stanley Monroe," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 447.

²⁹ It is important to note that E. S. Williams' *Systematic Theology* published in 1935 was one of the first non-dispensationalist articulation of Pentecostal Doctrines.

³⁰ Stanley Horton, *A Defense on Historical Grounds of the Isaiah authorship of the Passages in Isaiah referring to Babylon* (Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1959).

³¹ Stanley Horton, *Study Bible, Isaiah* in The Complete Biblical Library (Springfield, Missouri: World Library Press, Inc., 1995).

³² Wonsuk Ma, *The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah and Its Eschatological Significance* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996); Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah*, JSOTSup 271 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

³³ Stanley Horton, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1976).

³⁴ Robert Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNT Sup 54 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, JSTSup 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994); William and Robert Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000).

³⁵ See note 32, above.

³⁶ See Wonsuk Ma, "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*. eds. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 61-2. See also Timothy B. Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age," *Pneuma* 15 (Fall, 1993), 163-187.

³⁷ See Russel P. Spittler's article "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of These Categories," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*. ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 103-116.

towards the use of the "proof-texting" methodology, Menzies and Ma are careful to fully exegete the Biblical passages and limit their applications to within the context of Biblical Theology rather than being dominated by Systematic *apriori*. Let us turn to Menzies and Ma and look into their methodologies.

2.1 The Use of Critical Methodologies: Robert Menzies & Wonsuk Ma

Writing about a Pentecostal approach to the New Testament, Thomas argues that "currently, a plethora of approaches to the New Testament are advocated, either as stand-alone methods or in combination with other methods. The dominant approach for most of the last couple of centuries has been that of historical criticism."³⁸ Robert Menzies and Wonsuk Ma may be the best examples of this trajectory.

Menzies in his monograph, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with special reference to Luke-Acts*,³⁹ not only presents a formidable confirmation of Rodger Stronstad's⁴⁰ defense of a Lukan Pentecostal theology, but also ushers Pentecostal New Testament scholarship into the center-court of New Testament academics. Menzies followed this work with a continuous flow of journal articles, papers and a user-friendly version of his monograph⁴¹ that unpacked his thesis. The purpose of this paper is not to discuss his Pre-Lukan Pneumatology nor his discussion concerning the limits of Biblical Theology⁴² that need to be addressed. It is instead his use of critical methodologies such as Redaction Criticism and History of Religions that is our concern.

Menzies gives the clearest statement of his methodology in his monograph and a critique article of recent trends in Pentecostal Biblical scholarship in which Postmodernism is being proposed as the best option for a Pentecostal Hermeneutic.⁴³ In his monograph Menzies succinctly summarizes his methodology:

The method of analysis employed is redaction-critical. I shall examine relevant passages in Luke-Acts in an effort to detect Luke's 'creative contribution in all its aspects' to the tradition concerning the work of the Spirit which he transmits. I shall not assume Luke's theological perspective is revealed only in his modification of received sources; thus my concern will include Luke's selection, as well as his arrangement and modification of received material.

I accept the two-document hypothesis as axiomatic. Therefore, I have assumed that Luke knew Mark and a written source Q. Although Markan priority has been subjected to severe criticism of late, it still remains, in

³⁸ John Christopher Thomas, "Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century," 13.

³⁹ Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with special reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

⁴⁰ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Press, 1984).

⁴¹ Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

⁴² Robert Menzies, "Coming to Terms with an Evangelical Heritage – Part 2," *Paraclete* 28:4 (Fall, 1994), 1-10.

⁴³ Robert Menzies, "Jumping off the Postmodern Bandwagon," *Pneuma* 16:1 (Spring, 1994), 115-120.

my opinion, the best solution to a complex problem. Similarly, while recognizing that questions related to Q are equally complex, I have concluded that it represents (at least partially) a written source utilized by both Matthew and Luke.

The separation of tradition from redaction is more difficult in Acts than in Luke's Gospel since we are unable to reconstruct with the same degree of certainty any of the sources employed by the author. I reject, however, the notion that due to a lack of source material Luke produced Acts in a manner entirely different from his Gospel. In spite of notable claims to the contrary, the conditions for the formation of tradition were not unfavorable in apostolic times. In the formation of Acts, like his Gospel, Luke used a variety of written (and perhaps oral) sources. It is, however, generally impossible to determine to what extent Luke's narrative is based on traditional material. Nevertheless, since Luke 'is not satisfied with transcribing his sources' but 'rewrites the text by putting the imprint of his vocabulary and style everywhere', Acts remains an invaluable source for determining Luke's distinctive pneumatological perspective.⁴⁴

Therefore, Menzies utilizes redaction criticism as one of his major tools to clarify the theology of Luke-Acts. Donald Johns, in reviewing new directions that are being taken to discuss the Pentecostal teaching of "initial evidence," encourages the use of this redaction criticism. Although he does not mention the two-document hypothesis, he finds that "redaction criticism is one of the areas that is similar to what classical Pentecostals have been doing all along, drawing out the theology expressed by narrative texts, specifically those of Acts."⁴⁵ I believe that Johns misses an important dual ingredient that was necessary for the new direction in Pentecostal hermeneutics that is attached to the names of Stronstad and Menzies. It is here that I. H. Marshall's important work, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, must be added to the discussion.⁴⁶ As a U.K. "Evangelical"⁴⁷ New Testament scholar he utilized not only redaction criticism, but also was very keen on maintaining the historical component. Marshall in fact sees both the historical and the theological value of Luke's writings.

It is here that actually Menzies' methodology is furthered by his conviction that history matters. This can be seen in the fact that Menzies' monograph spends over 50 pages establishing the literary background to Luke-Acts.⁴⁸ His strong rejection of postmodernism is based on the importance he attaches to history.⁴⁹

However, a disturbing point is that Menzies may be converging his prioritizing of history with

⁴⁴ Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology*, 114-15.

⁴⁵ Donald Johns, "Some New Directions in the Hermeneutics of Classical Pentecostalism's Doctrine of Initial Evidence," *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Press, 1991)

⁴⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971). N.B. Menzies did his Doctoral work under I. H. Marshall's tutelage at the University of Aberdeen.

⁴⁷ Evangelical scholars in the U.K. have had a very different history from their colleagues in the U.S.A. They have been more open to critical methodologies than those in the U.S.A. See Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988 2nd edition) and especially Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

⁴⁸ Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology*, 52-112.

⁴⁹ See Robert Menzies, "Jumping off the Postmodern Bandwagon,"

an acceptance of the "history of religions" methodology. His 50 pages of work on the literary background to Luke-Acts utilizes the "History of Religions" methodology. This can be seen even most dramatically in his discussion of the Wisdom of Solomon as being the source for Paul's soteriological pneumatology. He writes, "It is my contention that wisdom traditions from the Hellenistic Jewish milieu which produced Wisdom were known to Paul either through this text or related (oral or written) sources and provided the conceptual framework for his distinctive pneumatology."⁵⁰

Wonsuk Ma is the second example of the new Pentecostal scholars that are utilizing critical methodologies. His important works that need to be considered are both his Doctoral dissertation,⁵¹ a monograph on the Spirit of God in Isaiah⁵² which is based on his dissertation and also a recent article in the *Asian Journal for Pentecostal Studies*.⁵³

Ma's work on Isaiah reveals his use of the critical scholarly tradition that Isaiah is made up of works that were written in three different time periods, pre-exilic, exilic and postexilic. He writes:

Recent Old Testament scholarship is characterized by an unsettled state. As the traditional historical-critical method is slowly losing its ground, various new methods are being tried out. Williamson divides the scholarship into two strands: 'those who continue to operate within the established tradition of historical-critical study' and 'those who believe that we should move beyond this to various forms of post-critical literary reading'. Often the book of Isaiah becomes a showcase where much of the battle is fought. There is, however, a 'silent majority' – in Williamson's terms – which 'hopes to reconcile these divergent approaches as the rational level'.

This study is a small voice raised by one from the 'silent majority'. In this study, the unity of the book is 'pursued by way of a more intense application of traditional methods rather than an ignoring or bypassing of them'. The validity of the historical-critical approach lies in the fact that a passage is read in its real-life context. The biggest challenge is to discover to what extent one can recover the actual life context and how. However, the uncertainty of recoverable data does not justify the divorce of a text from its historical context. The book will be read as four major chronological collections: pre-exilic, exilic, postexilic and canonical. The divisions do not correspond to the traditional literary blocks of First, Second and Third Isaiah. For instance, Isa. 32.14-20, found in the first literary block or First Isaiah, will be treated with passages belonging to the second, or exilic, block. This deliberately fragmentary and historical reading is designed to recognize the value of the traditional historical-critical approach. A text is a product of a real human life within its own historical, religious and social context.⁵⁴

Ma's acceptance, in writing, of the historical-critical approach that divides Isaiah into multiple

⁵⁰ Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology*, 303. His whole discussion is found on pages 303-315. See Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 904-915.

⁵¹ Wonsuk Ma, *The Spirit (πνεῦμα) of God in the Book of Isaiah and its Eschatological Significance* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996).

⁵² Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

⁵³ Wonsuk Ma, "'If It Is a Sign': An Old Testament Reflection on the Initial Evidence Discussion," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2:2 (July, 1999), 163-175.

⁵⁴ Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, , 17.

authors with differing historical settings is probably a first in Pentecostal scholarship. He has not just taken the "traditional" scholarly approach without thinking through the problem areas that have emerged since Döderlein and Duhm.⁵⁵ When compared with the "pre-critical" work of Frank Boyd,⁵⁶ who was not totally unaware of the "higher critics'" position, one is amazed at the fundamental difference.⁵⁷ Boyd would have viewed Ma's approach as "evolutionary" and problematic when it came to the doctrine of inspiration of the scriptures. And yet it is important to understand that Ma in no wise, would consider his view of inspiration of scripture as "lower."

Ma combines the multiple authorship of Isaiah with a "modified form of canonical criticism and intertextual reading."⁵⁸ It is here that he attempts to do justice to the "entire book as it stands today."⁵⁹ In this way, Ma takes the inherent problems of a fragmented Isaiah and sees it as Frank Boyd would have.

It is not only in Isaiah that Ma has opted for the critical consensus. In both his dissertation and in his recent article mentioned above, Ma utilizes the traditional Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch. For example, writing about Numbers 11.25 he states, "The wilderness narrative is commonly considered to have come from the northern E tradition during the 8 to 7th centuries, BCE."⁶⁰ In his dissertation, he deals with the pericope, Numbers 11.17, 25-29 and writes, "The tradition of the seventy elders (E, 11.14-17, 24ff.) is inserted into the quail tradition (J, 11.4-13; 18-34) by an editorial hand."⁶¹

Unlike the sophistication of his approach in Isaianic studies, Ma's work in the Pentateuch and especially his use of the classical documentary hypothesis seems to be following more of an academic standard, the consensus opinion, rather than one worked through the system. This is especially evident because the study of the Pentateuch is recognized to be in even more of a turmoil than Isaianic studies. Levinson, for examples writes:

The academic study of the Hebrew Bible is currently in a state of ferment. All conventional models for understanding the formation and development of the Pentateuch have been opened to question. On the one hand, increasing numbers of scholars, eschewing conventional diachronic analysis as atomistic and sterile,

⁵⁵ Note, however, that it is necessary for him to attempt to give the Pentecostal scholarly community a detailed analysis of his use of multiple authors and times periods in the book of Isaiah and how it interacts with his Pentecostal confession.

⁵⁶ Frank M. Boyd, *Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1950), 12-19.

⁵⁷ I would have like to have compared Ma with the recent work of Stanley Horton in Isaiah, but his works were unavailable to me at this time.

⁵⁸ Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, , 167.

⁵⁹ Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, "The Role of the Spirit in Isaiah," *Pentecostal Mission at 2000: Issues Home and Abroad, Conference Papers of The 29th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, (March 16-18, 2000) relies upon Ma's work but leaves to the side the issue of the dating of the texts.

⁶⁰ Ma, ""If It Is a Sign": An Old Testament Reflection on the Initial Evidence Discussion," 166.

⁶¹ Ma, *The Spirit (πνεύμα) of God in the Book of Isaiah and its Eschatological Significance*, 87.

embrace the 'literary approach' that views the text as synchronically coherent, even as the product of a single author. By concentrating exclusively on the final form of the text, these scholars attempt to demonstrate the meaningfulness of its composition. On the other hand, many scholars powerfully challenge classical source criticism from within, retaining the diachronic method yet drastically revising conventional assumptions about the sequence, dating, scope and redaction of the documentary sources and proposing new models for the formation of the Pentateuch.⁶²

The defenders of the standard, classical documentary hypothesis are having to scramble to shore-up the crumbling structure. One of the most adept, Ernest Nicholson, writes in the preface to his recent work:

The book arises from conviction that much in current Pentateuchal research needs to be subjected to rigorous scrutiny and that much, indeed, is radically mistaken. The work of Wellhausen, for all that it needs revision and development in detail, remains the securest basis for understanding the Pentateuch. As the reader will see from the conclusions, however, this is not a mere call to go 'back to Wellhausen', for much in the intervening debate has significantly modified his conclusions, as well as asking questions that were not on his agenda. But the Documentary Hypothesis should remain our primary point of reference, and it alone provides the true perspective from which to approach this most difficult of areas in the study of the Old Testament.⁶³

This spirited defense of the basic documentary hypothesis was needed since such scholars as R. N. Whybray has struck at the heart of the theory.⁶⁴ John van Seters has re-dated the Yahwist to the exilic period after Deuteronomy.⁶⁵ Israel Knohl has proposed that a Holiness School came after the Priestly source and edited the whole work,⁶⁶ while many are proposing a Deuteronomistic editing of the whole Pentateuch.⁶⁷ On a more detailed analysis in response to Ma's use of E, it is now very hard to find scholars that will accept it as an independent source, let alone in the book of Numbers.⁶⁸ For example Robert B. Coote argues that the Elohist can only be found in Genesis and Exodus.⁶⁹

The lack of awareness of the "ferment" especially in Pentateuch studies causes me to wonder

⁶² Bernard M. Levinson, *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 9.

⁶³ Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1998), v-vi.

⁶⁴ R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987). It is important to know that Whybray ultimately returns to a "Fragmentary" hypothesis to deal with the Pentateuch.

⁶⁵ See John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) and *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994).

⁶⁶ Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

⁶⁷ See the volume Linda Schearing & Steven McKenzie, ed., *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Here the such scholars as Frank Crüsemann or Blum are discussed along with many others.

⁶⁸ Alan W. Jenks, *The Elohist and North Israelite Traditions* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977) is the last major work to defend the viability of the traditional E source, although he re-dates it.

⁶⁹ Robert B. Coote, *In Defense of Revolution: The Elohist History History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). See his list of E texts on pages 141-2.

if Ma, like other Pentecostal and Evangelical scholars that choose to utilize the critical methodologies, have followed a supposed "scholarly consensus" rather than working thoroughly through both the critical and the "Pentecostal" issues at stake. Rickie D. Moore, has partially chronicled his scholarly and Pentecostal journey that may be necessary for all those who are attempting to work through these areas. In his Doctoral studies at Vanderbilt, he worked on Deuteronomy and drank deeply from the critical chalice.

... the treatment of Deuteronomy that I encountered in my 'critical training' placed this book at the very center of the canons of modern biblical scholarship (as in the JEDP hypothesis), with its elaborate body of writings and prevailing theories on the late dating and complex redactional history of the Pentateuch. This towering fortress of scholarship, with its formidable conclusions about the text and methods used to reach them, was a far cry from the ethos and impulse of my Pentecostal confession. This was the case not only with respect to the book of Deuteronomy but across the entire range of my 'critical training'. In a way that went against my deepest and mostly unconscious feelings, I was being relentlessly conditioned to experience criticism and confession as mutually exclusive opposites.⁷⁰

Moore's academic experience was and is not unusual. The Pentecostal community has not really prepared its future scholars for the critical world. A case in point is that the International Correspondence Institute's (ICI) college level course on the Pentateuch does not deal with the documentary hypothesis.⁷¹ It is only in the course on Genesis that this is introduced.⁷² It is true that L. Thomas Holdcroft⁷³ had a short addendum introducing the documentary hypothesis in a little earlier period, however the treatments are/were generally dated and do/did not deal with the issues as they applied to Pentecostalism.⁷⁴

Moore further documents his scholarly journey when he began a teaching position at a Pentecostal seminary and had to seriously begin integrating his critical scholarship at Vanderbilt and his Pentecostal confession. He writes:

On the surface of things, it should not be surprising that modern thought has been so successful in training us to see criticism and confession as clear opposites. There is no doubt that the embrace of confession has too often served the avoidance of criticism, the stifling of voices different from or outside of our own. I say 'no doubt' because I have seen this dynamic not just in others but also in myself. Biblical criticism helped me to

⁷⁰ Rickie D. Moore, "Deuteronomy and the Fire of God: A Critical Charismatic Interpretation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (October, 1995), 13-14.

⁷¹ George Assad, *Pentateuch: A Study Guide* (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1985, 2nd edition). This work is based on the extremely dated work by Oswald T. Allis, *God Spoke by Moses* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1951).

⁷² Paul B. Hoff, *Genesis: An Independent-Study Textbook* (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1988, 3rd edition). This study guide is based on Derek Kidner's *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1967).

⁷³ L. Thomas Holdcroft, *The Pentateuch* (Oakland, California: Western Book Company, 1966).

⁷⁴ I have recently been able to get a hold of William C. Williams, ed. *They Spoke from God: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press/Gospel Publishing House, 2003), but I have not been able to work through the whole volume. A preliminary reading indicates that Williams does not deal adequately with the critical issues at hand. I intend to do an article length review of this important pentecostal textbook in the near future.

get in touch with a lot of this. But I came to find another dimension of criticism that academic criticism, as I have experienced it, scarcely touches. It is a level of criticism that I find, if anything, *more critical* insofar as it unleashes a starker challenge to the self-securing tendencies of my own interpretive standpoint. It is the criticism that I found and experienced when I pushed more deeply *into* rather than *away from* my Pentecostal confession and experience.

I began to encounter a voice from the text of Deuteronomy that was more critically demanding of me than critical scholarship ever had been. This was the voice that brought me to the self-effacing realization that my academic training as an Old Testament scholar had been dominated largely by suppressed embarrassment and fear. These two things had driven me *everywhere* in my study, but I was too *uncritical* to notice. I was secretly embarrassed about the uncredentialed heritage and humble status of my uneducated Pentecostal elders. Notwithstanding the fiery 'mountain top' experiences to which my elders bore witness, and perhaps more and more *because* of them, it was a past I wanted to forget and one that I was desperately trying to 'rise above'. As for fear, I was afraid of scholars and smart people. I was constantly intimidated by them and in awe of them, never realizing at the time that this was the fear of which worship is made. I had a chance to recognize the power with which both of these passions were acting upon me one day when a friend and fellow graduate student, a Lutheran who had turned down an offer to study at Yale, asked me what church I attended. My face flushed with shame as he identified my denomination as Pentecostal and even asked me about speaking in tongues. I was so afraid of my friend's 'educated' opinion of me that I could do little more than stammer and grope for an awkward escape from the encounter. I shook off the potential self-revelation of this moment and went right back to my study carrel that day, suffering no loss of faith in my critical access to how the ancient authors came to compose the biblical writings, even though I was completely out of touch with the decisive factors at work behind *my* scholarly writing, right there in front of my nose.⁷⁵

Here Moore challenges the Pentecostal scholarly community to work in both the academic and confessional worlds. The problem of being embarrassed into accepting a critical theory that is the standard scholarly treatment conflicts with this duality. Our Pentecostalism should speak to our hermeneutic.

When one turns to the critical methodologies, the scholar must not only analyze the academic hypotheses on the bases of the academic community, but also as Pentecostals ask questions based on our unique confession of a dynamic encounter with God. For example if we believe that God gifts the church with prophecy and this has become part of our worldview, is the argument concerning *ex eventu* possible? The ecstatic understanding of the HtD form of the verb *nabi'* is now finally being questioned by some scholars, should not our Pentecostal experience not have informed us earlier? Is it not necessary to develop a Pentecostal critical approach, if one is to utilize these tools?

2.2 The Use of Post-Modernism:

There has been a recent move among Pentecostal academics to find a solution to the critical verses Pentecostal conundrum, by celebrating the end of modernity and the advent of postmodernism. The discussion is heated and much writing is taking place. A quick survey of the

⁷⁵ Rickie D. Moore, "Deuteronomy and the Fire of God: A Critical Charismatic Interpretation," 20-21.

Pentecostal journals reveal a growing list of disputants in this field both pro and con.⁷⁶

I will summarize the implications of Postmodernism for Biblical studies and then move on to what Pentecostals are attempting to do with it. David J. A. Clines, a non-Pentecostal, Old Testament scholar, an expert in applying postmodernism to Biblical studies, has published an article in the inaugural volume of the *Australasian Pentecostal Studies*. The following will be an encapsulation of his sketch.

First, Postmodernism affects Text Criticism by questioning the validity of the search, or better the reconstruction of the original text. All manuscripts are important and should be studied. As Clines summarizes, "an interest in *originals* is a modern interest; an interest in *copies* is a postmodern interest."⁷⁷

Second, the Postmodern Old Testament Theology would be one which no longer argues for this or that "center" of the Old Testament. Instead, "a postmodern theology of the Old Testament would be an adventure, in framing a *comparative* 'theology' of the Old Testament."⁷⁸ It is an adventure in "comparing and contrasting."

Third, Postmodern Old Testament Lexicography does not only list the different possible meanings of a given word. This is considered "modern." Instead, the Lexicographer realizes that words are used in sentences and sentences in paragraphs or in poetic stanzas, etc. One can not limit the semantic field anymore with certainty. They must be interpreted *in situ* and only there. Clines writes, "It is rather whether we can say with our hands on our hearts that the text has *this* meaning and this meaning only. The modern aims at doing just that; the postmodern knows it cannot be done."⁷⁹

Fourth, Postmodern Israelite History is none other than historiography. There is no discovery of the "past," "as it actually was." Clines states that the historians "are not objective observers standing outside the framework of some external reality they are trying to describe, but interested

⁷⁶ A. C. Autry, "Dimensions of Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Focus," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993), 29-50 T. B. Cargal, "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), 163-87; H. K. Harrington & R. Patten, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Postmodern Literary Theory," *Pneuma* 16 (1994), 109-14; R. D. Israel, D. E. Albrecht & R. G. McNally, "Pentecostals and Hermeneutics: Texts, Rituals and Community," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), 137-61; J. D. Johns, "Pentecostalism and the Postmodern Worldview," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995), 73-96; R. P. Menzies, "Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon," *Pneuma* 16 (1994), 115-20; G. T. Sheppard, "Biblical Interpretation After Gadamer," *Pneuma* 15 (1994), 121-41; Scott T. Stephens, "Postmodernism, Poetry and a (Pentecostal) Text: An Approach to the Book of Joel," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 1 (March, 1998), 55-101.

⁷⁷ David J. A. Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 1 (March 1998), 44.

⁷⁸ Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," 45.

⁷⁹ Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," 48.

parties with some personal or institutional ideological investment in the business of reconstruction the past."⁸⁰

Fifth, Postmodern Biblical Exegesis is a process whereby the establishment of the "meaning" of the text is not the ultimate goal. Postmodern Exegesis asks the question: "What are we to do with these texts – apart from *understanding* them?"⁸¹ This means that there is a shift in Postmodernity from Hermeneutics to Ethics. So the questions continue, "What does this text do to me if I read it? What ethical responsibility do I carry if I go on helping this text to stay alive?"⁸²

Sixth, Postmodern Pedagogy is also unique. Here I will quote Clines extensively in dealing with 2 out of 4 "revelatory" moments that he experienced.

The third moment was when I awoke one morning from a dream of the classroom and announced to myself, From today I shall abandon teaching the Old Testament and begin teaching students.

From then on I stopped worrying. I knew then what I had to do. My duty was no longer to the subject – to represent it fairly, to be entirely up to date, to pass on the tradition, to fill my students' heads with the latest and most brilliant scholarship. My duty was to ensure that each of my students advanced from the place where they were in Old Testament studies to the place they were capable of achieving. I had to discover what they knew and what they didn't – and I was amazed, after half a career as a university teacher, not how ignorant they were, but how ignorant I was, of them. . . .

Oh, the fourth moment in my pedagogical conversion out of modernity was the vow, quite a recent one, I have to confess; To teach my students nothing they can forget. . . .⁸³

Postmodernism in the field of Biblical Studies provides a fascinating new horizon when compared with modernity. The quest for truth in some sort of abstraction is displaced by a wonder at the divergent "truths" that are all around. History with its supposed positivistic objectivity is no longer a correct historical analysis or an incorrect one. It is the investigation into how one goes about doing history, for ultimately there are just too many perspectives that one could take that would alter how he or she views that "history." It is not just proclaiming an objective truth, but it is feeling it in such a way that this truth that is to be proclaimed matters!

It is easy to see the attractiveness of Postmodernism to the Pentecostal scholar. Robert Menzies has attempted to focus on its ahistorical nature, viewing this as both a barrier to continued Evangelical connectiveness and at the same time the point in which Pentecostals would be weakened to the seduction of this new perspective.⁸⁴ His concern for the historical is a crucial element in the establishment of the "theology and history" of Luke-Act and therefore would

⁸⁰ Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," 48.

⁸¹ Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," 49.

⁸² Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," 50.

⁸³ Clines, "The Postmodern Adventure in Biblical Studies," 50-51.

⁸⁴ Menzies, "Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon," 115-20.

wreck havoc with the Stronstad-Menzies defense of a Lukan Pneumatological emphasis. This vociferous and emotively charged attack on a postmodernity based hermeneutic smacks of censorship. Mieke Bal perceptively notes that "Censorship of art, be it overtly political or subliminally social, is confirmed, strengthened, and perpetuated by censoring forms of interpretation. . . . censorship *of* interpretation can be used to cover up censorship *by* interpretation."⁸⁵

A further question that strikes me as important from a Pentecostal perspective is that much of the pluses that postmodernity offers are already a strong point in the Pentecostal ethos. This is why Menzies feel that Pentecostals are so susceptible. However, is a post-Kantian historical-critical methodology the sole answer to the the diverse Pentecostal movement that in its early stages drank from the wells of a dispensationalist-fundamentalism with its Baconian Inductive methodology? These flirtations with postmodernity may be instead signs of a healthy experimentation and search to move beyond Foundationalism, to account for aspects of the movement that are not easily incorporated into the aforementioned systems. The polemic observations of Donald Bowdle may be important here. "Pentecostalism is a coat of many colors . . . no one person ever should presume to speak for the movement, nor any single denomination pretend fully to represent it, so diverse is it in both thought and practice. International in its range, Pentecostalism wears many faces, speaks a variety of languages, indulges a multiplicity of style of expression. Perhaps for these very reasons, no adequate Kulturgeschichte of the movement is likely to be written."⁸⁶

A final issue is the fact that most Pentecostal writers who are recommending a postmodern approach are producing journal articles, and papers presented at conferences, but the production of books or monographs are not yet available. In fact it may very well be that this is only a passing academic fad.⁸⁷

2.3 The Use of Alternative Methodologies: Mark McLean & William Griffin

A third trajectory in recent Pentecostal Old Testament scholarship is one that is hard to define. The two figures that are important here are Mark McLean and William Griffin. The works that

⁸⁵ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Second Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 17.

⁸⁶ Donald N. Bowdle, "Informed Pentecostalism: An Alternative Paradigm," in *The Spirit and the Mind: Essays in Informed Pentecostalism*, eds. Terry L. Cross and Emerson B. Powery (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000), 9.

⁸⁷ In personal conversation with K. Kitano, he mentioned the fact that systems are shifting faster, so postmodernity may very well be quickly eclipsed.

characterize these two are Mark D. McLean, "Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic" *Pneuma* 6 (Fall 1984), 35-56; William Griffin, *The God of the Prophets: An Analysis of Divine Action* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) and *A Pentecostal Approach to Old Testament Theology*.⁸⁸

The first characteristic of this trajectory is that they are very careful in their use of critical tools in spite of the fact that they are adept at it if necessary. For example McLean's doctoral dissertation from Harvard is on "The Uses and Development of Palaeo-Hebrew in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods." However, there is a tendency to avoid the critical issues. Griffin's monograph, which is based on his doctoral dissertation, avoids the use of traditional critical tools by dealing with "context analysis," which relies heavily on computer analysis.

However, the major agenda of all three of the above mentioned works is that "God speaks and acts today as He did as recorded in the Bible." In this way Griffin and McLean are able to maintain both a historical perspective, i.e., ". . . in the Bible," and make it Phenomenological ". . . today." Problematic is that one is not sure by reading these works what tools are to be used in finding out the nature of what God "spoke and did," "speaks and does."

2.4 There is a Fourth trajectory that Remains Silent as to Pentecostal Uniqueness

The fourth and final group is that of those Pentecostal Old Testament Scholars that do not deal with issues that pertain to Pentecostal hermeneutics. These scholars remain unobserved since they do not tend to publish in Pentecostal journals. William Barnes may be a good example here, who as an Old Testament scholar has not to date published in the area of Pentecostalism.⁸⁹

3. Conclusion

Mark Noll shocked the Evangelical world with the first words of his challenging monograph, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind."⁹⁰ If what Noll writes from the bastion of Evangelism, Wheaton College, is in any sense true, then Pentecostalism should be classified as brain dead, D.O.A. And yet when one begins to read recent scholarly Pentecostal literature, one wonders if we might not be able to say that

⁸⁸ <http://www.evangel.edu/DeadSea/ottheo/ottheo12.htm>

⁸⁹ See however his important work, William Barnes, *Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 48, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

⁹⁰ Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 3.

a spark of life can finally be detected, the heart is faint, but resuscitation now seems possible.⁹¹ The only problem is that I fear that unless we are careful we will be producing a living being that is not unlike Shelly's frightful tale of Frankenstein. The Pentecostal tendency to piece together bits and pieces of borrowed hermeneutic and theological propositions wrapped up in an anti-intellectual package, all warn of a monster on the table. To avoid this problem, I believe we must clearly come to terms with our hermeneutic and theological past.

In 1973, Dr. Russell P. Spittler presented a paper entitled "The Theological Opportunity Lying Before the Pentecostal Movement" to the Society for Pentecostal Studies in Seoul, Korea. He moves to the conclusion of his highly charged article with the following paragraphs:

. . . I suggest to you, an unprecedented opportunity lying before the pentecostal movement. On the popular level, there is a world full of men who've had it up to here with science and reason and technology and materialism and liberalism. They thirst for things of the spirit – small "s" – without knowing that God *is* Spirit – capital S. Let those who know what it is to be baptized in the Spirit gird up their loins anew for a boldly renewed evangelistic assault! Whom men seek unknowingly, let us proclaim experientially.

But there is more to do on a theological level, too. In these days of rising education levels of the general public, let us not leave unreached the reflective thinkers who also search for reality.

Pentecostals have always been better at evangelism than at writing theology. We are known more for foreign missions than for theological books. That is as it should be: in my opinion, the theologian must always be the servant of the Church.

But the time has come to pluck a ripened pentecostal theology.⁹²

In a similar vein to Spittler, Charles Malik's now infamous dedication message delivered at the dedication at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in the fall of 1980 is significant. He wrote:

But just as we are not alone with God and the Bible but also with others, so we are not only endowed with a soul and a will to be saved but also with a reason to be sharpened and satisfied. This reason wonders about everything, including God, and we are to seek and love and worship the Lord our God with all our strength and all our mind. And because we are with others we are arguing and reasoning with one another all the time. Indeed every sentence and every discourse is a product of reason. And so it is neither a shame nor a sin to discipline and cultivate our reason to the utmost; it is a necessity, it is a duty, it is an honor to do so.

Therefore, if evangelization is the most important task, the task that comes immediately after it – not in the tenth place, nor even the third place, but in the second place – is not politics, nor economics, nor the quest of comfort and security and ease, but to find out exactly what is happening to the mind and the spirit in the schools and universities, between the perfection of thought and the perfection of soul and character, between intellectual sophistication and the spiritual worth of the individual human person, between reason and faith, between the pride of knowledge and the contrition of heart consequent upon being a mere creature, and once he realizes that Jesus Christ will find Himself less at home on the campuses of the great universities, in Europe and America, than almost anywhere else, he will be profoundly disturbed, and he will inquire what can be done to recapture the great universities for Jesus Christ, the universities which would not have come into being in the first place without Him.⁹³

⁹¹ N.B. It is important to note that Noll was not referring to the lack of scholarly Biblical and Theological investigations by Evangelicals. However, when we turn to Pentecostalism, even this avenue of intellectual challenge was missing.

⁹² Russell P. Spittler, "The Theological Opportunity Lying Before the Pentecostal Movement," in Vinson Synan, ed. *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1975), 242-43.

⁹³ Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks* (Westchester, Illinois: Cornerstone Books, 1980), 25-26.

Malik's "two tasks" are a challenge beyond the Evangelical confines of Wheaton College. The very fact that Pentecostalism has done so well "evangelistically," does not excuse it from fulfilling the second task of winning the minds of men and women. This is at the heart of Pauline "spiritual warfare."⁹⁴ Malik further warns, "The problem is not only to win souls but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you have not won the world. Indeed it may turn out that you have actually lost the world."⁹⁵

⁹⁴ The argument in 2 Corinthians 10.3-6 is that a Christian is to "destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raise up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ." This has nothing to do with casting out territorial spirits or any such thing. It is a cognitive issue.

⁹⁵ Malik, *The Two Task*, 32.