

# *THE PENTECOSTAL* EDUCATOR



A JOURNAL OF WAPTE  
*the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education*

Vol. 4, No. 2  
Fall 2017  
ISSN 2375-9690

# The Pentecostal Educator

*A Journal of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education*

## **Aims and Scope**

*The Pentecostal Educator* biannually e-publishes scholarly and practical articles related to theological education within the Pentecostal tradition to encourage the continuing maturation of Pentecostal theological education. It is intentionally practical, applied and international.

**Senior Editor** – Dr. Paul Alexander, Chair of WAPTE

(drpaul.r.alexander@gmail.com)

**Executive Editor** – Dr. Rick Wadholm Jr., Trinity Bible College and Graduate School (wadholm@gmail.com)

**Book Review Editor** – Meghan Musy, Southeastern University (tpebookreviews@gmail.com)

**Technical Services** – Robert R. Wadholm, Trinity Bible College and Graduate School (rwadholm@indiana.edu)

## **WAPTE Officers**

Chairperson: Dr. Paul Alexander

Vice-Chairperson: Dr. Dan Hedges

Secretary: Dr. Alex Fuentes

Treasurer: Dr. Weldyn Houger

Executive Committee Member: Dr. Stephen Fogarty

Executive Director: Rev. Roland Q. Dudley

### **WAPTE Board**

Dr. Marilyn Abplanalp (USA)	Dr. Paul Alexander (USA)
Dr. John Carter (USA)	Dr. William Chelliah (Sri Lanka)
Dr. Jacob Cherian (India)	Dr. Jon Dahlager (Costa Rica)
Rev. Roland Dudley (USA)	Dr. John Easter (USA)
Dr. Steve Fogarty (Australia)	Dr. Alex Fuentes (Philippines)
Dr. Carl Gibbs (USA)	Dr. Pedro Gomez (Dom. Rep.)
Dr. Dan Hedges (USA)	Dr. Weldyn Houger (USA)
Dr. Ulrik Josefsson (Sweden)	Dr. Enson Lwesya (Africa)
Rev. Pasi Parkkila (Finland)	Dr. Rick Wadholm Jr (USA)
Dr. Mark Williams (USA)	

### **Instructions for Authors**

All submissions to *The Pentecostal Educator* should conform to the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* including its use of footnotes for all citations. For abbreviations of biblical and other ancient material, as well as transliteration of all non-Roman scripts, see *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Manuscripts should be written in English with consistent spelling throughout and using 12 point Times New Roman, single spaced lines. Submissions should not exceed 5,000 words in length (though longer submissions may be considered). All submissions should be emailed as Word (.doc) attachments to [rwadholm@trinitybiblecollege.edu](mailto:rwadholm@trinitybiblecollege.edu). Please include a brief biographical sketch, a 100-300 word abstract, 3-4 keywords, and a bibliography.

Use two levels of headings. They should be flush left, and not numbered.

#### **This is the First Level Heading**

*This is the Second Level Heading*

Please insert page numbers in the upper right-hand corner.

Manuscripts which are submitted without sufficiently meeting the above criteria will be returned to the author without publication. All submissions

must not be currently submitted to, or previously published by, any other journal. If accepted, the author agrees to transfer copyright to *The Pentecostal Educator* and the manuscript will not be published elsewhere in any form, in English or any other language, without prior written consent of the publisher.

### **Instructions for Book Reviewers**

For information regarding interest in being a reviewer and to learn what volumes might be currently available for review contact the Book Review Editor Meghan Musy (tpebookreviews@gmail.com).

*The Pentecostal Educator* is indexed by Christian Periodical Index.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).

## Contents

### *Editorial*

Paul R. Alexander .....	5
-------------------------	---

### *Volume Editorial*

Rick Wadholm Jr.....	6
----------------------	---

### *In Search of a Pentecostal Theology of Knowledge-Work: Exploring the 'Under' Chartered Territory of the Scholar-Researcher Vocation*

Bob L. Johnson Jr.....	8
------------------------	---

### *The Pentecostal Conversation on the Wall of Higher Education: A Rapprochement with Tradition*

L. William Oliverio Jr. ....	53
------------------------------	----

### *Educating the Next Generation, Inside-Out: From Pentecostal Tongues to Multi-Cultural Conversations: The Conversation Behind the Wall*

Rickie D. Moore.....	69
----------------------	----

## Editorial

*Paul R. Alexander, PhD, Senior Editor*

***The Pentecostal Educator*** is the only official means that the **World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education** has by which to communicate with its wider constituency. Thus allow me, in introducing this edition of ***The Pentecostal Educator*** to give a brief overview of the activities of WAPTE.

WAPTE exists to advocate on behalf of Pentecostal Theological education, to facilitate research and discussion on the subject of theological education and to bring cohesion to the wide and varied world go theological education. Additionally we are the theological commission of the World Pentecostal Fellowship. Membership consists of both Associations and individuals. In September of this year the International Board of WAPTE will meet in Siem Riep, Cambodia. The planning of future WAPTE sponsored events will be discussed. As Chair of WAPTE I will be representing the PWF at an ecumenical meeting in Italy in October. The meeting is sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Your prayer and interest in the work of WAPTE is appreciated.

An so to this edition of the ***Pentecostal Educator***. Pentecostal history in overview shows two remarkable trajectories for this part of the Church. Firstly, the high commitment to mission evidenced in Pentecostal fellowship0s. Secondly, the fact that a major emphasis of this mission activity has been theological education and training. While these two obvious strengths are to be celebrated, the danger has been to place a lesser emphasis upon reflection and research. Thankfully this lack of emphasis has seen something of a corrective in recent years and Pentecostal scholars have emerged in many of our institutions. In turn, these scholars and researchers have contributed significantly to the resources available to teachers in Pentecostal institutions. Thus the articles in this edition make a necessary contribution to the field of theological education.

I am grateful for the continuing excellent services of Rick Wadholm and his team of contributors.

Paul R. Alexander, PhD  
Chair, WAPTE

## Volume Editorial

*Rick Wadholm Jr., PhD, Executive Editor*

This issue includes an extended three part series of articles creatively making use of an insight by Walter Brueggemann regarding the language used by various groups in relation to the walls of Jerusalem as she lay in siege as recorded in 2 Kings 18-19.<sup>1</sup> Earlier forms of these articles were presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies held in St. Louis, Missouri. They are offered as a way of conceiving of the various ways in which Pentecostal scholars engage in relation to those in the secular research university (outside the wall), those within a confessional university (on the wall) and those within a Pentecostal university (inside the wall). The conversations offered in these three articles help to conceptualize three different contexts which Pentecostal scholars may find themselves. Herein are offered ways in which each setting holds both challenges and opportunities should Pentecostals be sufficiently critically contextualized best to engage their given contexts.

Bob L. Johnson Jr. opens the conversation with a lengthy introduction to the three part series and then moves to discuss the ways in which a Pentecostal scholar might conceive and respond accordingly within a secular research university environment to engage still with the language of Pentecostal theological reflection while bridging the worlds of Pentecostals and the secular research university.

L. William Oliverio then carries the conversation as it moves to being “on the wall” from his vantage point as a Pentecostal scholar working in a confessional (non-Pentecostal) university. He proposes ways for Pentecostal scholars to not only bridge the divide in “language” between Church and world, but between Pentecostal communities and other Christian faith traditions.

Finally, Rickie D. Moore offers a concluding engagement as one “inside the wall” (a Pentecostal scholar within a Pentecostal confessional university). Here he offers some brief insights into a comparative reading of Isaiah’s account of the siege as a way of hearing an insider for the engagement with those on the wall and outside the wall.

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Brueggemann, “The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic: 2 Kings 18-19,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7 (June 1985): 1-42.

While these contributions provide points of overlap, each offers a fresh engagement with their given context and ways to constructively develop as Pentecostal scholars seeking to be both faithful to the Pentecostal tradition(s) and to the socio-religious scholastic locations. As such, these articles serve to carry the all too necessary conversation forward regarding the need for Pentecostal scholars in every sphere of the wider academic world. This calls for discernment and the exercise of wisdom. It calls for a form of Pentecostal hermeneutic that interprets those speaking different languages (e.g., Church and world, Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal, Pentecostals among one another). Pentecostals belong to the wider world and Church (as well as one another) and must learn to speak, interpret, and re-speak in ways that fittingly express the responsibilities of those walking in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus in every sphere.



## In Search of a Pentecostal Theology of Knowledge-Work: Exploring the 'Under' Charted Territory of the Scholar-Researcher Vocation

Bob L. Johnson, Jr.

**Abstract:** As part of a trilogy of papers that examine higher education, the purpose of this endeavor is to move toward an incipient theology of: 1) research as a *vocation* and; 2) the scholar-researcher role in the secular university from a *Pentecostal* perspective. In so doing this essay examines the *tensions* Pentecostals encounter in this role. It also assesses the *adequacy* of Pentecostal theology for informing how they occupy, navigate, and contribute from this space in ways consistent with their theological commitments. In spite of the negating, anti-intellectual educational propensities that have characterized the Pentecostal movement, it is argued that Pentecostal theology has the *potential* to contribute to a robust theology of the life of the mind. As evident in the primary assets Pentecostals bring to ecumenical discussions of scholarship and research – a *rich pneumatology*, a *pneumatological understanding of creation*, and *viable hermeneutic*, the seeds of a vigorous intellectual life are embedded deep in their theology. Yet the formal articulation of this theology has yet to emerge. Two explanations are offered for this: 1) the requisite elements needed to construct this theology have been under-developed, under-utilized, misguided or altogether absent in conversations among Pentecostals; and 2) these elements have yet to be configured in ways that advance these conversions. Pentecostals must continue to articulate a theology in these areas and in the context of their own hermeneutic. To the extent that they leave unchallenged those tenets of modern/postmodern epistemologies that contradict this pneumatological understanding of the world, this theology will remain under-developed. To the extent that they fail to act on the full implications of their pneumatological understanding of the world, this theology will likewise remain under-developed.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal theology, scholarship, academics, higher education, pneumatology, knowledge-work

### Introduction

As two of the more visible institutions in society, public and higher education continue to exert a profound influence on culture. Social, political, and religious leaders have long realized this. Although its purposes are perennially contested, education remains a powerful means of cultural transmission *and* transformation.

Seeking to account for the longitudinal effects of shifting educational goals on reform initiatives, Tyack and Cuban have described this ongoing pursuit as one of ‘tinkering toward utopia’ – *given the society we envision, how can we structure the curriculum and educate citizens so as to create this society?*<sup>2</sup> Such imagery is evocative. *Utopia* – that normative, ideal ‘no place’ – exists only in the mind. Yet as Tyack and Cuban note, society’s hope and persistence for realizing it through education – *tinkering* – have remained undiminished through the years. Both ideas have been institutionalized as topics of perennial interest in our collective discourse.

Beyond the *potency* of education as a tool for realizing social ends, this imagery underscores two fundamental truths. Beyond the *faith* placed in education by cultural elites as a means for realizing the normative ends envisioned for society are the uncertainties encountered when even the ‘best-laid plans’ for educational change are introduced. While the realization of intended goals of a proposed reform can never be assured *ex ante*, the emergence of unintended consequences *after* implementation certainly can.

This essay examines the institution of education from a specific theological orientation under the larger rubric, *Pentecostals and culture*. In pursuing this end, it explores: 1) the general orientation of Pentecostals to culture; 2) the tensions created for Pentecostals as a result of this orientation, 3) the challenges encountered as they seek to influence the larger culture from the margins, and 4) the *adequacy* of Pentecostal theology as a means for conceptualizing these tensions *and* generating strategies for addressing them in faithful ways.

---

<sup>2</sup> David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1995).

As with organizations and movements of all types,<sup>3</sup> the Pentecostal Movement is embedded within the larger collective known as society. Regardless of the unit of analysis – community, state or national level – this society is populated by a wide-array of groups, diverse in orientation and unequal in influence. These disparate entities loosely cohere to form a recognizable corporate identity bound by a common culture. While this culture at times threatens the existence of these sub-groups, their identities tend to persist through time. Many are recognizable – e.g., ‘Californians, Texans, Southerners, Bostonians, New Yorkers, Ivy Leaguers, Baptists, Mormons, Pentecostals’ to name but a few.

Pentecostals seek to influence, if not transform society and the larger culture. Animated by an eschatology of cosmic healing and renewal, they are inclined to pursue actions that promote rather than negate human flourishing. Such engagement is done in anticipation of the consummated Kingdom. For reasons such as this Pentecostals often find themselves at odds with the prevailing culture. Visions promoted by the larger and competing sub-cultures are frequently at odds with the redemptive and restorative goals Pentecostals envision. While the orientations of some of these sub-cultures are religious, the orientations of many are not.

For these reasons and as a historically marginalized faith community, Pentecostals often find themselves inhabiting a *pressured* place and assuming a *defensive* posture.<sup>4</sup> Demands for conformity to the larger culture coupled with those of similarly-positioned yet competing sub-cultures combine to create a space vulnerable to assimilation and loss.

Within the context of these ideas, the purpose of this endeavor is to move toward an incipient theology of: 1) research as *vocation*; and, 2) the scholar-researcher role within the research university<sup>5</sup> from a *Pentecostal* perspective. As sub-components of a wider conversation on the theology-science, faith-reason relationship, my intent is to reflect on the tensions Pentecostals encounter in this role and the adequacy of their theology for informing how they might navigate, contribute from, and occupy this space in ways consistent with their theological commitments. Stated

---

<sup>3</sup> Parsons offers a taxonomy of social collectives based on the function they serve in society: *adaptive*, *goal attainment*, *integrative*, and *latency* organizations. Latency organizations are those that function primarily to perpetuate, renew or transform cultural patterns, norms, and values, e.g., churches, schools, etc. See Talcott Parsons, *Structure and Process in Modern Societies* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960).

<sup>4</sup> See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> This term builds on Boyer’s notion of the scholar in post-secondary education and the four roles this entails: scholar-teacher, scholar-citizen, scholar-practitioner, and scholar-researcher. See Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

differently, this essay seeks to assess the adequacy *and* inadequacies of Pentecostal theology for addressing these issues.

## 2.0 - Context: *Multiple Voices, Multiple Locations*

This project is part of a trilogy of papers intended to be read together under the heading, *Pentecostals, Education, and Culture: A Theological Exploration of Issues and Possibilities*. Their purpose is to explore various dimensions of higher education from three positional perspectives: *behind*, *on*, and *in front of* 'the wall.' This analogy is borrowed from Brueggemann's reading of 2 Kings 18-19. It describes the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem during Hezekiah's reign and the conversations that ensue 1) behind the wall within the Jewish community; and 2) on the wall between Israel's representatives and Assyrian military leaders.

Brueggemann identifies two separate hermeneutics at work in the narrative: the Empire's interpretation of the situation as conveyed to Israel's ambassadors 'on the wall,' and Israel's counter-interpretation arising from Israel's commitment as Yahweh's covenant people 'behind' the wall. While the power of the Assyrian interpretation as rooted in its visible show of force is certainly legitimate, Israel's 'sectarian hermeneutic' as counter-narrative is equally legitimate. As contested narratives voiced amid the unequal distribution of visible power, both offer different constructions of reality.

Drawing freely from Brueggemann's analogy, the papers of this trilogy represent descriptions and interpretations of higher education from three different perspectives. While all are written by scholars, each speaks from a different educational context. These are distinguished by the location/proximity of each to 'the wall.'

As used in this context, *the wall* is the nexus between church and society. It is that figurative place where interactions/conversations between the church and world occur. These are characterized by conflict, confrontation, and conciliation. *Behind the wall* is used to describe the church, the conversations that occur within it, and the interpretations that follow from these conversations. *Outside* or *in front of* the wall designates the larger world in which the church is embedded. It too is defined by particular ways of interpreting reality.

The first scholar<sup>6</sup> works in a university situated *behind the wall*. He is a

---

<sup>6</sup> Rickie D. Moore, Lee University: *Educating the Next Generation, Inside-Out: From Pentecostal Tongues to Multi-Cultural Conversations*.

faculty member at a denominationally-sponsored institution dedicated to providing students with an education grounded in a Christian worldview. The second is employed by a well-known Catholic university.<sup>7</sup> His background in philosophy has led him to focus on issues at the intersection of the church and world. From this position, he speaks as *a voice on the wall*. As the third leg of this triumvir, I speak as a voice *outside of the wall*: from the context of a secular research institution.

The perspectives in this trilogy are thus distinguished by the physical positionality of the institutions and/or work of these scholars to *the wall*. Though imperfect, this analogy provides a viable heuristic for framing these analyses of higher education. Its usefulness lies in its generative capacity for addressing enduring questions in fresh ways.

### 3.0 - Education in the History and Growth of the Church

A cursory review of the history of Christianity and that of its theological progenitor underscores the value given and role played by education in the formation and perpetuation of faith. One need only look to the Torah for the origins of this. With his command, ‘Hear, O Israel,’ Moses issues a series of imperatives before his impending death:

*These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deut. 6:6-7, NASB)*

Several implications follow from the words of the prophet: Israel is to *teach* her children; Israel is to be *deliberate and persistence* in this task; Israel is to teach in a *variety of venues/settings*, and; this teaching is to be done out of a *heart fully committed* to Yahweh.

Numerous exhortations of this sort can be found in the Hebrew Bible. Teaching, learning, and education are deeply rooted and constitute defining values in Jewish culture. From a historical standpoint, the educational achievements, intellectual contributions, and cultural influence of the Jewish community far exceed their numerical proportion in the world.

---

<sup>7</sup> L. William Oliverio, Marquette University: *The Pentecostal Conversation ‘On the Wall’ of Higher Education*.

Education has likewise played a vital role in the growth of Christianity. As early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century schools were established in urban areas of the Mediterranean by leading Christian intellectuals to instruct converts and educate priests and ecclesiastical leaders.<sup>8</sup> These venues became centers of intellectual vitality and profoundly influenced their cultural environs. Hunter offers multiple lines of evidence to substantiate this claim: 1) the quantity and quality of intellectual outputs produced by these schools; 2) their success in institutionalizing the educational philosophy known as *paideia* with the integration of catechetical and classical learning; and 3) their success in changing the social status of the poor and disenfranchised through systematic efforts to educate these groups.<sup>9</sup> These cathedral and monastic schools did much to shape the future of their successors. For example, the monastic schools played an indispensable role in preserving ancient and contemporary texts.<sup>10</sup> At the invitation of Charlemagne, the theologian-poet Alcuin (735-804) outlined the seven liberal arts. The *trivium* (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy) would later become the educational basis and curricular impulse of the modern university in the West.

Many of the earliest European universities were developed under the auspices of the Roman Church, kings or municipalities. It is reasonable to assume that these evolved from and shared many features of the cathedral and monastic schools of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Johnson has argued that these universities represent the deliberate continuation of learning promoted in monasteries.<sup>11</sup>

The humanist movement and curriculum which defined it were foundational to the intellectual success of the Reformation.<sup>12</sup> Well

---

<sup>8</sup> For example, schools were established by religious leaders such as Justin Martyr (100-165) in Rome; Clement (150-211) and Origen (185-253) in Alexandria; and Tertullian (160-225) in Carthage. See Howard C. Kee, *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Macmillan, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> James Davison Hunter. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Cahill in particular highlights the critical role played by Irish monastic schools in preserving many ancient texts of Western Civilization from destruction by the Huns, Goths, Franks, Angles, and Saxons following the collapse of the Roman Empire. See Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Paul Johnson, *The Reformation: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> This is the argument made by Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987). See also, Steven Ozmen, *The Age*

established by the time of Luther (1483-1546), humanist thought was instrumental in providing the texts, knowledge of languages, and standards of scholarship critical to the academic formation of the reformers. With its emphasis on history and languages, the classical culture embodied in the humanist curriculum became the defining model of the arts. This curriculum found a home in the Protestant schools and universities of the day. It is reasonable to suggest that without this humanist education in the Church the Reformation might not have occurred as it did, if at all.

The ongoing importance of education in the church was later reflected in the life of Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890). At the behest of Irish ecclesiastical authorities, Newman moved to Dublin as rector of the newly established University College. In a day where most English-speaking universities were Protestant and Catholic universities secularized, Newman's intent was to build a university that could reconcile the freedom required to pursue uncensored research with the need to educate students in the faith of the Catholic Church. He envisioned a university where the teachings of the Church were not only respected, but actively promoted. Within this context Newman delivered a series of lectures articulating this educational philosophy, later published under the title, *The Idea of the University* (1854). Newman sought to establish the *via media* between intellectual freedom and moral authority, respecting both human reason and divine revelation. Although his philosophy met with significant opposition from the Church, it highlighted several defining tensions between faith and freedom of thought. Newman's book remains influential to this day.

This cursory review of the growth of the church in conjunction with the development of higher education in the West is by no means exhaustive. My intent is to substantiate: 1) the Church's consistent interest in education throughout its history, 2) the effectiveness with which the Church has used education as a means of growth, and 3) the Church's profound influence on the emergence of educational institutions in the West, including the modern research university.

As documented in the history of the church, discussions of education, educational institutions, curriculum, and research have not been without controversy. The faith-reason dialectic is an age-old conundrum. One need only recall Galileo's forced recantation by Church authorities, the opposition encountered from the magisterium by Newman or more recently the dismissal of a professor at a noted evangelical institution who

---

*of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of the Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).

chose to stand in solidarity with the Muslim community by donning a hijab to substantiate this.

This brief survey also does not account for the emergence of Enlightenment thought and its influence on education in the West. This includes dethroning the medieval notion of ‘theology as the queen of the sciences,’ and its diminished, if not delegitimized status as part of the curriculum. Neither does it account for the concomitant enthronement of the scientific method as the epistemology of choice, the emergence of postmodernism as a competing epistemology *or* how these and other factors combined to create the modern, secular university. Though integral to what follows, tracing these developments is beyond my purposes here.

Having noted this, Charles Taylor speaks to these and other issues. His *Secular Age* provides a compelling theory of the past, present, and future trajectory of Western intellectual thought.<sup>13</sup> In it he offers a socio-philosophical account of the shift from a theistic to a non-theistic orientation in society and its defining institutions. Whereas prior to the Enlightenment it was impossible *not* to believe in God, Taylor argues that it is now impossible *to* believe in transcendence. The *default* orientation that marked the philosophical orientation of the pre-modern period – *belief in a transcendent reality* – has given way to the unbelief of late modernity. Ours is an age of contested belief in which religious dogma is no longer received as axiomatic or hegemonic. In Taylor’s words, it is a *secular age*, defined by an exclusive humanism that accounts for meaning and significance *without* reference or appeal to the divine, heaven or transcendence.

In the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this secularized view of the world is *the* defining orientation of the research university. Beyond the academic study of religion, it is marked by a closure to transcendence. There is little if any room for faith, much less talk of the integration of faith and reason. It is also the dominant orientation of society and its most powerful institutions. Like education in general, this secularization has come as the sacred roots of higher education have been severed. The once pervasive influence of religion on the intellectual life of America’s preeminent institutions of higher education has all but vanished; the disestablishment of Protestant influence is a *fait accompli*.<sup>14</sup> In today’s academy non-belief is the only legitimate academic perspective.

---

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

<sup>14</sup> George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).



#### 4.0 - Education, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals

Theology is the discipline *and* education the venue in which this secularization has been felt most acutely by evangelicals in the last 150 years. As with Evangelicalism in general, much of the contemporary landscape in evangelical higher education may be understood as a reaction to the growth and influence of liberal theology and its attempts to reconcile Enlightenment thinking (*reason*) with traditional Protestant Christianity (*faith*). Spawned by the emergence of the historical-critical method in Germany,<sup>15</sup> the modern evangelical movement arose both as a *conservator* of orthodoxy and *resistor* to this advancing secularism.

The declining influence of evangelicals in the academy has produced what would appear to be two contradictory responses within this community. The first has been the emergence of an ‘empire’ of parallel evangelical organizations – an array of vibrant educational institutions, publishing houses, television companies, entertainment syndicates (e.g., music and film), ambassadors, ‘celebrities,’ and para-church organizations and with these a definable subculture.<sup>16</sup> These institutions have been an invigorating source of vitality for the evangelical and broader Christian communities. The founding of many evangelical Bible schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries attest to this.<sup>17</sup> While many were established in response to pressures created by the liberal propensities of historical-criticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, others were founded in the decades immediately before or after the zenith of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy in the U.S. The emergence of these institutions is indicative of the importance placed on education by evangelicals past and present. Their establishment reflects a recognition of the need to integrate faith and reason – if only tenuously.

Yet with this response has been the simultaneous emergence of an anti-intellectual orientation within the evangelical community. Given the spate of educational organizations established within a relatively short period of time, it is a disposition that contradicts this educational impulse. Education and anti-intellectualism personify the proverbial oil-water relationship. This attitude within evangelicalism naturally begs questions regarding its

<sup>15</sup> For example, in philosophy-theology at the University of Berlin and within the Tübingen School, e.g., Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), F. C. Bauer (1792–1860) Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), Rudolph Bultmann (1884–1976), etc.

<sup>16</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World*.

<sup>17</sup> Included among these are Baylor (1845), Taylor (1846), Southern Theological Seminary, (1859), Wheaton (1860), Calvin (1876), Gordon (1889), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1889), Biola (1908), Messiah (1909), Lee (1918), Central Bible College, (1922), Westminster Theological Seminary (1929), Westmont (1937), Fuller Theological Seminary (1947).

source. Is this disposition merely a product of evangelical theology as a conservator of orthodoxy *or* does it reflect the larger psyche of American society of which evangelicalism is a part? Although they recognize the invigorating and symbiotic relation they share, Hofstadter and others would argue the latter.<sup>18</sup>

The dynamics of this juxtaposition have waxed and waned in evangelical circles through the years. Yet it remains a defining tension – particularly among groups whose theological roots align with those of the Radical Reformation.<sup>19</sup> Included in this is a significant portion of American Pentecostal Movement.

The cumulative effect of this orientation has been in the marginalization of the evangelical voice in the academy.<sup>20</sup> This marginalization has in turn placed evangelicals in a defensive posture in public conversations regarding education and its purposes. Instead of advancing a robust theology of education and scholarship, many evangelicals find themselves defending the under-examined educational ground on which they stand. Rather than choosing to engage the academic community as a marginalized voice, some succumb to the comforting temptation of limiting such conversations within the confines of their faith's own communities – solely *behind the wall* – while periodically engaging voices from other evangelical or mainstream traditions. At best such conversations provide the opportunity to observe and reconcile contrasting views of education; at worst they contribute to ghettoized discourse and group think. As implied in the tone of Tertullian's famous question or variants thereof – *What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?*<sup>21</sup> – published

---

<sup>18</sup> See for example the highly influential volume, Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1963) as well as Aaron Lecklider, *Inventing the Egghead: The Battle over Brainpower in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Whereas *radical* reformers rejected secular authority over the church, *magisterial* reformers argued for the interdependence of the church and secular authorities, i.e., *magistrates*. The Radical Reformation gave birth to many Protestant groups in Europe. Among these were the Zwickau prophets (e.g., Thomas Müntzer, Andreas Karlstadt) and Anabaptist groups such as the Baptists, Swiss Brethren, Hutterites, Mennonites, Moravians and Methodists. Descendants of the Magisterial Reformation include denominations whose theologies aligned most directly with those of Luther, Zwingli, and/or Calvin. Included in this are Lutherans, the Reformed traditions, Presbyterians, etc.

<sup>20</sup> Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*.

<sup>21</sup> With this question Tertullian was conveying the mutual awareness of the Greeks and Jews to the other's culture. In asking it, he was asking 'What does Greek thought and philosophy have to do with Christianity and theology?' Rather than discouraging the use of Greek philosophy, Tertullian incorporated its ideas and logic in service of theology, specifically in his descriptions of the Trinity.

titles within the evangelical community reflect this defensive posture. The audiences for which they are written and serials in which they appear provide evidence of the intra-tradition focus of this dialogue. Multiple perspectives are found in this literature. One can find the educational philosophy of 'Jerusalem' compared to competing philosophies personified in the cities Athens, Berlin, Geneva, and even Azusa.<sup>22</sup>

Seeking to explain why the contributions of evangelicals to American intellectual life lag behind their advances in social status, wealth, and political influence, Noll characterizes this discrepancy as nothing less than *scandalous*: 'The *scandal* of the evangelical mind is that there is *not much* of an evangelical mind' (*author's italics*).<sup>23</sup> In nourishing believers in the truths of the gospel, evangelicals have failed to sustain a rigorous life of the mind. Further, they have abandoned substantive involvement in society's most powerful institutions: universities, research, and the arts. Noll attributes much of this anti-intellectualism to the 'activist, populist, pragmatic, and utilitarian' culture of evangelicalism found most notably in the dispensational, holiness, and Pentecostal groups of evangelicalism.

One could take issue with Noll's argument on several fronts. Why does he speak of these sub-groups monolithically? Has he accurately characterized their theological commitments? Why does Noll fail to critique the Enlightenment epistemology guiding his own analysis? Is he unaware of the biases of his perspective? Isn't the unexamined use of this paradigm to assess other epistemologies presumptuous? Does the piety emphasized by some in these groups (e.g., Wesleyans and Pentecostals) *actually* promote an irreconcilable bi-furcation of faith and reason as he insists? In his aggregation of evangelicals, has he not masked important differences between them, and in so doing overstated his argument? Has not the portrait he presents been painted with an excessively broad brush?

Such questions notwithstanding, the observations of Noll, Marsden and others regarding the existence of a culture of anti-intellectualism within

---

<sup>22</sup> See for example: David Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); Cheryl Bridges-Johns, 'Athens, Berlin, and Azusa: A Pentecostal Reflection on Scholarship,' *Pneuma* 27.1 (Spring 2005): 136-147; Veli-Matti Kärkäinen, 'Discerning the Mind of Christ in a Pluralistic World: Theological Education in a New Environment,' *Theology News and Notes*. Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, Fall 2013 ([www.fullerstudio.fuller.edu/discerning-the-mind--christ-in-a-pluralistic-world-theological-education-in-a-new-environment/](http://www.fullerstudio.fuller.edu/discerning-the-mind--christ-in-a-pluralistic-world-theological-education-in-a-new-environment/)).

<sup>23</sup> Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 1.

evangelicalism have validity.<sup>24</sup> These observations should not be taken as a denial of the presence of an intellectual tradition(s) within this movement. Rather, they speak of the absence among evangelicals of a sustained and culturally-potent intellectual influence that has achieved critical mass through time. Broad generalizations such as this, however, are problematic. To speak in monolithic terms of any movement populated by diverse sub-groups is risky cognitive business. Pentecostals share a cultural orientation similar to their holiness ancestors. Yet this orientation contrasts with their Reformed counterparts.

If evangelicals exist on the margins of the larger culture, then Pentecostals find themselves situated on the margins of the evangelical community - on *the margins of the marginalized*. For reasons such as this, it has been difficult for scholars outside the Reformed tradition to find acceptance in discussions of education, scholarship, and the building of intellectual capacity among evangelicals. In light of this positionality and consistent with Noll's indictment writ large, one would not expect to find a robust intellectual history or the requisite conditions needed to cultivate this *vita mentis* within their ranks. A review of Pentecostal history and theology both confirms and disconfirms these expectations.

### **5.0 - Negating and Anemic Educational Propensities Within Pentecostalism**

A review of the modern Pentecostal movement does indeed provide evidence that substantiates the anti-intellectual sentiment found within the evangelical movement and wider American society. Included in this are social propensities within Pentecostalism that have negated the emergence of a sustained intellectual tradition and, in certain quarters, under-developed or anemic theologies that function likewise. Much could be cited here. What follows is a selective sampling of this evidence. These are offered with the assumption that no single factor is necessarily representative of the whole. Analogous to the Church in its multiple denominational expressions, Pentecostals are not a monolithic entity: they are a 'many-splintered' thing.

---

<sup>24</sup> In addition to Noll, *The Scandal*, see also: Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*; Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1980); Henry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1963); Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), in particular the chapter entitled, 'Back to the Academy: Evangelical Scholars and the American Mind,' pp. 163-180; also Bartholomew, 'Scripture and the University: The Ecology of Christian Scholarship,' in Craig G. Bartholomew, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2015), 463-484..

As previously noted, the modern Pentecostal movement started among society's have-nots as a strand of American revivalism. This social location and broader religious phenomenon provide a measure of insight into the character of Pentecostalism's initial imprimatur, remnants of which remain. Three characteristics of revivalism in particular are noteworthy. Contrary to educational progressives of the day, revivalism was animated by the assumption that the societal change would come *only* as the hearts of individuals were altered. Transformation of the heart wrought by faith in Christ – not education *per se* – was seen as *the* key to this change. When framed by certain revivalists as an either-or juxtaposition, hearers found themselves forced to choose between faith and reason: faith was to be embraced and education rejected. This forced-choice mentality explains in part the anti-intellectual disposition found in certain quarters of the evangelical and Pentecostal communities today.

The revivalist movement of the past likewise embraced a high view of Scripture. Contrary to the growing influence of Enlightenment-thought in the educational institutions of their day, revivalists accepted the Bible as the divinely-inspired witness of Christ and ultimate authority for life/living. Frequently portrayed with great zeal as a zero-sum choice, hearers were exhorted to choose God rather than science. Such logic did much to reaffirm the anti-intellectual impulse found within evangelical and Pentecostal ranks.

The activist orientation that animated revivalism also contributed in part to the anti-intellectual ethos that persists among certain evangelical and Pentecostal groups to this day.<sup>25</sup> This activism was personified in a variety of efforts to attend to the welfare of others and their souls. Whether through personal evangelism, mass propagation of the gospel or structures and programs for spiritual formation, this activism has valued education and the development of intellect but toward constricted ends. This is best exemplified in the ethos that defines much of the evangelical higher education community. Rather than an end in itself, education is viewed as the primary means of forming student character in ways consistent with a Christian worldview – the greater end of which is the formation of activists who will impact the larger culture and perpetuate this activism.

---

<sup>25</sup> See George M. Marsden's two volumes, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006) and *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991); see also Noll, *The Scandal*.

As Coulter notes, there is much to be celebrated in these efforts by the evangelical community.<sup>26</sup> With them evangelicals have come to recognize that: 1) higher education can indeed be a legitimate Christian enterprise; and 2) in the end, the development of the mind is a sacred endeavor. On the other hand because of the narrow focus on activist ends, such efforts have failed to embrace the ‘characteristics needed for the cultivation of the life’ of the mind among Pentecostals and their evangelical siblings.<sup>27</sup> Since the pursuit of knowledge in the natural and social sciences that typifies research universities is inconsistent with these activist ends, the norms, incentives, and reward structures to encourage such research are absent in most evangelical institutions today.

The restricted educational focus of these efforts has likewise contributed to a culture of anti-intellectualism among these groups. It has done so by devaluing the characteristics necessary for cultivating the life of the mind *beyond* a certain point. In restricting the goals of education to activist ends, this focus truncates the conditions needed to cultivate the life of the mind toward other legitimate ends in higher education, including research. It likewise fails to legitimate the callings of evangelicals and Pentecostals occupying faculty positions in these institutions.

The anti-intellectual impulse found in the Pentecostal tradition is also a function of Fundamentalist influences in its history. Although not birthed as a Fundamentalist movement, Pentecostalism has not been immune to the cultural, populist, and theological influences of this movement. The extent of this influence is perhaps most discernable before and after the height of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. Facing common threats from liberal theology on the religious front *and* Darwin’s theory of evolution (Scopes Trial, 1925) on the secular front, Pentecostals joined ranks with Fundamentalists and evangelicals to form the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942. At first glance, the formation of the NAE was an odd and unanticipated alliance. While this alignment led to the recognition of Pentecostals as a legitimate faith-community for some, other groups within NAE – Fundamentalists and Reformed in particular – would remain Pentecostalism’s most ardent theological antagonists.

The anti-intellectual ethos of the Pentecostal movement was confirmed and strengthened in certain quarters by the NAE alliance. The strident biblicism of Fundamentalism in particular led some Pentecostals to

---

<sup>26</sup> Dale Coulter, “Evangelical Universities, Activism, and the Life of the Mind,” *First Things* (October 5, 2016): 1; ([www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2016/10/evangelical-universities-activism-and-the-life-of-the-mind](http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2016/10/evangelical-universities-activism-and-the-life-of-the-mind))

<sup>27</sup> Coulter, “Evangelical Universities,” 1

embrace a rigid, uniformed view of Scripture that de-emphasized its living, dynamic quality as Spirit-Word. Such biblicism presented two additional temptations to Pentecostals. Not only did it encourage a reductionist, propositional-based view of the Christian life that eclipsed the Pentecostal emphasis on divine encounter, this biblicism also promoted a view of Scripture that exalted its authority above the God to whom it testified. In so doing, Fundamentalists embraced a subtle, yet deceptive bibliolatry that they proved eager to defend.

This is somewhat ironic. Unwittingly accepting the epistemology of Enlightenment thinking, Fundamentalists incorporated the logic of science to defend challenges to biblical authority informed by liberal theology and its historical-critical method. Yet with these challenges, science quickly emerged as ‘the enemy’ of the Bible. Framed as such, talk of Scripture as *inerrant* and *infallible* by fundamentalists informed an apologetic that would dominate evangelical theology for years to come. Animated by a populist mentality reflected in the persona of William Jennings Bryan, Fundamentalists in their zeal threw out the proverbial baby with the bath-water by condemning and even suppressing promising lines of scientific inquiry. The cumulative effect was the solidification of a mentality within their ranks marked not only by a suspicion of science, but questions regarding its compatibility with faith.

Allied with the dispensationalism promoted by fundamentalist theology is the other-worldly orientation shared by Pentecostal and Holiness movements in America. In that it enforces a view of the world that privileges heaven at the expense of creation, this too has contributed to the anti-intellectualism found in these traditions. Its fixation on eternity encourages a reductionist view of salvation – *I wanna to go to heaven when I die* – and with it an orientation that devalues creation and human engagement with it as outlined in Genesis 2. Noll argues that this theological perspective betrays subtle forms of Gnosticism and Doceticism, both of which encourage a theological method that seeks to understand the world by assessing the secret, esoteric knowledge attained only by ‘unlocking’ or ‘de-coding’ the Bible.<sup>28</sup>

Two additional negating tendencies follow from the other-world orientation inherent in the dispensational theology of Fundamentalism. One is the isolationist tendency nurtured among evangelicals and Pentecostals. As exemplified by the emergence of the array of parallel evangelical institutions referenced above, these organizations have buffered their members from the world. On the positive side this buffering

---

<sup>28</sup> See Noll, *The Scandal*; also Coulter, ‘Evangelical Universities.’

has created a safe space for the nurturing of intellect. On the negative side, it has done much to promote an isolationist mentality, parochial in its intellectual pursuits. To the extent that it protects the 'Christian' mind from the corrupting influences of secular thought and thinking, this mentality is pseudo-intellectual. When utilized, secular thought and thinking serve merely as foils – often caricatured – to propel the ongoing development of a sanitized Christian knowledge-base that informs subsequent intellectual pursuits that are equally parochial.

Inherent in this mind-set is a categorical rejection of both the knowledge and methods developed by *secular* scholars in *secular* institutions based solely on their *secular* orientation. Though not actually enacted in ways that are faithful to this working assumption, Christian educators who embrace this orientation rhetorically confess allegiance to it if challenged. In so doing they reject the intellectual fruit of these thinkers who – like themselves – have been made in the image of God and endowed with certain gifts and talents. While the spiritual condition of these unregenerate thinkers influences their work, it doesn't entirely negate the fruit and utility of this work.

In making such hard distinctions between secular and sacred, this type of 'Christian' thinking is isolationist in its orientation and anti-intellectual at its root. It undermines efforts to move toward a viable theology of research and life of the mind. If intellectualism is an attempt to understand the world, isolationism is an attempt to avoid such understanding. If evangelical Christianity is to shed its anti-intellectual propensities, it must re-think those aspects of its theology that promote this isolation.

This parochial view of scholarship has also done much to promote the fragmentation of human experience among Pentecostals. From this has emerged the *schizophrenic* Christian whose isolationist thinking has led to the parceling out of human faculties – physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual – into distinct categories, each of which is to be addressed in its own context.<sup>29</sup> One's faith is to be discussed and developed solely within the confines of the Church. This part of life is separate from one's job, which in turn is separate from other dimensions of life. The Christian thus stands dismembered, living a fragmented, schizophrenic life. This runs contrary to the gospel's message of the fully integrated individual remade in the image of God.

---

<sup>29</sup> A student of the late C. S. Lewis, Henry Blamires provides a useful discussion of this fragmentation and its effects on human thinking in a dated, but useful volume. See Blamires, *The Christian Mind*, 80f.



The influence of the Fundamentalist movement on Pentecostalism is complex. To label both as evangelical masks several important yet incompatible theological distinctions. As has been argued above, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this influence has hindered or slowed the development of a theology of scholarship and research among evangelicals and Pentecostals. Without this theology, the conceptual means to guide, correct, and refine our collective understanding of intellectual pursuits is lacking. When considered together, these theological propensities within Pentecostalism and wider evangelicalism represent forces that negate efforts to establish a theology of research.

In the context of this theological milieu, it is easy to understand why Pentecostals called to the life of the mind encounter resistance to and a fundamental tension in this role. Scholars of faith find themselves marginalized on two fronts. First, they are somewhat at odds with the larger intellectual culture of the research academy where Enlightenment and post-modern epistemologies reign. Though socialized in the academy, they have not fully embraced its philosophical assumptions. Second, because of the culture of anti-intellectualism within the wider evangelical and Pentecostal communities of which they are a part, their vocations can also marginalize them from these communities. While many scholars of faith are committed to academic excellence, they live and are nurtured in traditions that neither fully support or value this call.

## **6.0 - Prerequisites for a Pentecostal Theology of Scholarship/Research**

Because of their marginalized position, scholars and educators outside of the Reformed tradition have found it difficult to participate in discussions on the nature of scholarship and research. This has certainly been the case for those in the Pentecostal tradition. Along with their Wesleyan counterparts, they have been blamed for the absence of sustained scholarship and cultural influence within evangelicalism. As noted above this argument has a measure of validity. Yet it is premature to conclude that scholars from these groups have nothing to contribute to this debate. How might Pentecostal theology illuminate collective efforts to move toward a theology of scholarship and research? In what ways can it affirm the legitimacy and strengthen the vocational ground of individuals working in these areas *outside the wall*?

I would suggest that Pentecostal theology indeed has the potential to contribute to a theology of research and life of the mind. My choice of the word *potential* is strategic. As with evangelicalism in general, viable working theologies related to scholarship and the life of the mind are either under-developed, under-utilized, misguided or altogether absent in

conversations among Pentecostals. Whether under-developed or misguided, all are informed by other working theologies, including but not limited to theologies of the Trinity, Creation, the Spirit (pneumatology), human vocation/work, the Fall, destination (eschatology), hermeneutics, education and human development, and the Great Commission. To offer an exhaustive review of these is certainly beyond my purposes here. My intent is to highlight a few that appear to be foundational to development of an incipient theology in this area. Implicit in what follows is the realization that while theologies of related phenomenon have been developed in key areas sufficient enough to contribute to our understanding of scholarship and research, these theologies have not been configured in ways to advance this conversation among Pentecostals at the pace needed for the movement.

### **6.1 - A Theology of Creation and Human Origins**

A theology of Creation and human origins presents a reasonable point of departure for discussions of research and the vocation of scholar. Though this topic is at times used in misguided or under-developed ways, Pentecostal theology recognizes the fundamental goodness of Creation and sacredness of humanity. The Spirit breathed into this creation was the very life of God. This life was discernable in the manifest beauty and latent potentialities of Creation. The goodness of Creation was anything but inert: it was good, dynamic, vibrant, and full of promise.<sup>30</sup> Creation remains enchanted and sustained by the Spirit.<sup>31</sup> To rule over and steward this Creation, God created humans in His image as the crown of this Creation.

### **6.2 Theology of Human Purpose/Vocation/Work**

Complimenting this view of creation is the theology of human purpose or vocation. The Genesis account indicates that humans were placed in Eden to both ‘cultivate...and keep it’ (Gen 2:15, *NASB*). While Pentecostals and other evangelicals have in general under-explored the implications of these dual tasks, both capture the essence of human vocation. They provide the basis for engagement with the world along multiple fronts. This text further suggests that the divine intent for humans was to develop and steward the earth in ways that met their needs and glorified the Creator. Explicit in it is the fundamental recognition of the dignity of work. As a creative activity, work not only expresses the essence of who and what

---

<sup>30</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World*.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002)

humans are, but fulfills basic human drives. In his critique of capitalism, Marx recognized the centrality of labor to the quality of human life. Although an avowed atheist, his account of the corrupting effects of the industrial revolution on work, the reconfiguring social relations, and human alienation reflects many theological overtones.<sup>32</sup>

Work is the means whereby humanity mirrors God's own generative act. As such it reflects the very nature of humans as made in the image of God. Whereas some narrowly confine the object of this work to the physical earth, it is logical to extend this to society and other social endeavors. Hence, individuals can fulfill their work destiny in numerous ways: through various types of manual labor, commerce, art, music, and even scholarship. Inasmuch as a given line of work contributes to human dignity, builds culture, is morally good, reflects stewardship of the earth, promotes human flourishing by counteracting the effects of the Fall, it has dignity and as such may be viewed as a 'vocation.'

While this broader interpretive view of vocation is justified by the biblical text, it is inconsistent with that found among many Pentecostals and evangelicals, particularly those in the Anabaptist tradition. Because labor has little or no spiritual meaning outside of the church – that divinely ordained society which exists in *contradistinction* to the world, 'secular' work is conceptualized by some solely as a means for advancing the work of the church. Implicit in this view is an elitism that stratifies those who work in and outside of the church. Whereas those working in the church are called, those working elsewhere are not. By not providing a theology of work for those employed in occupations outside of the church, Anabaptists offer a disembodied theology to the world.

### 6.3 - A Theology of the Fall

A theology of scholarship and research must also be informed by the Fall and its effects – that Adam-and-Eve-initiated decision to assert themselves as gods in disobedience to the life-giving command. In so doing, they chose to disrupt the intimate communion with God and the harmony and dominion enjoyed over creation: ends for which they were created. Though the full effects engendered by the Fall on individuals, society, and human institutions are not fully known, they remain. The sum total of these effects may be distilled in the concept *alienation*. The Fall alienated humanity from the Creator, Creation, and each other. This alienation is confirmed by the prevalence of sin, death, decay, and disease. In the

---

<sup>32</sup> See Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*. Edited by Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1967).

vocation that is work, *homo faber* – ‘man the creator/fabricator’ – has become *homo laborens* – ‘man the toilsome laborer’ (Gen 3:17f).

#### 6.4 - Theology of Destiny: *Eschatology*

In the shadow of the Fall, the construction of a theology of scholarship and research must likewise consider the ultimate destiny of Creation. Though under-utilized and distorted by some, Pentecostal theology provides a rich eschatology to inform this endeavor. The resurrection of Christ from the dead and outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost were defining, cosmic events. Together they signaled the in-breaking of the Kingdom and promise of its fulfillment. The defeat of death trumpeted by the resurrection marks the initial reversal of the Fall and its effects. With it the healing, renewal and restoration of all things has begun.

In his work of bringing the future Kingdom into the present, the Spirit articulates futurity and purpose for Creation. History is thus moving in a direction. Christ will return to consummate His righteous Kingdom and renew Creation for eternity. Spirit Baptism is a sign within this overarching narrative that points to the coming Kingdom. This Baptism produces within us the desire to embody and model this Kingdom in anticipation of its consummation in an *already - not yet* way. The *already* dimension arises from the fact that with the resurrection the in-breaking of the Kingdom has begun; the *not yet* aspect of life and living is that the Kingdom has yet to come in its fullness. Hence, we are called to be ambassadors and participants in this coming restoration. The process of cosmic salvation is being worked out with the Spirit as mid-wife.

What are the implications of this for those called to scholarship and research? How does it contribute to the construction of a theology in these areas? Answers to such questions must begin with identifying improper responses to this eschatology found among Pentecostals. These represent competing, albeit misguided theologies and competing trajectories in the Church. In contrast to those who seek to embody and engage the fallen world as ambassadors of the Kingdom, there are some who embrace a lifeboat response to this eschatology. If civilization is a voyage, then the world is a sinking ship on its way to judgment and loss. Hence, the goal is that of rescue: others must be drawn into the lifeboat of salvation. While this orientation is consistent with half of the Great Commission, it fails to address the imperative found in the Parable of the Talents: *occupy until I return* (Mt 25:14f; Luke 19:12f).

Though witnessed less frequently, there are others who define the goal of redeemed life in this aeon as one of *coping*. Until the Kingdom comes in

fullness, redemption provides the means for coping with the fragmentation and brokenness of life. As with lifeboat theology, this response is incomplete if not misplaced. To be sure, the gospel provides a means of dealing with the *sturm und drang* of life. But an undue preoccupation with this response promotes an isolationist stance inconsistent with the Parable of the Talents and Genesis 2. Christians are commanded to engage the fallen world – to ‘cultivate and guard it,’ in anticipation of the coming Kingdom.

It is the vocational mandate of Genesis that provides a theological justification for the Church’s engagement with the world – both *ante* and *post* Fall. As implied by the Hebrew verbs,<sup>33</sup> this involvement is animated by a passion to engage, shape, and change the world in ways consistent with the ethos of Kingdom in anticipation of its consummation. Exploring and unpacking the mysteries of Creation embedded in the physical and social worlds – what Drucker insightfully describes as ‘knowledge work’<sup>34</sup> – builds our capacity to address these mandates in ways that promote human flourishing by counteracting the effects of the Fall. On the other hand, these same activities are also used to enslave, exploit, and promote evil.

### 6.5 - A Robust Pneumatology

The most substantive contribution Pentecostals have to offer a theology of scholarship/research is a robust pneumatology. At the heart of Pentecostal theology is the ontological assumption that the Spirit who empowered the Apostles at Pentecost *continues* to be present and active in Creation.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to more modernist and cessationist evangelical theologies, Pentecostal theology asserts that the Spirit sustains and *continues* to speak, heal, and manifest God’s presence in expected and unexpected ways. His abiding presence and this pneumatic continuity are deemed essential to the

<sup>33</sup> Gen 2.15 indicates that Adam was put in the Garden to ‘cultivate’ [Hb: עבד- *abad* - ‘to work, labor, dress, keep, husband’] and ‘guard’ it [Hb: שמר- *shamar* - ‘to guard, protect, hedge, attend to, preserve’]. It should be noted that both are *active* verbs.

<sup>34</sup> As coined by Peter Drucker, *knowledge work* is that work done by individuals whose job is to ‘think for a living.’ Their main capital is knowledge, e.g., academics, researchers, engineers, physicians, pharmacists, architects, accountants, lawyers, etc. See Peter Drucker, *The Landmarks of Tomorrow* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959).

<sup>35</sup> See Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1996); Yong, *Spirit, Word, Community*; also the article by James A. K. Smith, ‘Thinking in Tongues: The Past and Future of Pentecostal Theology,’ *First Things* (April 2008) and James A. K. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010). Also M. McLean, ‘Toward a Pentecostals Hermeneutic’ *Pneuma* 6.2 (Fall 1984): pp. 35-56.

life of the Church *and* Creation. Several implications follow from this.

### 6.5a - The enchantment and disenchantment of creation

This assertion derives from the larger theological truth that Creation itself is enchanted by the Spirit.<sup>36</sup> The Genesis account reveals the creative role of the Spirit in this process. Once created, the earth was ‘vacant’ and ‘without form.’<sup>37</sup> It was only as the Spirit ‘moved’ or ‘hovered over’<sup>38</sup> the earth that life, form, and ecological structures emerged. Consistent with the love that is the Trinity (1 Jn 4:8), the motherly love that is the Spirit<sup>39</sup> brought life, order, and beauty to that which was heretofore chaotic. Subsequent to this the Spirit remains active in sustaining life and Creation (Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). Thus it is the Spirit that stands behind and within the deep architecture of Creation. It is the Spirit that sustains the natural laws on which all things – visible and invisible – rest. It is this same Spirit who animates and propels this life-giving creativity forward. In sum, the Spirit is the Trinitarian person in whom creation lives, moves, and has its being.

Implicit in Pentecostal spirituality is a viable theology of creation and culture that affirms the dynamic, active presence of the Spirit. This pneumatological understanding underscores the truth that there is always more than meets the eye in creation.<sup>40</sup> Castelo notes the constructive and destructive side of this enchanted view of creation and culture.<sup>41</sup> A rich sense of the Spirit’s presence and activity in creation accentuates the positive, constructive role of the Spirit in culture making. Antagonistic to this is the disenchantment of the world by other spirits who, consistent with the rebellion antedating the Fall, work at cross-purposes to the Creator. Pentecostals are keenly aware of these spirits and the spiritual warfare ensuing from them.

### 6.5b - An alternative worldview and epistemology

Likewise implicit in this robust pneumatology is the worldview it reflects.

<sup>36</sup> This characterization of the world is borrowed from Taylor’s account of the rise of secularism and decline of transcendent worldviews in late modernity. See Taylor, *A Secular Age*

<sup>37</sup> Hb: תהו ובהו - *tohu vabohu*- ‘empty and formless; void, a vacuity’.

<sup>38</sup> Hb: רָחַף - *rachaph* - ‘to move, hover, flutter or shake’.

<sup>39</sup> As the subject of hovering in Genesis 1:2, *Spirit* in Hebrew is a *feminine* noun [Hb: רוּחַ - *ruach*].

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*; Daniel Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics: The Epiclectic Community* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Castelo, *Pentecostal Ethics*.

Smith describes the Pentecostal worldview as a particular ‘take’ on things. . . ‘a construal of the world that not only has something to say on the steps of the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 2), but also on the Areopagus of Athens (Acts 17).’<sup>42</sup> With its accent on the ongoing work of the Spirit in the world, it is a ‘way of being’ defined by a radical openness to God. This worldview defines for Pentecostals a way of thinking, being, and living that transcends the categorical sacred-secular divide. In so doing it provides a viable theological basis for knowledge-work.

## **6.6 - Working Components of a Pentecostal Theology of Research/Scholarship**

When coupled with presuppositions shared with the broader evangelical community, these components of Pentecostal theology can be used to legitimize the vocation of scholar-researcher and inform his/her epistemological niche within a secular institution. In so doing they affirm the following:

- The inherent mystery, order, en-Spiritedness, and goodness visible in Creation in spite of the Fall.
- The necessity of nurturing a posture of radical openness to God, who as Creator continues to work in His creation in visible and invisible ways.
- The wonder, awe, fear, and worship these realizations evoke as they are considered.
- The sanctity and dignity of work as a divinely ordained and creative human endeavor. Work defines and gives expression to the essence of our humanity as made in the image of God.
- The work ordained to Adam in the Garden – to ‘cultivate’ and ‘tend/guard’ (Gn 2.15) – provides the normative character and end of human work: any and all work that contributes to human dignity, builds culture, is morally good, reflects stewardship of the earth, and promotes human flourishing in ways consistent with the ethic of Kingdom is divinely ordained.
- The reality of the Fall and its effects on creation. Sin permeates and has corrupted creation as we know it. Both speak to a larger cosmic struggle in the heavens, the end of which has been signaled with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. Hence, the slavery introduced by sin is not the final word.
- The renewal and restoration of all things in Christ is the divine goal of history. Toward this end the Spirit is at work in creation in

---

<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tonuges*, 25.

visible and invisible ways to judge and redeem in anticipation of the consummated Kingdom.

These truths provide the legitimate basis, teleology, and epistemology for all human work. From this it is reasonable to suggest that insofar as scholar-researchers explore the mysteries of the universe in order to expand our collective knowledge and develop tools and techniques that reflect the character and ends human work outlined above, theirs is a divine and legitimate vocation.

### **7.0 - Pentecostal Theology: A Matrix for Epistemological Discernment, Critique, and Engagement**

The robust pneumatology which characterizes Pentecostal theology likewise provides an alternative epistemology to scholars working in research institutions. In that it recognizes as legitimate a broader range of human knowledge, knowing, and experience, it stands in contrast to Enlightenment, postmodern or other earth-bound epistemologies. As such, it provides both a point of departure for cultural discernment *and* means of de-constructing reigning paradigms in the world and within evangelicalism itself.<sup>43</sup> Consider the ways in which it can function in this de-constructive role.

#### **7.1 - Modernism *vis a vis* Postmodernism**

*Modernism* is the name given to the *zeitgeist* which defines much of contemporary intellectual thought in the West. With roots in the work of Bacon (1561-1626) and Descartes (1596-1650), the ‘enlightened’ ideas of these and other thinkers gave rise to what we know as *science*. The *modern* scientific method constitutes the fruit of such thinking. Based on a strict set of working assumptions and logic, it seeks to establish knowledge through the systematic, evidence-based exploration of the world. Modernist thought confines evidence to human observables – data gleaned *only* through the five human senses and pieced together systematically using inductive and deductive logic.

Excluded from consideration are data which fall outside these human senses. Likewise excluded are arguments which appeal to divine

---

<sup>43</sup> While they may not describe their work in pneumatological terms, I would suggest that bits and pieces of this epistemology can be implied the cultural analysis provided by the likes of Grenz, Couch, Hunter, and Taylor. See the following: Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996); Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Call* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008); Hunter, *To Change the World*; Taylor, *A Secular Age*



revelation, the word of despots, fiat proclamations, and various ‘subjective’ human states. Instead ‘truth’ is established on the basis of empirical evidence obtained through observation, and pieced together by logic. Such distinctions provide the basis for the fundamental knowledge-dichotomy inherent in modernist thought - *objective vs subjective knowledge* – and the privileging of the former over the latter. Because it falls outside of pre-established epistemological parameters, *subjective knowledge* is deemed ‘unverifiable.’

Most are familiar with this conception of science. It is the logic of economics, commerce, and medicine. As one of two reigning epistemologies found in leading research institutions, it is also the logic which defines the core educational curriculum in the West. Consistent with the designations of Kelsey and Kärkkäinen, the German model of higher education exemplified by the city of Berlin personifies this paradigm. This is ‘hard’ science. And this is the world inhabited by scholars of faith; it is the context in which their work is done.

Yet a way of thinking has emerged over the last century in reaction to the failures/inadequacies of modernism.<sup>44</sup> Its very name implies the sequential movement away from and declining influence of modernist thought. If modernism embodies humanity’s faith in science to solve society’s most challenging problems, then *postmodernism* is the rejection of this faith and the limited range of knowledge it privileges. This rejection is born out of the despair brought on by the failure of modernism to deliver on the promises attributed to it. With it has come the rejection of explanatory grand- or meta-narratives and relativization of truth. This rejection has in turn led to a collapse of key social structures. Not a total collapse, but significant nonetheless. The dominant role played by science in legitimating knowledge and the authority with which science speaks have been undermined. Stated differently: positivist science has been challenged in the larger academy and dethroned in certain quarters.

Several implications follow from this paradigm shift. From a positive standpoint, the inadequacies of modernist thought and the idolatry on which it rests have been revealed for what they are. Science has failed to solve society’s persistent and most perplexing problems. In addition, by placing artificial limits on what qualifies as ‘legitimate knowledge’ (*i.e., subjectivity and the search for transcendence have no meaning, only ‘objective,’ sense-based knowledge will do*), it fails to account for the totality of human existence. In so doing it confirms that the ultimate faith

---

<sup>44</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

of many has been misplaced. The declining influence of modernist thought has created a vacuum within the human heart and with it a renewed search for transcendence. Because nature abhors a vacuum,<sup>45</sup> this search has revived interest in spirituality. One need only visit a bookstore or watch PBS or talk shows such as Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Phil or Dr. Oz to see that spirituality is big business these days. This vacuum has also created space for a renewed hearing of Pentecostal theology in the broader religious community.

On the other hand, this collapse has had negative consequences for society. Foremost among these is the stage that has been set for increased spiritual darkness. There are multiple reasons for this. As noted above, postmodernism accentuates the weaknesses and inadequacies of modernism. In so doing, it has undermined faith in reason and the moral consensus on which Western civilization rests. Once hailed as a reliable guide for the governance of society, human rationality has proven that it is rarely un-partisan or neutral in its interests. This realization has undermined the authority of modernity.

Whereas the Judeo-Christian ethic once provided a referent for truth/morality, it too has been rejected in favor of relative, 'personal' truth. There is no Truth with a capital 'T' for postmoderns, no moral absolutes. Rather, there are only multiple and competing truths (small 't') – all of which are contextually valid in the communities from which they arise. Hence, truth is to be constructed from the smorgasbord of ideas found in the ideological marketplace. In boutique fashion one can mix and match, abandon and embrace, even move in and out of various truths at any time. In sum, postmodernism is truth in flux.

Finally, and consistent with Nietzsche's argument, the truth that dominates is the truth of the powerful. The powerful are those driven by unbridled ambition who have acquired the ability to persuade, coerce, and impose their will on others. Using rhetorical and/or physical means, Nietzsche describes this insatiable drive as *der Wille zur Macht* - 'the will to power.'<sup>46</sup> It is the will of the powerful that defines good and evil – not God. This is because for Nietzsche, 'God is [functionally] dead; God remains dead; and we have killed him.'<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> *Horror vacui*, attributed to the Greek physicists-philosopher, Parmenides (510-450 BC).

<sup>46</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: A Prelude to the Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Helen Zimmern (London: Dover Publications, 1997).

<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974): *Section 125 - The Madman*.

As a second, competing epistemology in higher education, postmodernism and its variants are found primarily in the humanities and social sciences. It is represented most notably in the work of French philosophers Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Michael Foucault (1926-1984) and personified here by the city of Paris and the Sorbonne.

## 7.2 - Pentecostal Affirmations of Modern and Postmodern Thought

In that it recognizes and thus legitimizes a broader range of human knowledge, knowing, and experience than Enlightenment, postmodern and other anthropocentric epistemologies, Pentecostal theology provides a more inclusive epistemology. Included in this is knowledge generated by and reflected in orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy.<sup>48</sup> These ways of knowing provide Pentecostal theology with a means for both affirming and challenging modernist and postmodernist thought. Consider the ways in which it affirms the fruit of these paradigms.

The scientific method has led to discoveries that have significantly improved the quality of human life: the eradication of disease, the discovery of electricity, the invention of telephones, mechanized transportation, and a panoply of digital innovations to name but a few. A Pentecostal theology of scholarship/research not only affirms these contributions, but the genius that produced them. *Sans* the restrictive epistemological assumptions on which they are based, the human cognition behind these discoveries/inventions reflects in part the mind of the Creator in whose image humans are made. For example, the logical process of triangulating methods of inquiry *and* the data generated by these to substantiate knowledge claims is to be appreciated for the advancements it has produced in multiple fields. Calvin eloquently captures the sacredness and skill of human cognition:

‘Manifold indeed is the nimbleness of the [mind] with which it surveys heaven and earth, joins past to future, retains in memory something heard long before, nay, pictures to itself whatever it

---

<sup>48</sup> *Orthopathy* is a term used by Theodore Runyon in conjunction with *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxy* to describe Wesley’s soteriology. For Wesley salvation is not only a function of ‘right’ doctrine and actions, but ‘right’ affections as well. See Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1988). See chapter 5, ‘Orthopathy as Religious Experience’ of this volume. Land later incorporates these concepts in his description of Pentecostal spirituality, see Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, specifically chapter 3: ‘Pentecostal Spirituality as Missionary Fellowship: An Affective Integration.’ Johns later incorporates these ways of knowing into a larger ‘Pentecostal worldview,’ see Jackie D. Johns, ‘Pentecostalism and the Postmodern Worldview,’ *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995): 73-96.

pleases. Manifold also is the skill with which it devises things incredible, and which is the mother of so many marvelous devices. These are unfailing signs of the divinity in man. Why is it that the [mind] not only vaguely roves about but conceives many useful things, ponders concerning many, even divines the future – all while man sleeps? What ought we to say here except that the signs of immortality which have been implanted in man cannot be effaced.’<sup>49</sup>

As expressed in the Enlightenment impulse, Pentecostal theology likewise affirms the search for universal laws, truths, and macro narratives (from which the university derives its name). This search is animated by humanity’s alienated state. Though post-moderns view this pursuit as misguided, it is a search for meaning and transcendence. In the end, the search for the unity of all things is the human search for the *ultimate* Unifier.

Pentecostal theology also affirms a number of working assumptions and observations arising from postmodern thought. As noted above, it affirms the inadequacies of the epistemological foil to which postmodern is a response – *Positivism* – and the restrictive assumptions on which it rests. Together these function as an epistemological straight-jacket. To be accepted as valid/legitimate, knowledge must conform to the constricting demands of abstracted, de-contextualized propositions.

Pentecostal theology likewise rejects the omnipotence imputed to the scientific method. In so doing it too affirms the *failure* of Enlightenment thought to live up to the lofty promises of its progenitors and adherents. Western civilization has placed its hope in science, but contrary to modernism’s promise, science has failed to provide solutions to its most persistent and challenging problems. Science has likewise failed to eradicate the primary cause of all human problems: *sin*. Because its epistemology prevents it from recognizing sin and the intangible reality behind it, science cannot do this. Along with postmodernism, Pentecostal theology recognizes a growing despair in the world, and with it a renewed openness to transcendence in search of meaning.

Pentecostal theology likewise affirms postmodern observations regarding the existence of competing narratives and truth claims – grand or otherwise. It recognizes that in a *fallen* world, knowledge risks becoming

---

<sup>49</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Chapter 5, Section 5, John T. McNeill, editor, translated by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1940), 57.

*radically* contextual and interest-based. This it does while acknowledging the historically-conditioned and vested nature of all knowledge. Thus, Pentecostal theology affirms the postmodern belief that in the absence of an absolute referent for truth, the collapse of language and communication are inevitable. It further recognizes that out of such conditions Nietzsche's 'will to power' is possible. Coercion and oppression can indeed be used to establish and legitimize arbitrary truth-claims. Those with the will to power and the requisite resources to enforce it can suppress all competing claims.

Finally, as voiced by postmodern thought, Pentecostal theology affirms the innate human desire to be free from oppression... 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom' (2 Cor. 3.17, ESV). Included in this are freedom of thought, expression of will, and freedom *from* the deleterious effects of a mindless uniformity – in sum, the freedom to be fully human. Pentecostal theology validates these observations and aspirations found in postmodern thought and views them as realities created by our alienated state in a fallen world.

### **7.3 - Pentecostal De-construction of Modern and Postmodern Thought**

Whereas Pentecostal theology affirms certain tenets of modern and postmodern thought, it also provides a means for de-constructing these philosophical orientations. A handful will be noted here.

Pentecostal theology exposes the distorting effects of the Fall on human cognition. Although its full effects are unknown, the Fall introduced a viral element into cognition that continues to distort our ontological, epistemological, and teleological assumptions. It has warped our ontology, confounded our epistemology, and supplanted our teleology. It has in sum corrupted and handicapped human thinking. Evidence of this exists throughout human history– in pre-, modern, and postmodern thought. As created finite beings, human thinking stands in need of spiritual restoration and renewal.

Second, Pentecostal theology de-constructs several erroneous assumptions that follow from this distorted thinking, most of which are half-truths. Foremost is human apotheosis and with it Enlightenment notions that Man is the measure of all things. Be it modernity and its god-child, science, or post-modernity and its incisive tools of cultural critique, humanity has placed its *ultimate* faith in self as the source and arbiter of truth. In so doing, it has enthroned self as god. To place one's *ultimate* hope in science and human cognition is to place one's hopes in the *creator* of science and *thinker* of thoughts. Neither humanity nor its scientific methods constitute

ultimate authority. Though potent, they are not omnipotent: the knowledge and capacity of both are finite.

Such idolatry is not new. Although humans are indeed the crown of creation, the pride on which this idolatry rests is *the* sin of creation. Neither humanity nor its science can eradicate the taproot of evil in the heart. This is the sole work of the Spirit. Pentecostal theology recognizes these cardinal truths. In its call for the dethronement of self and reenthronement of the Creator, it provides a pneumatological understanding of how this deficit can be addressed in anticipation of the renewal of all things.

As referenced above, Pentecostal theology likewise de-constructs epistemic claims put forth as *exclusive* and/or *absolute* by modernist and postmodernist alike. Such claims are exemplified in the statements such as the following: *This is the only way to know!* or *Nothing can really be known for sure in life!* Included in this are: 1) the exclusive privileging of certain kinds of human knowledge and knowing over others (*modernism*); 2) the assertion that because of the highly contextual and constructivist nature of meaning, all knowledge is socially-constructed and consensually-based (*postmodernism*); and 3) in a closed universe, no reality and hence no knowledge exists outside of human consciousness (*postmodernism*).

In de-constructing these assertions, it should be emphasized that Pentecostal theology does not reject them in toto – *only* the exclusive and exaggerated epistemological claims that ensue solely from a *closed* or *immanent construal* of the world.<sup>50</sup> As noted by Taylor, modern social imaginary consists of a constructed social space that frames our lives *entirely* within a natural (rather than supernatural) order. *Immanentization* is the process whereby meaning, significance, and fullness are sought within an enclosed, self-sufficient, naturalistic universe without reference to transcendence.<sup>51</sup>

Those familiar with the range of emotions encountered when making high-stakes decisions in life are aware of the strengths and limitations of modern and postmodern epistemologies. Those who through the Spirit have experienced a divine encounter with the Creator of the universe are likewise aware. Neither captures: 1) the full color and array of human experience or 2) the visible and invisible realities of creation. By contrast, Pentecostal theology embraces and engenders a radical openness to these

---

<sup>50</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

<sup>51</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 48, 141.

experiences and realities. While it is reasonable to distinguish the various sources of human knowledge, to exclusively privilege one over the other at *all* times and in *all* situations at the expense of ignoring other sources is to deny important dimensions of our common humanity.

Pentecostal theology likewise de-constructs definitions of human progress embraced by modern and postmodern thought. Inherent in these are working teleologies which are not only at odds with biblical eschatology, but animated by erroneous assumptions regarding human perfectability: ‘We can *think*, *engineer*, and/or *educate* ourselves to become what we envision.’ Pentecostal theology recognizes that in and of themselves, unaided by the transformative power Spirit, this is not possible.

In spite of its intuitive appeal, the hope endemic to modernism is ironically negated by evidence from its past. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was one of the bloodiest in history. Wars across the globe claimed more than 160 million lives, many at the hands of the most diabolical dictators and regimes in history. Included in this was the rise of Communism, and with it, visions of the ideal, socially-engineered state. The imprisonment and death of millions at the hands of Stalin, Chairman Mao, and Pol Pot punctuated by the politicide, genocide, infanticide, and other crimes against humanity betray modernity’s unfounded idealism. In his quest to create the pedigree Aryan state, Hitler executed more than six million Jews.

Man’s inhumanity to man, the persistence of poverty and widespread hunger, the inequitable distribution of wealth, and threats of pandemic stand as indictments against the failures of modernism. Evolutionary notions of social progress reflected in an ill-founded, mis-guided zeal animated by the best of intentions provide indisputable evidence that humanity cannot in itself engineer its way to the utopian state it envisions. Those impressed by human intellect, mighty buildings, and spectacular accomplishments need only consider the tower of Babel (Gen 11), the Nazi Party Rallying Grounds in Nuremberg, and the Cabrini-Green experiment in Chicago. Pentecostal theology reminds us that to place one’s *ultimate* faith in modernism is to misplace one’s faith.

It likewise reminds us that to place one’s ultimate faith in the assumptions and fruit of postmodernism is equally misguided. While the ideas represented in postmodern epistemology have done much to challenge the stultifying hegemony of the meta-narrative that is modernity, they present an epistemological landscape fraught with danger and despair. The emergence of these ideas have had the positive effect of opening the door for heretofore marginalized epistemologies to speak and be heard on their

own terms. It is in this space that Pentecostal theology and its adherents emerge to identify the limitations of postmodern thought as a means of cosmic renewal. Other than one's own ideographic preferences, postmodern thought provides no definitive way forward, no foundation on which to build. While postmodern thought provides a means of de-constructing the world, it provides few ideas for reconstructing it.

The rejection of moral absolutes and dominance by the powerful are recurring themes in history. Between the death of Joshua and birth of Samuel such were the conditions in Israel: *'In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes'* (Jdg. 17:6; 21:25). In postmodern parlance there was *no* moral authority in Israel during this time and truth was *relative*. A cursory reading of Judges reveals the havoc, oppression, and social instability these conditions wreaked in Israel. Such are the logical ends of postmodern thought. All authority and truth-claims are called into question and de-constructed to reveal the power-interests and oppression they impose. In sum, the individual is his/her own authority: *I am my own authority; the truth and morality I deem acceptable constitute 'truth' for me. . . Yet while valid for me, this 'truth' may not be right for you. You are free to construct/choose your own truth.*

So it is with postmodern thought. Truth is relative and idiosyncratic. It is constructed from the smorgasbord of ideas found in the ideological marketplace. The primary referent for one's choices is self and/or tribe; the primary *telos* is the realization of preferences. The chief obstacles to these ends are the competing desires/interests of others. Meaning in life is found in the ongoing pursuit of these existential interests. Such conditions call for a *negotiated* existence, one made possible by postmodern proposals such as Habermas' *ideal speech situation* and its quest for a 'rational' working consensus amid competing truths and interests.

Pentecostal eschatology rejects such notions and the ultimate teleological end to which the postmodern paradigm points: oppression by the powerful in a context of anxiety and dissolution in which the meaning of language is increasingly de-coupled (i.e., the link between signified-signifier-sign), contextual, amorphous, contested, and relative. While it recognizes the existence of these in a *fallen* world, it anticipates their redemption in light of the coming Kingdom within the already-not-yet tension of this eschatology. It is in this space and toward this end that scholar-researchers of faith do their work.

## 8.0 - Assessment and Implications



The thoughts above represent an attempt to identify, critique, and trace the developmental arch of prevailing orientations found within the Pentecostal movement toward education, the life of the mind, and the scholar-researcher vocation. They beg a number of seminal questions for Pentecostals. I've addressed some directly, others indirectly, and none exhaustively. What is the purpose and end of education for Pentecostals? Is there a theological basis for the life of the mind, a justification for its systematic development? To what extent is the role of scholar-researcher a *legitimate* vocation in Pentecostal circles? Are there charisms associated with this call? What contributions do such individuals make to the Kingdom?

In pursuing these ends, I have also sought to make *explicit* the theology *implicit* in these orientations. As importantly, I have made an effort to assess the validity and viability of this theology. To what extent does a theology of education exist in Pentecostal circles? Is this theology faithful to the biblical witness? Does it provide a viable rationale for those called to knowledge-work and the life of the mind? What might Pentecostal theology add to the larger ecumenical dialogue on these topics?

This assessment has been done in the context of the current state of Pentecostal theology. Although the modern Pentecostal movement is more than a century old, the formal traditioning of this theology within the broader ecumenical community is in its early stages. Excellent work has been done on multiple fronts. Yet progress has been uneven. This articulation remains a work-in-progress. The topic of this essay – a theology of the life of the mind – is an area in need of more work.

These reflections are offered by one whose vocation places him on the margins. As noted above, Pentecostal scholars – particularly those in secular, research institutions – find themselves marginalized on at least six fronts: 1) from the larger intellectual culture of the research academy, where Enlightenment and postmodern epistemologies reign; 2) from the broader ecumenical community in which evangelicals are perceived out-of-step with the realities of contemporary culture; 3) from evangelicals, where those in the Anabaptist tradition are perceived as naive, and anti-intellectual; 4) from the Pentecostal community itself, whose historical propensities encourage an anti-intellectualism that arises from a truncated understanding and unhealthy fear of reason, both of which present threats to the work of the Spirit; 5) from those Pentecostal scholars working in faith-based educational institutions whose conceptions of education/scholarship are limited to the inculcation of a Christian world and the promotion of the activism mandated by the Great Commission; and 6) from Pentecostal scholars whose primary discipline is theology,

specifically those who privilege this discipline at the expense and diminution of other academic fields. Given the extent of marginalization, it is easy to understand why such scholars might resonate with the title of Hale's infamous work, *Man Without a Country* [sic].<sup>52</sup>

What follows is a summative assessment of where Pentecostal theology is on this set of issues and what it has to offer the wider ecumenical community. I conclude by outlining a handful of implications this theology has for those called to the life of the mind in the research university.

### 8.1 - Assessment of Pentecostal Contributions

As noted above, the most important gift Pentecostals have to offer the ecumenical faith community is a robust pneumatology. For too long the Church in the West has emphasized the role of the Father and Son in creation to the neglect of the indispensable work of the Spirit.<sup>53</sup> As with ideas in general, one's working theology has consequences. Pentecostals remind the church that it is not merely a cognitive recognition of the Trinity that is important, but an openness to the presence and work of *all* persons of the Trinity – *including the Spirit* – that is critical.

This recognition has significant consequences for scholars of faith. To overlook the Spirit and His work in creation is to misconstrue who God is in the mysterious tri-unity of His being. As Phillips notes, inadequate conceptions of God lead to inadequate theology in other areas. A triune conception of the Godhead that fails to recognize the work of the Spirit in creation is indeed a God who is 'too small.'<sup>54</sup> Those who reject or are oblivious to the work of the Spirit in creation, are unable to discern His presence in the world. A robust, experientially-informed biblical theology of the Spirit is the primary contribution of Pentecostals to the church. This pneumatological awareness is rooted in a divine encounter that transforms and engenders a construal of the world that has something to say to Jerusalem, Athens, Berlin, and Paris – to faith, reason, and power. It is a way of being defined by a radical openness to God informed by the

---

<sup>52</sup> Edward Everett Hale, *Man Without a Country* (Bandana Books, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> This is argued by theologians across the ecumenical spectrum such as Yves Conger, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 2000); Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002); Pinnock, *Flame of Love*; and Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching, Through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> J. B. Phillips, *Your God is Too Small: A Guide for Believers and Skeptics Alike* (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1961).

ongoing, existential work of the Spirit. It is a way of knowing that incorporates yet transcends the epistemological categories of Enlightenment and postmodern thinking. As such, it serves as a corrective to the limited ontologies, epistemologies, and teleologies of these paradigms.

Several corollaries follow from this pneumatological awareness and the radical openness it engenders: 1) a recognition of the divine origin and purpose of creation *and* its inherent goodness, beauty, and vibrancy; 2) a defining sense of human purpose and place in this creation; 3) a heightened sensitivity to the en-Spiritedness of creation *in all* of its dimensions and hues – physical and social, animate and inanimate, visible and invisible, objective and subjective, known and unknown, sensory and extrasensory, natural and supernatural – *even* in its fallen state; 4) an epistemology informed by and thus open to the array and variety of knowledge embedded in these multiple dimensions, whether humanly discernable through the five senses or not; 5) a keen awareness of the presence of competing spirits in the world that work against the realization of innate visions of human flourishing, beauty, and truth in systemic ways; 6) an expectation born of the Spirit that eagerly longs for the full restoration and renewal begun in Christ; and 7) a spiritual desire to engage the world in ways consistent with the divine vocation assigned in Eden: to cultivate creation in faithful ways so as to promote its flourishing. This pneumatological understanding of creation is *the* primary asset that Pentecostal theology brings to ecumenical discussions of the life of the mind. This is its *potential*.

Yet based on the account offered above, this orthodoxy is inconsistent with the orthopathy and orthopraxy found in many Pentecostal circles. This discrepancy is more pronounced in some communities than others. While a handful of scholars have begun to construct a theology of the mind based on this pneumatological understanding,<sup>55</sup> the full impact of their work on Pentecostal practice is unknown. My experience suggests that Pentecostals in general are not aware of this understanding. If unaware, it logically follows that they have yet to identify, much less act on the implications that follow from it. Thus, Pentecostals have not acted on the full implications of their theology in this area.

Multiple reasons for this inconsistency have been rehearsed above. I will not repeat them verbatim here. Together, these can be classified into one of two categories: social or theological. Given that Pentecostalism arose from

---

<sup>55</sup> See the footnotes in this essay and the references contained therein for some of these individuals.

the margins within the lower socio-economic class, there were few from the educated classes to formally articulate its theology in its early years. This has since changed. With the maturing of the movement has come an educated class of Pentecostals who, prompted by a desire to understand their faith *and* equipped with honed analytic skills, have committed themselves to the systematic articulation of a formal Pentecostal theology. Social factors such as these have in recent years contributed to a growing need for a biblically-informed understanding of reason, education, scholarship, and other academic cognates. Heretofore, the need to attend to such topics has been less pressing for Pentecostals. When coupled with the negating theological reasons outlined above – the influence of fundamentalist theology, faulty and/or erroneous working theologies, etc. – the inconsistencies witnessed between current pneumatological understanding of the world *and* Pentecostal orthopraxy and orthopathy at the grassroots level are understandable.

Together, these have led me to conclude that while the pieces needed to build a full and robust Pentecostal theology of scholarship and the mind currently exist, many remain under-developed within the Pentecostal community. Furthermore, as I have attempted to demonstrate here, these pieces have yet to be sufficiently configured in ways that can systematically inform the work of scholar-researchers and the space they inhabit in secular institutions. Consistent with Malik's observations regarding evangelicals, Pentecostals will probably continue to live on the *periphery* of intellectual existence in *this* aeon.<sup>56</sup> But in this position they need not live an *irresponsible* intellectual existence nor default on efforts to influence the broader intellectual world.<sup>57</sup>

As with theology in general, Pentecostals' collective experiences with God tend to outdistance their formal theologizing about Him. There are a number of reasons for this. Foremost is the nature of theology itself. Human talk about the divine is a second-order activity that proceeds in abstraction from these experiences *and* from a position of finitude. Because of this, human speech about God remains incomplete; by necessity it always falls short. The inadequacies of human language reflect this. These factors notwithstanding, theology must seek to provide a valid account of this divine encounter in ways faithful to the biblical witness.

---

<sup>56</sup> Charles Malik, "The Other Side of Evangelism," *Christianity Today* 7 (November 1980).

<sup>57</sup> Malik, "The Other Side," 40. Speaking at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois on the intellectual challenges facing evangelicals, the exact words of Malik were as follows. . . 'evangelicals cannot afford to keep on living on the periphery of the responsible intellectual mind.' quoted later by Noll in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.

Pentecostals must continue to formally construct and articulate their own theology in the areas identified above in the context of their own hermeneutic. To the extent that Pentecostal theology leaves unchallenged those tenets of modernist epistemology that contradict this pneumatological understanding of the world – as Noll and others in the evangelical world have done, this theology will remain under-developed.

## **8.2. - Implications of a Pentecostal Theology of Life of the Mind for Scholar-Researchers**

Several implications follow from this incipient theology of scholarship for scholar-researchers. Those identified below are not to be taken as exhaustive, nor do I exhaust all that could be written for each.

### *8.2a - Loving God holistically in the totality of one's being*

Pentecostal theology reminds scholar-researchers that they are called to love God *holistically* with all of their being, not only in certain parts of their lives. Maturity in Christ consists of the ongoing denial of self in pursuit of the holy life (Mk. 8:34; Mt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23). This means continually and deliberately making Christ the Lord of life in *all* things. It is in this loving and pursuing that one finds abundant life (Jn. 10:10b). Moses and the Evangelists describe this effort as both an act *and* disposition: 'love the Lord God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength' (Deut 6:4f;; Mk 12:30f; Lk. 10:27).<sup>58</sup> The call to love and pursue Him *holistically* and in the *totality* of one's being.

Included in this is the *mind*. The Christian is called to worship and love with *all* of his/her mind. In light of the theological emphasis Pentecostals place on holiness and the pursuit of the sanctified life, to what extent do they view the conscious, deliberate development of the mind (*orthopraxy*) as an act of love and worship? As noted above, Pentecostal theology certainly recognizes the importance of the development of the mind (*orthodoxy*). Yet this theology affirms that this is to be done in conjunction with the affective transformation (*orthopathy*) that follows from divine encounter. This transformation forms the integrating center of Pentecostal epistemology. Orthopathy leads to the holistic integration of the Spirit-led process of orthopraxy and the Spirit-accomplished orthodoxy. The

---

<sup>58</sup> The number and configuration of loci out of which one is to love vary as follows: Moses: *heart, soul, strength* (Deut. 6:5); Matthew: *heart, soul, mind* (Mt. 22:37); and Mark and Luke: *heart, soul, strength, mind* (Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27). Debates regarding the specific number of loci – 3 vs 4 – is secondary to the larger truth conveyed in these passages – *love Yahweh with the totality of one's being*.

transformed heart leads to a renewed mind. This in turn expresses itself in right actions/practice. For Pentecostals this affective understanding and behavior are essential to the knowledge of God. Both lie at the heart of their theology. Thus there is no life of the mind without a spiritual life that sustains and impels intellectual pursuits.

#### *8.2b - The work of scholarship and research is done in the context of Exile*

Pentecostal theology also reminds us that scholarship and research – and indeed of all of life – are done in the context of exile. The already-not yet tension implicit in its kingdom eschatology is a reminder that their lives are out of step with the dominant hermeneutics/paradigms of this age. This tension permeates all areas of life, including work. Rather than something to be denied or accommodated, exile is accepted as a given. It is the temporary yet palpable context in which life is lived and work done.

Israel's experience and reflection on *exile* is a useful metaphor for understanding the situation of scholar-researchers of faith in the research academy. As Brueggemann observes, *exile* is an act of being *orphaned*, and orphans are vulnerable: there is no sure home, family place, or recognizable food – only a profound sense of loss and rootlessness.<sup>59</sup> Absent is a reliable epistemological world to ensure a common language. It is a context in which the most treasured and trusted symbols of faith are mocked, trivialized or dismissed. The research institution is a de-privileged place for Christianity; it is post-Christian. Yet is the playing field of the academy. It must be recognized and navigated as such. With it come hostility, threats, periodic rejection, and social and emotional persecution from various sources. This in turn calls for the cruciform life: the crucifixion and death of self.

The scholar-researcher of faith is called to engage and persist in this environment. Resisting the temptation to withdraw, he/she chooses to remain. The perennial challenge centers on determining how to faithfully embody the ethos of the Kingdom in ways that promote the *shalom* of the institution via one's research agenda/expertise (Jer. 29:7).

While there are many educational goals pursued within the secular academy, two in particular justify the presence of scholars of faith in this setting: 1) the pursuit of the common good; and 2) the production of human knowledge toward the realization of this good. Both confirm the legitimacy of their calling. Earth-bound agendas are ever present within

---

<sup>59</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Word Militant: Preaching a Decentering Word* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

the university to co-opt these dual goods. The threat these present require scholars of faith to make a conscious decision about the daily rule. Otherwise their faith commitments will be either defined or circumscribed by these competing agendas. It is here that scholar-researchers are called to respond in humble obedience to the imperatives found in the Sermon on the Mount. They must love and pray for those in the academy who choose to pursue agendas that negate human flourishing (Mt 5.44). Both responses – loving and praying for – are not only counter-cultural, but counter-intuitive. Yet because secular universities are the objects of our love, affection, prudential thinking, and common endeavors *both* are commanded.

Although exile was a place of dislocation for Israel, it was also a season of profound theological generativity – a situation that pushed her collective thought beyond a place of stagnation. From this context of loss arose a series of poetic, imaginative voices who insightfully reinterpreted faith traditions in ways that turned exile into hope, stagnation into renewed vibrancy.<sup>60</sup> In a similar way, the scholar-researcher of faith is provided a context in which to grapple anew with thinking and categories that have become stagnant or irrelevant with the times. As an institution in the vanguard of defining an ever-changing culture, the foil that is the secular university provides the opportunity to assess the concepts and cognitive vehicles used to convey truth.

### *8.2c - The need to be multilingual amid multiple, competing hermeneutics*

Pentecostal theology leads the scholar-researcher to recognize the secular university for what it is: a veritable teleological, ontological and epistemological Tower of Babel. As the zenith of human ingenuity, it is indeed an impressive institution. The development of knowledge to promote the common good and the creation of artifacts toward this end are commendable. Both activities mirror the creative impulse of individuals made in the image of God and should be embraced as such. This stance bodes against persons of faith who, animated by a misguided zeal, are excessively eager to throw out the proverbial research-university baby with the bathwater or to isolate themselves and their work.

Yet it should be recognized that for many scholar-researchers both pursuits – the development of knowledge to promote the common good and the creation of artifacts toward this end – are animated by faulty assumptions regarding human nature, human agency, and human perfectability.

---

<sup>60</sup> Brueggemann, *The Word Militant*. See for example Isaiah 40-55; Jeremiah 30-31; Ezekiel 33-48.

Dismissive of the Fall and its effects as unenlightened beliefs of a by-gone era, many academics proceed on the assumption that as knowledge accumulates, humanity can indeed rid itself of the ills of society. For these individuals, the problem is not sin, but ignorance, the lack of adequate resources and/or the absence of social justice.

These assumptions are reflected in a variety of philosophical orientations and languages found in the university. While there is a set of dominant languages that define this community, many tongues are spoken here. Much noise emanates from this speech. While all hear the cacophony, only the discerning hear the euphony. In an age of postmodern sensibilities and a cultural commitment to philosophical pluralism, the temptation to relativize the truths of the Kingdom is ever present. Such conditions call for *polyglots* – scholar-researchers who: 1) recognize the multiplicity and maze of languages spoken in the academy, 2) are not intimidated by the philosophical pluralism these languages represent, 3) understand what they hear, and 4) embody a counter-narrative conveyed with passion and love. In order to navigate, de-construct, and contribute constructively as members of this community, scholar-researchers must therefore be multi-lingual. This includes a working knowledge of the dominant language(s) of the ‘empire’ (*the world*), the Kingdom, *and* of the power differential that exists between these in academy.

As illustrated above, Pentecostal theology provides a theoretical matrix for navigating and critiquing this landscape. Pentecostal theology likewise recognizes that the Spirit-Baptism of Acts 2 signals the emergence of a renewed, unifying language. It is a language that captures the ontology and epistemology of the coming Kingdom. As such, it provides the context out of which scholar-researchers can understand and enact their vocation. This language likewise fuels their passion and invigorates their commitment as co-explorers of the universe and its mysteries.

#### *8.2d - Reclaiming the normative, teleological end of the education and research endeavors*

Pentecostal theology likewise provides a means of reclaiming the teleological end of education and the research endeavor. In addition to the epistemology it offers in the fusion of affective, behavioral, and cognitive-based knowledge, Pentecostal theology provides a means of rethinking the purposes of education and research. These purposes contrast with those of Athens, Berlin, and Paris. As touted by those who champion the classic liberal education model, the goal of the *paideia* of Athens was the cultivation of intellectual excellence for its own sake. Cardinal Neuman’s normative vision of a university capture this end, ‘Liberal education



‘makes not the Christian. . . , but the gentleman’ [*sic*] . . . it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life – these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge. . . the objects of a University I am advocating.’<sup>61</sup>

This contrasts with the educational end of the research university. Here one finds the ‘cultivated citizen’ of Athens supplanted by the scientific methods of Berlin and Enlightenment thought. The end of education is no longer the moral life, but the production of rigorous, scientific knowledge through critical inquiry. Research guided by this inquiry and grounded in its methods defines the end of an Enlightenment education, to which development of the cultivated mind serves only as handmaid.

This further contrasts with the end of postmodern thought as personified by the Sorbonne in Paris: the inculcation of a persistent, interrogating mindset directed at exposing the vested interests and unequal power relations of various human texts. As an ideological provocateur, the normative goal of postmodern thought is the instigation of change in the direction of a more equitable existence. However, the absence of a transcendent referent for truth make this problematic since all is relative and contextual. If pursued to its logical end, postmodern thought is nihilistic. While equity is a defining value in the Kingdom, it is not its ultimate end.

Pentecostal theology de-constructs and re-configures the self-world relationship implied in the educational approaches above. In submitting all things to the lordship of Christ, it provides a larger, more unifying goal for research than the limited and parochial ends of Athens, Berlin or Paris. This goal arises from an open, systemic view of the world. It is informed by a rich epistemology and robust understanding of creation, both of which are animated by the hope of renewal. Education and research are thus directed toward development of knowledge, discoveries, and inventions that promote human flourishing to the glory of God. To engage and restore creation in anticipation of the renewal of all things is the divine mandate entrusted to scholar-researchers. Herein lies the synergy of the inquisitive human spirit with the Creator Spirit, an engaged mind that participates in Trinitarian relationality.<sup>62</sup> The *telos* of this journey is God himself: Father, Son, Spirit.

---

<sup>61</sup> John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Discourse V, Section 9 (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1999), 110.

<sup>62</sup> Bridges-Johns, ‘Athens, Berlin, and Azusa.’

### 8.2e - The research endeavor as an act of worship

Pentecostal theology likewise provides a means for recognizing the research endeavor for what it is: an act of worship. Research is a response to the divine invitation to come and know the Creator through the exploration and cultivation of His en-spirited creation. ‘*Come and see the works of God*’ (Ps. 66:5 - NASB). ‘*For since the creation of the world [God’s] invisible attributes. . . have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made*’ (Rom. 1:20, NASB).

In exploring various features of the physical and social world, the scholar-research comes to God through the ‘dazzling theater’ that is creation.<sup>63</sup> Job captures the spirit and sacredness of this inquiry:

*But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you (zoology); and the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you (ornithology). Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you (geology); and let the fish of the sea declare to you (ichthyology). Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind? - Job 12:7-10 (NASB)*

When viewed in such terms, research parallels premodern and orthodox approaches to theology. Whereas Western theology seeks to *explain* the mystery of God, pre-modern and orthodox traditions seek to *participate* in the mystery of God. Pursued in this way, theology is an act of worship whereby one participates in and validates his/her experience with God.<sup>64</sup> I would suggest that research can be also be viewed in this way. Again, there is no life of the mind for Pentecostals without a *spiritual* life that sustains and impels intellectual pursuits.

### 8.2f - Knowledge-work should be marked by a piety-nurtured humility that bows before yet seeks to understand mystery

Contrary to Noll’s argument, the piety implicit in Pentecostal theology is

<sup>63</sup> ‘Dazzling theater’ is Calvin’s description of creation. He further notes, ‘to weigh these works of God wisely is a matter of rare and singular wisdom,’ see Calvin, *Institutes*, Book I, Chpt 5, Section 8, p. 61.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Anselm’s well-known, *Proslogion* - (‘Discourse’ - written in ~1077) plumbs the mystery of God’s existence. It is set in the form of a deeply moving prayer. The original title – *Faith Seeking Understanding* – speaks to the work as an act of worship. Likewise, Luther and Calvin elevate faith above reason, without neglecting the importance of reason for life and faith. See John Wyckoff, *Pneuma and Logos: The Role of the Spirit in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

*not* inconsistent with the development of the mind. While certain enactments of this piety by particular groups suggest otherwise, Noll's conclusions do not hold for all. To generalize across all such groups contradicts sound inferential logic; it is misguided. *Whether pursued or not by Pentecostals, the seeds for the development of a vigorous intellectual life are embedded deep in their theology.* This potential is perhaps reflected most keenly in their hermeneutic(s).

Reason is a defining element in a Pentecostal hermeneutic. Yet it is neither the sole nor dominant element of this hermeneutic. Reason bows before the Spirit speaking in and through the biblical text as this revelation is discerned in community. Nonetheless, it remains an *indispensable* part of the interpretive process. To discard or downplay its role in the life of faith is to deny and distort the essence of human nature made in the image of God. Thus on the one hand there is much freedom within Pentecostal theology to develop and hone the intellect. For those called to the life of the mind, stewardship demands it. On the other hand, to enthrone reason as the sole or primary interpretive potentate is also to deny and distort human nature. Pentecostal theology reminds scholars of the possibilities and limitations of reason. It also reminds them of the 'quenching' effect reason can have if misappropriated (1 Thess. 2:19).

Humans are called to worship God with their minds. Implicit in this is a fundamental recognition of the wonder that *is* human cognition. Also implicit is the humble recognition of the limitations of human reason. For scholar-researchers of faith, the point of departure for all intellectual development is the humble, fearful recognition of the Creator and the relationship humans share with Him - *The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding* (Prov. 9:10, NASB). Pentecostal theology reminds scholar-researchers of these cardinal truths. All define the parameters within which knowledge-work is to be done. These truths also underscore the temptations embedded in such work.

As Paul keenly observes: knowledge production and acquisition are pride-inducing.<sup>65</sup> One need only visit a university campus – Christian or otherwise – to realize that pride and the idols it births are the primary sins of the academy. Endemic to knowledge-work in a fallen world is the dethronement of God and enthronement of self. This is accompanied by the negating of several fundamental truths essential to knowledge acquisition. As witnessed in secular higher education, the distortion and abuse of working ontologies, epistemologies, and teleologies are the

---

<sup>65</sup> 'Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.' - 1 Cor 8:1 (NASB)

inevitable result. What is otherwise a sacred endeavor becomes a human-centered activity corrupted by sin-tainted agendas of self-aggrandizement, exploitation, and dominance.

It is presumptuous to assume that within the finite limits of human understanding, humanity can develop exploratory tools capable of sounding the infinite depths and full complexity of an infinite universe created by the Infinite One. Yet in the spirit of Gen. 2:15 these realities should not dampen our efforts to do so. I offer this observation as one committed to science and the scientific method of modernism, just not *totally* committed. As a human artifact, this method embodies both the genius and flaws of its creator.

It is likewise presumptuous to assume that within the limits of this same reason humans can in themselves solve society's most vexing problems. Included in this are the challenges associated with oppressive economic and social inequalities, the persistence of poverty and its effects, and the irresponsible use and needless exploitation of the earth's natural resources. Yet in light of the values of the coming Kingdom, the Gordian knots personified by these problems should not prevent researchers from seeking solutions for them. I say this as one who recognizes the validity of questions which frame the postmodernist critique, yet not totally committed to the solutions this critique offers. Such questions reflect the divinely-instilled cry of the heart for transcendence, yet the answers provided by postmodernism are rooted in earth-bound solutions.

With its emphasis on transformed affections and the pursuit of holiness, Pentecostal theology reminds us that the production and acquisition of knowledge must be nurtured in the context of a vibrant piety. Pentecostal theology provides such a piety. It is a piety that calls for seasons of re-commitment and renewal punctuated by periodic returns to Mt. Carmel and the question raised by Elijah, '*How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him*' (1 Kgs. 18:21, NASB). The regnant Christ will either be Lord of all *or* not at all.

\*\*\*

There are many scholars called to engage the world through the development and advancement of knowledge in various academic disciplines/fields. Unfortunately they have and continue to be nurtured in traditions that fail to recognize the legitimacy of this call. This essay is a response to this discrepancy. There is a need for the Pentecostal community to address this theological deficiency, a need to articulate with

greater clarity a theological justification for those called to be scholar-researchers. The pneumatological understanding of creation inherent in its theology provides a robust framework and alternative for doing this. In rising above the epistemological limitations of modern and postmodern thought; it provides a promising way forward. While I have only outlined the broad parameters an incipient Pentecostal theology of scholarship, research, and knowledge-work, it is toward this end and in this spirit that I offer these thoughts.

## The Pentecostal Conversation on the Wall of Higher Education: A Rapprochement with Tradition

*L. William Oliverio, Jr.*

**Abstract:** Walter Brueggemann's essay on the legitimacy of a sectarian hermeneutic provides an analogical lesson for Pentecostals operating "on the wall" of higher education, that is, those at the intersection of Pentecostal communities and other communities in manifold socio-cultural situations. Formation in the "authentic Hebrew" which comes "behind the wall" in Pentecostal traditions formed in an incarnational divine-human dialectic produces Pentecostal educators who can serve in the spaces between the Church and the world as well as between Pentecostal and other Christian communities is a significant and strategic service. This formation requires a rapprochement and recategorization with concepts of tradition to overcome underdevelopment in Pentecostal approaches to tradition. The essay concludes with advice to Pentecostal educators "on the wall."

**Keywords:** hermeneutics, higher education, Pentecostal, tradition

In 1985, the renowned Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann gave a paper at the National Faculty Seminar in Christian Education sponsored by the Lily Foundation on the topic of Christian faith, public issues, and the formative-interpretive task of Christian education.<sup>1</sup> His paper was entitled "II Kings 18-19: The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic." It has since become a noted work of biblical scholarship and prophetic theological writing. The essay used the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, usually dated to 701 BC and recalled in II Kings 18-19 and Isaiah 36-37, as an analogical lesson for Christian communities in interpreting important social situations in the face of often hostile non-Christian social powers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "II Kings 18-19: The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7:1 (1985): 1-42.

With Reagan-era situations in mind, Brueggemann focused on social-cultural imperialisms from both the political Right and the political Left. While some of his socio-cultural illustrations have become dated, his instructive lessons from the siege remain. One key lesson is of the importance of language and hermeneutics for Christian education and formation as Christian communities engage surrounding cultures, and the implications of this lesson continues to have plenty of force for us now, three decades later. As he begins with the affirmation that the languages which form our experiences, reflection, and faith shape engagement with the world, the lesson from the siege will be that speaking the authentic language of God's people provides the particular shaping of a people within a tradition that witnesses the universality of God's purposes for the world as central to the way of deeper faith in the God of the Bible as God's people engage even hostile forces in the social worlds which they inhabit.

**The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic (That is, One not Monopolized by Human Traditions, and with a Universal Orientation)**

In II Kings 18, the tiny kingdom of Judah is threatened by the Assyrian Empire's siege of Jerusalem. The Assyrian negotiators come to the wall of the city to commence negotiations for Jerusalem's surrender. Judah will not be treated well, though, in any case. The Assyrians are not to be trusted to be merciful nor to honor commitments after a surrender. Yet the might of Judah, by normal human calculations, is no match. The Assyrian's lead negotiator, Rabshakeh, seeks to strategically intimidate the people of Jerusalem through the conversation "on the wall." Rabshakeh speaks out his threats in Hebrew rather than Assyrian so that the defenders of Jerusalem at the wall can understand him directly in their own tongue. King Hezekiah is not at the wall, however, though he has sent his representatives. The king is holed up with the prophet Isaiah and others as they deliberate in a conversation "behind the wall." There, they speak Hebrew as well, but authentic Hebrew rather than the kind of Hebrew spoken by their Assyrian adversary, Rabshakeh, at the wall. He speaks what Brueggemann calls "fake Hebrew, spoken with an odd accent by one who did not know the nuance of the language or the nuances of the conversation behind the wall." Rabshakeh's attempt to use Hebrew, though he thinks he's using it with power, "misunderstands and betrays" its very power, for the Hebrew language is the language of the God of the Exodus.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Brueggemann, "II Kings 18-19," 9.

Hezekiah's negotiators request that Rabshakeh speak to them in Aramaic where they can have a more private and less threatening negotiation. Rabshakeh, of course, refuses to give up on his perlocutionary agenda to intimidate the defenders and inhabitants within earshot of the wall, and through their word to the others. By normal human calculations, it seems like the conversation at the wall is the decisive one. It turns out not to be. Rather, like with the Exodus, the decisive conversation is located where Yahweh and His prophet are at, in this case in the conversation "behind the wall," in "authentic Hebrew." There, in the conversation behind the wall, "grief work" occurs among understandably terrified leadership as they lament and cry out to the LORD for justice.

For, in fact, Yahweh's power has been mocked by Rabshakeh, since the Assyrians mistake the LORD for just another of the Ancient Near Eastern gods. Yet, as always, Yahweh will not be mocked. The word then comes from Isaiah, "Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. Behold, I will put a spirit to him so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword of his own land" (II Kings 19:6-7; RSV). And so it happens, for Yahweh is not one of the other Ancient Near Eastern deities but the living God.

Brueggemann uses this Old Testament story to illuminate the task of Christian education and formation in the contemporary American context. The world speaks Aramaic. The Church speaks Hebrew. Many in the world speak fake Hebrew to the Church. The Church's leaders, as well as others, are called not only to bilinguality, like Hezekiah and Isaiah, but also to the appropriate uses for each language, often in challenging, even in sometimes existentially challenging situations – such as that, Brueggemann points out, of the younger generations continuing in the faith. This is a recurring theme in Brueggemann's writings as he has long been critical of too many in the Church, including its leaders, of buying into the fake Hebrew, and thus compromising with the larger culture, risking the future of the younger generations in this way. The fake Hebrew has too often been spoken, often unwittingly, though sometimes also knowingly, with compromised pragmatisms which seem to be necessary compromises. Yet the Church's task in witness requires that the Church knows its covenant relationship with the LORD. Formation in Hebrew – a more difficult formative task – must take place so that God's people might speak God's truth to other peoples in their native languages.

Brueggemann's essay is thus about legitimizing the Church's sectarian Hebrew task in education and formation as the only way for proper



formation into Yahweh's covenant people. This sectarian formation, however, is *of a people set aside for universal concern* – as a sect of universal concern and benefit. Demonstrative of this, Brueggemann spends a whole section of his essay on texts in the Hebrew Bible which speak of Yahweh's concern for humanity and, ultimately, the universal mission of God's covenant people. He cites the blessing to all the peoples of earth in the Abrahamic covenant, as well as God's concerns for other peoples in the Joseph narrative. He moves on to Amos 1-2, where the oracles against the nations include those against Judah and Israel, then they are followed by Amos' words that Yahweh has cared for other nations as He has these. Brueggemann especially notes Isaiah 19 where Egypt is called "my people" and Assyria "the work of my hands," alongside Yahweh's "heritage" Israel.

In citing these, however, Brueggemann makes a crucial, quite hermeneutical point. It is only in and through the Hebrew language that such a vision comes – that of Yahweh's universal concern for the nations. Thus, there is not only legitimacy but a certain primacy, he finds, to the conversation "behind the wall," through which this dialect of universal concern is spoken formatively among the people. It is here where the dialect, and hence the gestalt, for the sectarian hermeneutic is formed, the "authentic Hebrew." That is, the sectarian interpretation of reality which the Church cultivates and brings forth to the world is necessary for proper formation for the people of God who are concerned with the salvation of God coming to all the peoples of the earth (Gen. 12:3). It comes through the Incarnational dialectic where the Spirit speaks into the chosen dialect of the Word in Scripture, and God's people interpret the Word in divine-human dialectic with the same Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

The God of the Exodus is at work here in formation for mission on and beyond the wall, from "behind the wall," as Moses the Prophet was formed in Midian, so that there is a certain universality to the particularity, a particularity which cannot be contained by the particular humans and human communities who experience it. Brueggemann puts it like this:

The Exodus is affirmed. Then it is also affirmed that what seems to be a peculiar property of the community behind the wall is no peculiar property, because Yahweh characteristically causes Exoduses for many peoples. This is a remarkable intellectual claim, for at the same time the

---

<sup>3</sup> As in Merold Westphal, "Spirit and Prejudice: The Dialectic of Interpretation," in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, eds. Kenneth J. Archer and L. William Oliverio, Jr., Charismatic and Renewal – Interdisciplinary Studies - CHARIS (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 17-32.

normative claim of the sectarian narrative is affirmed and exploded. It is not argued that the normative claim of the Exodus recital is anything but true and normative. It is only that it may not be monopolized.<sup>4</sup>

Drawing this further and beyond into a Pentecostal hermeneutic<sup>5</sup> – and in this case here I more specifically mean a hermeneutic that lives in the light of the Pentecost event of Acts 2 as norming contemporary Pentecostal communities – then, we might consider Pentecost as not only the fulfillment of God’s covenantal law-giving at Sinai (as implied in Acts 2), and not only as the reversal of Babel (as also implied), but also the explosion of the empowerment of the God of the Exodus towards innumerable little exoduses. This is so as the Spirit is poured out on all flesh, on servants and maidservants, young and old, of people from all ethnicities and locales.<sup>6</sup> The language behind the wall is translated into the languages of the world, and the knowledge of Yahweh is breathed forth through the many tongues of God’s empowered people witnessing the new covenant through His Son.

What is the power of the conversation “behind the wall,” then? It is the place where Isaiah and Hezekiah, both urbane and bilingual, spoke the language of covenantal formation. It is there that the sectarian hermeneutic cultivated an interpretation of realities which enabled trust in Yahweh

---

<sup>4</sup> Brueggemann, “II Kings 18-19,” 27.

<sup>5</sup> For my account of the multiplicity of contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutics, see L. William Oliverio, Jr., *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 12 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> As Frank Macchia put it, “The diverse tongues of Spirit baptism was the means by which this divine intention behind the scattering was to be fully realized among the peoples of the world who had been dispersed originally by the confusion of tongues,” *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), following Brueggemann, *Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, vol. 1 (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 32, 98.

Miroslav Volf finds that “Babel – confusion – is not the end state; God is not only ‘deconstructing’ false unity, but also ‘constructing’ salutary harmony. At Pentecost, one in a long series of God’s positive responses to Babel that started with the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), God is bringing order into ‘confusion’...Before Babel, the whole of humanity spoke *one* language; in Jerusalem the new community speaks *many* languages. As the tongues of fire are divided and rest on each of the disciples, ‘each one’ of the Jews from ‘every nation under heaven’ representing the global community hears them ‘speaking in the native language of each’ (Acts 2:3-7). A theological (rather than simply historical) reading of the Pentecost account suggests that when the Spirit comes, all understand each other, not because one language is restored or a new all-encompassing meta-language is designed, but because each hears his or her own language spoken,” *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 227-28.

beyond what was supposedly rational. It was “behind the wall” that this sectarian hermeneutic exposed the Assyrian hermeneutic for what it was, a despotic hermeneutic – like that of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph and likewise stood ready for judgment when the cries of the Hebrews went up to Yahweh.

The hermeneutic “behind the wall” also *knew the fake Hebrew for what it was*. Unlike, in my judgment, too much in popular Christianity today, this hermeneutic was able to discern the compromised voices driven by the primacy of their (only thinly veiled) self-interest and not faithfulness to the Lord and His covenants – and the mission of His people on earth. Isaiah and Hezekiah were bilingual. They, and others, could engage the world “on” and “outside” the walls of Jerusalem – and it was of course through the legacy of Isaiah that visions of the universal mission of God’s covenantal people would especially spring forth.

### Contemporary Pentecostal Scholars at the Wall

Many contemporary Pentecostals whose vocations revolve around the world of higher education find themselves neither neatly in Pentecostal enclaves “behind the wall” nor far outside those walls without contact with other Pentecostals. Rather, many Pentecostals find themselves and their vocations, especially in today’s world heavy in social (at least social media) interactions, at the intersection between Pentecostal ecclesial and educational communities, on the one hand, and wider worlds speaking many different languages, on the other. They live “on the wall,” in this in between space.<sup>7</sup>

These many Pentecostal educators work and live among other Christians and non-Christians of varied attitudes and dispositions towards their own faith.<sup>8</sup> Typically in North America, though not the case in many other places in the world – especially in Asia, many of these non-Pentecostal others are cordial interlocutors, while a few are hostile, among whom some are occasionally aggressively so. It is not only with the explicit speech and expectations of these wider worlds that these Pentecostal scholars and educators find themselves engaging, it is more often also with

---

<sup>7</sup> This is also, however, not to imply that within the enclaves of our Pentecostal communities that “authentic Hebrew” is what is always or usually spoken. It is to prescriptively imply that this is where “authentic Hebrew” ought to be cultivated in forming the spiritual, mental and practical habits of Pentecostals.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, see Craig S. Keener’s “The Global Charismatic Scholarly Community,” 296-303, Appendix C of his *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016). This list largely omits those “within the Wall,” focusing on those on or outside of it in the wider scholarly world.

deeper cultural and philosophical assumptions embedded into daily life – into the “unthought” or the “social imaginary” as Charles Taylor has named these.<sup>9</sup> These are powerful and formative embedded assumptions in cultures that, without the benefit of cross-cultural experiences and understanding, could be mistaken for being natural, as they have become second nature. It is at this level, rather than merely the explicit, where Pentecostals can feel like strangers in their own wider communities. They just feel life and the world differently.

Pentecostals living “on the wall” of higher education who often interact with these other worlds would certainly include Pentecostal educators and scholars who study and teach in the biblical-theological academy outside of Pentecostal or Christian institutions yet who worship with or are involved with Pentecostal ecclesial and scholarly life. A larger number of Pentecostals find themselves fulfilling God-given vocations as educators in roles such as public university professors or from roles such as student development staff to university administrators, as well as the many Pentecostal educators who serve as secondary and primary school educators or who work outside of the paid ranks of higher education yet whose vocations are rightly understood as Pentecostal educators nonetheless – men and women whose vocations are not dependent on the will of employers but on the Breath of God upon their vocation callings.

Yet Pentecostals whose vocations are “on the wall” of higher education and whose vocational calling is to scholarship and teaching live in a strategic place between Pentecostal churches and the world as well as between Pentecostal and other Christian communities. Though they may (rightly) question whether they are seen and treated as such (given how they are often treated), they are highly valuable to the Church’s work today. Pentecostals called to live and work “on the wall” tend to live in this space of tension between the Church and the world as a small but critical constituency. The lack of understanding and support, from within and without, often results in a double marginalization.<sup>10</sup> Pentecostal communities too often fail to adequately understand and support them; outside their own communities, they are often treated as strange anomalies. Nevertheless, they represent a constituency of over 600 million charismatic-Pentecostal Christians worldwide spread throughout movements, denominations, and subdivisions of the larger tradition. Meanwhile, the marginalization these Pentecostal educators on the wall experience tends to generate deeper perspectives on not only their primary

---

<sup>9</sup> Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 23-30.

<sup>10</sup> Bob L. Johnson, Jr. has helpfully identified a six-fold marginalization in his essay in this journal.

disciplines but also the Church and the world. Suffering has produced perseverance, and that perseverance character, and that character hope (Rom. 5:3-4).

How then shall we, as Pentecostal educators, live and work and have our being (Acts 17:28)? My suggestion is that we do so by recovering the formative power of tradition in a rapprochement, a reconciliation with a concept which many in our tradition have tended to reject – creating a harmful blind spot for Pentecostal formation and self-understanding.

### **The Recovery of the Formative Power of Tradition and the Conversation Behind the Wall**

Pentecostalism is a tradition – as much as Pentecostals have often tried to deny it. That is, the over 600 million contemporary Christians who are a part of charismatic and Pentecostal movements across the globe are not merely a set of movements but, together, constitute a living dialogue that is a large, organic reality that has unity amidst its many differences. Though Classical Pentecostalism – the more than 100 million Pentecostals worldwide who came out of primarily North American turn of the twentieth century fellowships created by early Pentecostal revivals and doctrinal developments – hold a place of honor at the core of the tradition, Classical Pentecostals, like myself, do not represent the majority of global Pentecostals, and the substantive cultural and theological differences among the nearly quarter of the world Christian population which religious demographers label this way.<sup>11</sup>

To be a tradition is to be human and cultural. To affirm this does not deny but rather is necessary to affirm the incarnational axis on which the divine-human dialectic occurs. Classical and other forms of Pentecostalism began, on one level, as a revolt against human religiosity repressing the divine-human encounter with the Holy Spirit in Christian spiritual life, though Pentecostalism has often tended towards failing to account well for the role of the human in the encounter so that the concept of divine-human dialectic is too often lacking. In the early Pentecostal ethos, tradition was something to be overcome, dead religion. More recently, many Pentecostals have had a desire to recover Christian heritages and moral values in larger cultural and moral debates, often in a clash with forms of modern progressivisms – even as Pentecostals have often also found themselves allied with modern progressives in concern for the poor and in

---

<sup>11</sup> See Douglas Jacobsen, *Global Gospel: An Introduction to Christianity on Five Continents* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), for instance, and the continual publications on the demographics of global Christianity coming from *The Pew Forum* and *The World Christian Encyclopedia*.

some forms of social action. Insufficient theological and philosophical reflection on tradition has led to errors on both sides. Failing to account for the humanity in the divine-human encounter has led to too strong of claims of purity in spiritual experiences and theological understanding birthed from such. It has likewise led to uncritically embracing and compromising with worldly traditions embedded in cultural traditions aligned with Christian communities.

In all cases, however, tradition is inevitable and is the continued giving of past culture to the present with all of its formative and normative power. Further, tradition is a morally mixed subject in Scripture. Passing on the faith and practice of God's covenants may rightfully be understood as important to the New as to the Old Testaments, though the externality involved in religious traditions is relativized to the ordering of the Christian and to Christian community in the life of the Spirit. The Incarnation of Christ also affirms embodiment and human particularity, as the high point of divine revelation to humanity comes in the form of a particular Person in a particular culture, an affirmation which builds upon the already present affirmation of the (very) goodness of creation, as in Genesis 1, and the original goodness of the cultivation of this good creation, as in the working and naming in Genesis 2. The concept that tradition can be overcome is more of a product of modern theories of knowledge than biblical sources, and inevitably smuggles in (often popular "common sense") cultural understandings to theological understanding and in biblical interpretation while it claims freedom from such contamination. For "common sense" is, in the hermeneutical mindset, a traditional communal sense of understanding.

While tradition is a generalizable concept for theology and Christian faith, its particular and interrelated meanings include at least the four following: 1) the content of faith passed down as established norm; 2) the broad cultural histories of Christian churches with their normative implications; 3) the cultural histories of peoples and cultures, sub-cultures, movements and the like, with its manifold interrelatedness, with all of their normativity, as they relate to Christian communities; and 4) all of this leading to the formative power of traditions – that is, traditioning. Thus, with more definition below, I am speaking of tradition for Pentecostal Christian faith in four senses:

Tradition 1: Tradition as the consensus of orthodox Christian teaching or doctrine.

Tradition 2: Tradition as the particular historical realities of the Christian Church, and the histories of churches and ecclesial

traditions, what is commonly referred to as “the Christian tradition,” and the particular traditions found within the greater Christianity *oikumenē*.

Tradition 3: Tradition as the general cultural context, and passing down of understanding and practices, extending beyond but including religion, and practically synonymous with what is referred to by that other broad and inclusive term “culture.”

Tradition 4: Tradition as the specific process of formation of persons and communities (i.e., “traditioning”), in which Christian churches inevitably participate – whether poorly or well.

It is here that this background on tradition comes to bear upon Pentecostal higher education and Christian formation in our churches. Tradition, in the first three senses, comes to its formative function in the fourth. Traditioning is thus the task of forming people in Christian communities – in our way of life, in our values, and for Pentecostal communities as it should be for all Christian communities this entails traditioning people in the life of the Spirit. The emphasis on the formative power of tradition for Pentecostals has been especially developed by Simon Chan, James K.A. Smith and Cheryl Bridges Johns.<sup>12</sup>

### **A Pentecostal Rapprochement with the Formative Power of Tradition**

The unifying *telos* of tradition (in the senses of Traditions 1, 2 and 3) is the formation of God’s people in faithfulness to Him within the context of the time and place in which they dwell: Tradition 4. The way forward for engagement with the world, and God’s universal purposes for humanity, happens within the formative communities – ecclesial and educational – in and through which the “authentic Hebrew” tongue is spoken.

In his *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, Simon Chan called for this: “The issue is not whether they have a tradition, but whether they have been effective in traditioning.”<sup>13</sup> Thinking in terms of cultural formation, James K.A. Smith has called for an understanding of

---

<sup>12</sup> Among other works from each, these would include Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement 21 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); idem., *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement 2 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); and Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 20.

affective, embodied teleological spiritual and cultural formation – with sights, smells, passions – for Christian churches, in general,<sup>14</sup> and Pentecostal ones in particular.<sup>15</sup> Tradition 4 builds upon the other three senses as mediums for Christian life.

The lack of unity among Christian traditions (Tradition 2), especially unity regarding the agenda for Christian mission in relation to the essence of the faith (Tradition 1), has led to a kind of disunity that engenders ineffectiveness for tradition as formation (Tradition 4). As James Davison Hunter has contended, the disunity of Christianity in North America has been a key element in its becoming a “weak culture” within wider American culture.<sup>16</sup> The lack of an understanding of Tradition 1 (the essence of Christianity) has led to division in the sense of Tradition 2 (church traditions) and led to ineffectiveness in the sense of Tradition 4 (in the task of formation) within the context of Tradition 3 (the wider cultural situation).

This also means that a genuine Pentecostal hermeneutic which speaks “authentic Hebrew” fosters a genuine ecumenism, one that simultaneously deepens one’s living faith in the Triune God and operates with a greater sense of generosity to the many Christian traditions which house the spiritual body that is Christ’s Church, which should move towards a more robust Church united in common mission together despite differences. A genuine ecumenism here is not a thinning out of Christian understandings to a lowest common denominator but of more mature and developed understanding for Christian theology.<sup>17</sup>

For example, on both local and global fronts, Christians have been confined in addressing the problems of poverty, the sex trade, and other forms of degradation of human life mostly within the context of

---

<sup>14</sup> See Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*.

<sup>15</sup> Idem., “Thinking in Tongues,” *First Things* 182 (Apr 2008): 27-31.

<sup>16</sup> James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> A model of this among Classical Pentecostals is Macchia’s *Baptized in the Spirit*, which develops the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism in relation to Catholic and Reformed views of the doctrine, along with the non-Lukan biblical witness, by calling for a deepening of understanding of each and providing for a Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism that uses these other witnesses (ecclesial and scriptural) to provide a thicker understanding of Spirit baptism as a baptism into divine love.

I articulate how I understand a more robust approach to Pentecostal ecumenism – with Macchia as a model of this – in “Spirit Baptism in the Late Modern World: A Pentecostal Response to The Church: Towards a Common Vision,” in *The Holy Spirit and the Church: Ecumenical Reflections with a Pastoral Perspective*, edited by D. Thomas Hughson, 44-70, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology Series (Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2016).



parachurch (which often seemed to have formed in order to foster a certain practical ecumenism for practical expediencies because of the disunity among organized church bodies) or denominational agencies. But it often seems that our Christian witness is limited by this multiplicity of the disunity of our efforts. On this point, Hunter finds that, at least in the North American context, “The divisions within the Christian community along lines of social class, ethnicity, and race remain very deep, and the divisions that fall along denominational or confessional lines are as tribally factional as they have ever been. If Christians cannot extend grace through faithful presence, within the body of believers, they will not be able to extend grace to those outside.”<sup>18</sup>

Hunter made this claim back in 2010.

Faithful witness and the learning of “authentic Hebrew” start within the tradition. On this matter, a theology of the Incarnation may help as it leads into a Christian understanding of the nature and mission of Christian life informed by and affirming particularities, as particularities were affirmed on the Day of Pentecost. The particular is the vessel of universal mission, even as the particular, save the vessel of the Incarnate Son, cannot in themselves constrain Christian witness. And even in the case of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, the Second Person is, to come full circle back to Brueggemann’s words, “affirmed and exploded” in the outpouring of the Third Person “on all flesh.” The affirmation of particularity has been well developed by contemporary Pentecostal theologians, as well as Christian theologians from other traditions, so that the tongues of Pentecost in Acts 2 entail a Christian affirmation of the Spirit of the One True God filling and empowering peoples of different cultures, in the multiplicity of their traditions (Tradition 3) and their particular personalities, to bless them in participation in God’s good work in the world for the achievement of the ends God desires for His creation, and namely the redemption of humankind. The theological work of Amos Yong, alone, has robustly made this point and has begun working out many of its implications.<sup>19</sup> A Pentecostal rapprochement with tradition (in

---

<sup>18</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World*, 244.

<sup>19</sup> For a more general appropriation of this principal in his thought see Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series; Burlington, VT and Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2002); and *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005). For examples of how the implications of the “many tongues” principle plays out in specific areas of theological attention, see his *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology – The Cadbury Lectures 2009* (Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); and *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in*

all senses) would entail a greater valuing of Tradition 2 and Tradition 3, in every aspect of the good and redeeming qualities found in the particularities of each ecclesial and cultural tradition, as it moves towards the ends sought by Tradition 4 in the name of the common faith found in Tradition 1.

Similarly, theological reflection done amongst the larger household of Christian faith – in friendship, collegiality and dialogue together among traditions (Tradition 2) – will provide greater opportunity for shared insight among Christian thinkers towards producing more adequate Christian accounts of theological and social realities. Such an apologetic task for the Church is pressing upon us, especially in Western civilization, where secularity – in the senses of lack of religious belief and practice, and attendant irreligiosity in the way of life – has become established in many Western societies, and in others it is growing.<sup>20</sup> The disunity of Pentecostals from other Christians, when we fail to acknowledge the legitimacy of and foster partnerships with other traditions (Tradition 2) misses out on taking advantage of the vast resources available to us in this regard. For example, if Pentecostals could forge an intellectual partnership with faithful Catholics, with their vast global intellectual and educational resources, even despite our significant theological and ecclesial disagreements, we can partner together in Christian fellowship towards producing strong Christian philosophical, theological and ethical accounts together in the face of persisting and advancing secularities. While we see glimpses of it, we have yet to see the power of grace potentially available to us in our embodied unity together.

### ***Advice to Pentecostal Educators on the Wall***

What does this all mean for Pentecostal educators, as well as those tasked with guiding Pentecostal communities in spiritual formation? There is much to be said here, but I want to put forth a few key points after

---

*the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination* (Pentecostal Manifestos 4; Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2011).

For my assessment of Yong's thought, see L. William Oliverio, Jr., "An Interpretive Review Essay on Amos Yong's Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18:2 (October 2009): 301-311; and "The Theology of Amos Yong and the Dissolution and Pluralism of Late Modernity," in *A Passion for the Spirit: Pneumatology, Pentecostalism, and the Promise of Renewal in the Theology of Amos Yong*, Wolfgang Vondey and Martin Mittelstadt, eds. (forthcoming; publisher TBA).

<sup>20</sup> Like "tradition," "secular" refers to several closely related entities, including lack of religious adherence or belief, lack of religious way of life (personally or societally), the justification of knowledge apart from appeal to religious belief, and social space that is ideally separated from religion.

clarifying that what I have been developing above is the condition for any faithful and prophetic witness “on the wall” of higher education.

This underlying condition is that Pentecostal educators who desire authentic living and witness at the intersection of their own communities and that of the wider world need the dialectics between the Word and their selves, the Spirit and their Pentecostal communities to form them, first and continually, in the “authentic Hebrew” so that their witness might be formed by the Word and Spirit, formed with the authenticity of the graciousness of God’s divine love and knowledge made real among sinful humanity.

Today the challenge of that witness is complex, not least because the contemporary world has Christian communities facing many local and global issues which cannot adequately be addressed through common sense (that is, local and traditional) responses. Wolfgang Vondey, whose vocation has taken him from his native Germany to two decades in the United States to now the University of Birmingham (UK), has called Pentecostalism to attend to “glocal” realities, an awkward if accurate amalgamation of terms.<sup>21</sup> Pentecostal educators who operate at the intersection dealt with here are often tending to both large, general – even global – trends while, at the same time, tending to local realities. They are often translators calming the people “behind the wall” or coaching them through social tensions or seeking to understand what is going on with outside forces pressing in.

Often, Pentecostal educators on the wall need to push back against unhelpful generalizations about the outside world or fear about what will happen. Much of this can best be addressed through traditioning “behind the wall.” Yet Pentecostal educators “on the wall” should take courage in the task of cultivating imagination and developing understanding towards addressing the global and local challenges. Most of Scripture is particular and occasional, but with importance for all of God’s people. Such an imagination is an eschatological imagination as the ends imagined, if they are truly biblical, end in God’s shalomic vision for humanity and the world, as anticipations of the New Heavens and the New Earth. So, first, Pentecostal educators “on the wall” ought to function as the wise men and women, like the bilingual Hezekiah and Isaiah, who can categorize and lead the community in faith and wisdom, even and especially in the most difficult of times.

---

<sup>21</sup> Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

Second, the vocational calling of Pentecostal educators is, in fact, to teach. The double marginalization of the vocation of teaching as Christian higher educators, from within and without, does not diminish the calling itself. The calling faces adversities. There is the rigor of good scholarly and teaching work, tasks which are truly endless and for which the physicality of is often underestimated by outsiders. This is not a financially lucrative field, despite what, on occasion, some might assume; and, painfully, our own people contribute to the undercompensation of Pentecostal educators, with ramifications and difficulties for the families of those called. Yet the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and the gifts the Spirit bestows has placed Pentecostal educators in particularly strategic places, even amidst sufferings. Part of our teaching vocation is, thus, to teach others the value of what we do – the slow but powerful formation of God’s people. As my *doktorvater* Phil Rossi, who served as chair of Marquette’s Department of Theology and then Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, would remark (referring to the traditional undergraduate career) – the value of a good undergraduate education truly manifests around age forty.

In an endnote in Brueggemann’s essay, he notes that the scholar Wayne Meeks, a scholar of early Christianity, came to the conclusion that “the Pauline Corpus in the New Testament is almost completely concerned with the internal ordering and symbolization of the community, or in our terms, with the conversation behind the wall” (39n16). It is the work among those of us who operate “on the wall” do “behind the wall,” which funds are engagement there. This comes in formation and devotion, in developing our communal languages in richness – see here a justification for what we do, in one key area, in biblical-theological education – for funding our engagement “on the wall,” at the intersection of the Church and the world, and that of our students. This cultivation and formation, in the creation of not just intellectual understanding but also in physical and social spaces for richer Christian languages to be spoken and expressed.

Like parents who constantly invest in the lives of their children, Pentecostal educators are seeding and cultivating within and outside of Pentecostal communities in ways which are of great importance yet whose results are hard to clearly observe or quantify. We must thus also teach concerning the value of our own roles.

Third, the motivation and desire of Pentecostal educators who work “on the wall” ought to be God’s shalomic vision of his kingdom, the eschatological vision of God’s people of all tribes and tongues and nations, together in a posture of worship of the one true and loving God. Our conversation “behind the wall” ought to cultivate this vision – in deed and word. Yet, here, we need to take heart that the task is not our own.

The theological category of participation in the grace of God should give us courage as a helpful theological-practical image. We are “in Christ” and it is the work of the Spirit, who indwells us and fills us, who leads us in our work. We might not think of our talents as our own but as given to us gracefully as creational gifts of God and cultivated as the Spirit gifts us and leads us. This attitude can coordinate with the shalomic ends and vision so that we can live and be people of grace. So we fight the narratives of the world with Spirit hermeneutics,<sup>22</sup> as people of shalom and grace, responding with the power found in what Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount rather than the regnant cultural languages and narratives. And part of our task is to teach our communities to do just that.

Fourth and finally, we are called to refuse marginalization. There is a fighting spirit here – not as the world fights – but as Jesus’ disciples empowered by the Spirit to wage war against the kingdom of darkness. Some, even in our own churches, will seek to marginalize Pentecostal teachers because they are intimidated by or feel jealous concerning or do not understand us and our callings. In serious cases, we must go back and do the “grief work” behind the wall and ask Yahweh to fight for us. Other times the task may be simpler. It is to overcome this through simple boldness, by refusing the marginalization in the imagination of insiders and outsiders and by teaching them to imagine the importance of our bilinguality and the place we have in mediating the Church and the world.

In conclusion, my advice to Pentecostals who live and work at the wall need is to first and foremost continually experience the dialectic of transformation which forms the “authentic Hebrew” within, as we develop 1) the imagination to deal with the particularities of our late modern, “glocal” world; 2) the skills to teach and dialogue with others on the ways in which those “on the Wall” can share their gifts as members of the Body of Christ, in Pentecostal plurality, with the Church and world; 3) the motivation and desire to see such as participating in the grace of God to bring about shalom and healing; and 4) the refusal of marginalization and the overcoming of kinds of intimidation which hinder such work and witness.

---

<sup>22</sup> I am thinking here of the prescriptive vision for Pentecostal hermeneutics formulated by the biblical scholar Craig Keener in his *Spirit Hermeneutics*.

## Educating the Next Generation, Inside-Out: From Pentecostal Tongues to Multi-Cultural Conversations: The Conversation Behind the Wall

*Rickie D. Moore*

**Abstract:** Beginning with Brueggemann's insights into the use of language in 2 Kings 18-19, certain intersecting features of Isaiah's account of the same events offers ways for Pentecostal scholars working within Pentecostal universities to engage both those "outside" and those "inside the walls." James K.A. Smith's work in Pentecostal philosophy becomes one way in which just such a hermeneutic for speaking "inside the wall" could be carried out to raise up the next generation of Pentecostals.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal, higher education, Isaiah

### Introduction

This multi-authored presentation proposes to address how Pentecostal theology and spirituality can be relevant to cultural engagement in the field of education, even in the public arena. Our presentation takes its starting point and adopts its framework from a well-known article written by Walter Brueggemann over 30 years ago now, entitled, "The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic."<sup>23</sup>

Our present use of Brueggemann's article is not the first time that Pentecostals have found this article useful for their own constructive proposals. In 1995 Cheryl Bridges Johns appealed to this article in calling

---

<sup>23</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic: 2 Kings 18-19," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7 (June 1985): 1-42. This article was later republished in the collection, Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 41-69.

for Pentecostals to lay claim to their distinctive identity in terms of their own hermeneutical orientation and practices.<sup>24</sup> In 2010 Jamie Smith followed Johns in finding Brueggemann's thesis useful in framing his own effort to chart a course for Pentecostal contributions to Christian philosophy.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in his book, *Thinking in Tongues*,<sup>26</sup> Smith draws upon a summary of Brueggemann's article by Johns that can well serve us here in introducing Brueggemann's thesis:

In his reading of 2 Kings 18-19 (the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem under Hezekiah's reign), Brueggemann notes two different universes of discourse at work in the narrative: the language of the empire "at the wall" versus Israel's language "behind the wall." "Both conversations construct reality. At the wall, the empire constructs reality utilizing the agenda of the imperial system. In this conversation, no prophet speaks and Yahweh is silent. The conversation behind the wall constructs reality based on the decisive prior claim of covenant with Yahweh. Here we have the voice of the prophet. Here the imperial voice is silent. Here only Hebrew is spoken. It is the language of the covenant."<sup>27</sup> Each functions as a hermeneutic, "a proposal for reading reality through a certain lens." But Israel's constitutes a "counter-perception of reality" that challenges the hegemony of the dominant, imperial hermeneutic.<sup>28</sup>

In deriving this model from the story in 2 Kings 18-19, Brueggemann finds the statement in 18:26 particularly important, where King Hezekiah's officials meet the Assyrian military officers at the wall of Jerusalem and say to them,

"Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people, who are on the wall."

From this key statement, Brueggemann drives to the heart of his thesis, summarizing it in the following way:

---

<sup>24</sup> Cheryl Bridges Johns, "The Adolescence of Pentecostalism: In Search of a Legitimate Sectarian Identity," *Pneuma* (1995): 3-17.

<sup>25</sup> James K.A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Pentecostal Manifestos Series; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, p. 24, quoting Johns, "Adolescence," p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, p. 24.

I suggest that people of faith in public life must be *bilingual*. They must have a *public language* for negotiation at the wall. And they must have a more *communal language* for use behind the gate, in the community, and out of sight and range of the imperial negotiators.<sup>29</sup>

Expanding upon this point, Brueggemann goes on to say,

The conversation on the wall is crucial, because the Assyrians are real dialogue partners who must be taken seriously. They will not go away. But unless there is another conversation behind the wall in another language about another agenda, Judah on the wall will only submit to and echo imperial perceptions of reality. When imperial perceptions of reality prevail, everything is already conceded.<sup>30</sup>

And driving home the point to its culminating application, Brueggemann says,

Church education is properly and legitimately sectarian if it nurtures an alternative reading of reality that can interface with the dominant reading of reality freely, imaginatively, and critically . . . a sectarian conversation kept open to its own language, its own experience, and its own proper reference is not only legitimate but essential to serious public discourse. Without the conversation behind the wall, the conversation on the wall will surely become a totalitarian monologue.<sup>31</sup>

Our present effort takes up Brueggemann's model in order to explore ways that a Pentecostal hermeneutic can move from "the conversation behind the wall" to the wider cultural engagement of "the conversation beyond the wall," specifically in the public arena of education. In looking first at the "conversation behind the wall," I am proposing to build upon Brueggemann's model in three ways:

1. By showing how the book of Isaiah, in presenting a parallel account of 2 Kings 18-19 (see Isa. 36-37), provides, in the course of this entire prophetic book, an expanded and deepened view of "the conversation behind the wall."

---

<sup>29</sup> Brueggemann, "Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic," in *Interpretation and Obedience*, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> Brueggemann, "Legitimacy," p. 44.

<sup>31</sup> Brueggemann, "Legitimacy," p. 50.



2. By showing how the vision of Isaiah is focused in a primary and thoroughgoing way with concern for raising up and teaching the next generation—an insufficiently recognized theme in Isaiah scholarship that obviously bears directly upon our presentation's central focus on education.
3. By showing how the prophetic vision of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 1:1 and chap. 6) resonates deeply with the visionary experience which inspires the Pentecostal worldview and hermeneutic.<sup>32</sup>

### **“The Conversation Behind the Wall” in Isaiah**

The book of Isaiah in chapters 36-37 features a synoptic version of 2 Kings 18-19, the story from which Brueggemann draws his model of the two conversations—“*behind* the wall” and “*at* the wall.” Yet in Isaiah this story is paralleled by another story presented in chapters 7-8. Both stories begin with a conversation “at the wall” of Jerusalem at the exact same geographical spot. Highlighting the parallel, the spot in both narratives is identified with identical wording, namely, “at the aqueduct of the upper pool by the highway to the fuller’s field” (Isa. 7:3 and 36:2). Thus, the book of Isaiah features not just one conversation “at the wall” but two—two that are explicitly linked together by a repeated geographical reference. And even as the second conversation at the wall (in Isaiah 36-37) is impinged upon by a conversation behind the wall, as Brueggemann has effectively shown in his reading of 2 Kings 18-19, one can find an even more pronounced example of this in the first conversation at the wall, in Isaiah 7.

Here in chapter 7 one finds a conversation at the wall between Isaiah and Ahaz, King of Judah—one that is flanked on each side by a conversation behind the wall involving YHWH and Isaiah. These two conversations between YHWH and Isaiah bear directly on the prophet’s encounter with Ahaz in chapter 7, with God calling and preparing Isaiah for this encounter in chapter 6 and debriefing him after this encounter in chapter 8. These divine conversations with Isaiah carry us into the inner sanctum of Isaiah’s ministry and vocation.

In chapter 6 we see Isaiah’s famous call narrative and vision of God in the temple, where his encounter with God’s holy presence and word raises the specter of devastating threat not only to the city of Jerusalem (6:11) but also to the walls of the very temple itself, for “the posts of the door moved

---

<sup>32</sup> For programmatic statements on the Pentecostal worldview and the hermeneutical orientation emerging from it, see Jackie David Johns, “Pentecostalism and the Postmodern Worldview,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (October 1995): 73-96; and Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, pp. 17-85.

at the voice of the one who called, and the house was filled with smoke” (6:4). This is the encounter in which the prophet, whose lips are burned with a holy ember (6: 6-7), is called to “go and speak to this people.” He is to speak a message that, hearing, they would not hear and, seeing, they would not see (6:9-10)—an overarching life calling that Isaiah can be seen carrying out in a particularized way at the beginning of chapter 7. Here YHWH directs Isaiah to “go” and “speak” to Ahaz (7:3). Indeed Isaiah engages Ahaz *at the wall* with a message that clearly has its basis in Isaiah’s divine conversation *behind the wall*. Yet just as the Assyrian officers would not be open to the conversation coming from behind the wall in the later story of Isaiah (chaps. 36-37), Ahaz is not willing to hear what Isaiah is bringing from his conversation behind the wall of the temple. Indeed, hearing, he does not hear and, seeing, he does not see, for he even refuses YHWH’s offer to choose any validating sign—any sign whatsoever—that would enable him to see (7:10-12). After Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign, Isaiah rebukes him and informs him that YHWH will nevertheless give him a sign (7:13-14). However, it is a sign that is complicated in its extensive symbolic detail (7:14-28), thereby making it an ambiguous and confusing sign, as proven by the widely diverse interpretations produced by centuries of commentary. Yet once again, this accords with what Isaiah was told to expect in his conversation with YHWH behind the wall in chapter 6—Isaiah would deliver a message that the people, hearing, would not hear and, seeing, would not see.

This linkage I have pointed out between Isaiah *behind the wall* in chapter 6 and *at the wall* in chapter 7 serves to show that Isaiah is not only navigating between two different conversations but also between two different visions. And it is this *vision behind the wall* that is crucial in transforming the speech, the very lips of Isaiah (6:6-7), indeed the language that challenges the vision or worldview that reigns at the wall, as seen with King Ahaz.

After the exchange between Isaiah and Ahaz in chapter 7, there follows another conversation between YHWH and the prophet in chapter 8. The thrust of this exchange is to make clear to Isaiah what remained unclear in God’s sign to Ahaz in chapter 7. YHWH now gives Isaiah a sign, and like the sign given to Ahaz, it begins with the divinely announced birth of a child. For Ahaz it was a child to be named Immanuel, “God with us,” but the predicted array of events attending this name, given in the following lengthy paragraph, offers nothing more than ambiguity as to how God would be “with us” and even whether this would mean weal or woe (7:15-28). For Isaiah, the child’s identity and name are made clear. His own child, who will be named “Plunder-comes-quickly” (8:3), points to Assyria’s soon plundering of Judah’s adversarial northern neighbors (8:4).

However, Assyria would not stop there but continue to flood into the land of Judah, all the way “up to its neck” (8:7-8), at which point YHWH again speaks the name, “Immanuel” (8:8), but this time “God with us” is now clarified as something that will take the form of an Assyrian invasion of Judah. Thus, in this inside conversation between YHWH and Isaiah that comes in the aftermath of the conversation with Ahaz at the wall, the prophet is made privy to the crisis event that will bring about the conversation at the wall during Hezekiah’s reign, a generation later (Isa. 36-37).

Yet chapter 8 presents still more in the way of YHWH tutoring Isaiah in the language behind the wall. As Isaiah puts it,

For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand upon me, and he instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, “Do not call a conspiracy all that this people call a conspiracy; neither fear what they fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself and let him be your fear; let him be your dread. And he shall be a sanctuary but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both houses of Israel . . . Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples” (8:11-16)

And to this Isaiah responds,

I will wait upon the LORD, who hides his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me for signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts who dwells on mount Zion” (8:17-18).

What makes this last statement so significant is that Isaiah’s words in chapter 6, “Here am I; send me,” are here in chapter 8 reprised and revised in the statement, “Here am I and the children the LORD has given me.” Isaiah is not only being given a new language, he is being given children to train in this new tongue. And he is thus being given a more focused calling to teach the children of the next generation, among whom Hezekiah will eventually become the leading figure. And with this we come to a major theme in the book of Isaiah that obviously relates directly to the matter of education. I will now attempt to show the pivotal role that this theme—the theme of raising up the next generation—plays in the book of Isaiah.

### Isaiah's Vision of Raising Up the Next Generation

My case for the pivotal place of the theme of the raising up of the children in the book of Isaiah could be outlined in the following 13 statements:

1. It is the first issue raised by Yahweh at the beginning of the book of Isaiah; 'Children have I raised and brought up, but they have rebelled against me' (1.2).
2. It is the final issue (the *telos*) of Isaiah's commissioning in chap. 6—'the holy seed' revealed in the stump (6.13).
3. It is further reinforced as a focal point of Isaiah's call when his 'Here am I' of chapter 6 is reprised in 8.18 with 'Here am I and the children whom Yahweh has given me'.
4. Isaiah then immediately adds that these children have been given as 'signs and portents in Israel from Yahweh of Hosts, who dwells on mount Zion' (8.18).
5. These are the very signs in the narrative of chaps. 7-8 that Ahaz, representing his whole generation, fails to see—the sign of the child named 'Immanuel' (7.2) and of Isaiah's own child named 'Plunder Hastens' (8.3) and of his older son named 'Remnant-Shall-Return', whom God explicitly commanded Isaiah to take with him when God sent him to confront Ahaz (7.3).
6. But Ahaz could not see the child who was right in front of him, indeed he and his generation were 'seeing but not perceiving' (6.9), not perceiving the sign, the signification, the significance of the children coming after them—children who were much more than mere symbols of abstract theological truths. They were the embodiments of those truths, the very embodiments of Isaiah's theology, who were being overlooked and passed over like 'leftovers'.
7. Yet the mission of Isaiah was all about taking up, not just a message, but these children, these 'leftovers', these children of the next generation, beginning with his own son, 'Remnant', and eventually even Ahaz's own son, Hezekiah, who looks to Isaiah a generation later when that generation had to face their dire 'day of distress ... (the day) when children have come to birth and there is no strength to deliver them', and so Hezekiah pleads for Isaiah to 'lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left' (37.3-4).
8. Once again Isaiah takes up the burden of the remnant and brings forth for a the new generation a saving word and child-friendly sign, specifically that 'the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward ... for the zeal of Yahweh of Hosts will accomplish this' (37.31-32).

9. Yet after Yahweh responds to Hezekiah's intercessions to spare mount Zion from the Assyrian army (Isa. 37) and then to spare him from his 'sickness unto death' (Isa. 38), Hezekiah fails at last to intercede for his own children and the next generation when the prophet tells him, 'your own children ... shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of Babylon' (39.7)—a word Hezekiah is quick to accept in view of his self-assuring thought that closes the entire Hezekiah narrative: For he says, 'There will be peace and security in my days' (39.8).
10. The generation that is *written off* by Hezekiah at this pivotal juncture of the book is the generation that is *written to* in the chapters of Isaiah that follow. Clearly this is a message directed to what 6.13 first called 'the holy seed', the offspring that would come only after the cutting off of God's people.
11. This exilic message has many points of contact with the theological theme of the raising up of the children, but none more important or strategically placed than what Isaiah 53.10 speaks concerning the role of the servant, of whom it is written, 'he will see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the plan of Yahweh will prosper in his hand'.
12. The following chapter of Isaiah is, of course, the extended birth announcement that begins, 'Sing, O barren one, who did not bear ... for the children of the desolate one will be more than of her that is married, says Yahweh' (54.1).
13. And this is a promise that pushes through to the very last paragraph of the book of Isaiah, which says, 'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, says Yahweh, so shall your seed and your name remain' (66.22).<sup>33</sup>

### **The Vision of Isaiah and the Pentecostal Worldview and Hermeneutic**

Philosopher James K. A. Smith in his book, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, has identified and explicated five elements of a Pentecostal Worldview:<sup>34</sup>

1. *Radical Openness to God*
2. *An "Enchanted" Theology of Creation and Culture*
3. *A Nondualistic Affirmation of Embodiment and Materiality*

---

<sup>33</sup> I have drawn this list from my recently published article, "John Goldingay's Theology of Isaiah: An Appreciative Response," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 25 (2016): 1-7. I have since expanded this statement to an article I presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Research in November 2016, entitled, "Isaiah and the Children: A Neglected Theme in Isaiah Studies" (publication forthcoming).

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 3.

4. *An Affective Narrative Epistemology*
5. *An Eschatological Orientation to Mission and Justice*<sup>35</sup>

It is no stretch to see all of these elements abundantly represented in the book of Isaiah. In fact, they are on prominent display in the passages from Isaiah that have already been referenced in the previous pages of this discussion. Looking through the lens of a Pentecostal reading of Isaiah, I would offer the following observations on each of these elements.

For a *radical openness to God* that opens up an “enchanted” *theology of creation and culture*, one need look no further than Isaiah’s famous visionary experience in chapter 6. It is an encounter with God so staggering that is undoubtedly related to how the entire book of Isaiah comes to be identified as “the vision of Isaiah, son of Amoz” (1:1)—a vision that opens vistas to the transformation and restoration of all of creation (cf. 11:6-9 and 66:22) and all of human culture (cf. 2:1-4).

For a *nondualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality*, one can see the embodiment of Isaiah’s own theology and vocation beginning with his own burned lips, marking his call experience in chapter 6. His very body becomes a manifestation and sign of the burning truth he comes to deliver, such as when God directs him to disrobe his body and “walk about naked and barefoot” in order to prefigure the state of captivity that was in store for those who would not submit to God. Yet perhaps the most poignant instance of the word’s embodiment for Isaiah comes in the form of his own children becoming “signs and portents” (8:18) of God’s revelation to his people—indeed his son, named “Remnant-Shall-Return,” whom Isaiah is told to take with him to his confrontation at the wall with King Ahaz (7:3; cf. 10:21-22), and his son, named “Plunder-Comes-Quickly,” who will now signify what will soon come upon the nation of Judah (8:1-8).

As concerns an affective narrative epistemology in relation to the book of Isaiah, one need only take note of the role of chapter 6 in the book of Isaiah—the first-person testimony of the prophet—as well as the narrative of chapters 7-8 extending from it along the lines noted earlier. And then the narrative of Isaiah 36-37, which, as noted earlier, parallels the narrative of chapters 7-8 in terms of featuring prophetic conversations behind the wall that generate pivotal conversations at the wall, upon which the entire ministry and book of Isaiah turn.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, pp. 31-47.

<sup>36</sup> See Edgar W. Conrad, ‘The Royal Narratives and the Structure of the Book of Isaiah’, *JSOT* 41 (June 1988), pp. 67-81. See also his *Reading Isaiah* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991, esp. ch. 2, and Christopher R. Seitz, *Zion’s Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah; A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39*

As far as Pentecostalism's *eschatological orientation to mission and justice*, anyone who has studied Isaiah knows that justice (*mishpat* and *tzedekah*) stands at the heart of Isaiah's mission, as seen in the climax of Isaiah's opening message (1:17-18), which gives way to his opening eschatological vision of the nations coming to Zion to learn the ways of the LORD, beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks (2:1-4).<sup>37</sup> Yet Isaiah's eschatological vision of the nations being taught the ways of YHWH finds embodiment and grounding for him in his own calling to teach the children of the next generation (8:18). And this calling of Isaiah, found at the heart of his conversation behind the wall, informs and inspires his conversations at the wall upon which depends the education and salvation of the next generation, even reaching "to all generations" (51:8).

---

(Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991), who takes up and develops this same view.

<sup>37</sup> See John Goldingay, *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014).

