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Experiencing the Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Reading of the Early Church Fathers

Olga M. Zaprometova

The purpose of the present paper is to explore the role of experiencing the Holy Spirit in the development of spiritual life and doctrine by analyzing the teachings of three representatives of the Eastern Church: Gregory the Theologian (Gregory of Nazianzus the Junior), Isaac the Syrian (of Nineveh) and Simeon the New Theologian. It is an attempt by a contemporary reader to appreciate and understand the Early Church Fathers’ writings, paying special attention to the spiritual experience and emotional outpouring expressed in their work. There is a growing interest in contemporary Russia in ‘enthusiastic Christianity’, defined by some as ‘Christianity characterized by emotion, that sometimes reaches exaltation’. It therefore seems timely to ask some new questions:

Is it possible to relate this recent open expression of emotions to the experiences recognized as necessary by Eastern Christian tradition centuries ago?

Is this present movement seeking its roots in historical Christianity in the context of its national/Russian culture or in the context of global Christianity?

Is this movement formulating doctrines which may have a future in Russia?

Until recently, Protestant theologians in the West have paid minimal attention to teachings regarding the Holy Spirit. It is with good reason that Jürgen Moltmann calls Pneumatology ‘the Cinderella of Western theology’. Until the nineteenth century Christian doctrine was perceived as ‘given’, even as permanently established. In the second half of the twentieth century,

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1 Olga Zaprometova is a lecturer at ETS Moscow, olgaza@zmail.ru
alongside the growth and development of the Pentecostal movement\textsuperscript{3}, the formation of its theology and the quest for its historical roots\textsuperscript{4}, a renewed interest in the Early Church Fathers, especially those of the Eastern Tradition, has emerged and started to grow among Protestants.

The author's interest in this part of the theological heritage was influenced by the ecumenical movement which the Orthodox Church (including the Russian Orthodox Church) joined in 1961 and the Pentecostal churches later. According to paragraph seven of Ausburg's Confession, the Church is a gathering of all believers to whom the pure Gospel is preached and to whom the Holy Sacraments are given. This is the reason why Protestants have no difficulties in accepting other churches. The crisis of contemporary society is viewed by present-day Christianity as a result of secularization, and many are trying to find a solution in the 'fellowship of the Holy Spirit'. In this way they are following the statement of the apostle Paul: as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom 8:14). While the cultural and historical differences of Orthodoxy and Protestantism cannot be ignored, we must also accept that, before we can move from rejection of each other, we need to learn to trust each other. This is exactly what is so often lacking in Christian circles. Christians are united by a statement of faith, the Eucharist, ministry and liturgy. However it is important not to forget that, during the course of church history, there have always been those who have stressed the importance of personal experience in the life of a Christian. The experience of living fellowship with God includes the realization of His presence, conversion, receiving revelation and inspiration, following His will and mystical union in the Holy Spirit. Ireneaus (second century A.D.), in his polemics against Gnostics, mentioned that the Holy Spirit is given to the Church as breath was given to the first created man and it is the Spirit who gives us confirmation in faith\textsuperscript{5}. Pointing to the Holy Spirit as to the 'means of communion with Christ and the ladder ascending to God, Ireneaus wrote: where the Church is, there is the


\textsuperscript{5} There is a concept of "confirmation" in the Lutheran church, necessary for joining the body of church. In the Pentecostal church the testimony of experiencing the Holy Spirit by a believe has been the necessary requirement for one to become a member of a local church.
Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth.

The number of theological educational institutions, including Pentecostal ones, is growing in Russia. One of the obligatory subjects in every curriculum is Church History. Students are discovering for themselves the treasure of Patristic tradition, comparing the spiritual experiences of the Church Fathers with their own. Quite often they are surprised by the similarity between the spiritual practices of the authors they are studying and their own experiences. The magnitude of the spiritual life of the Church during the Early Patristic period is opening before their eyes. This creates opportunities for new developments in Pentecostal theology in the contemporary Russian context. Furthermore, an enlarged perception of the wonderful heritage of world cultures helps representatives from the evangelical churches to deepen their understanding of the unity of the Christian Church. It is perhaps significant that the author is engaging in this whole subject as a result of her own experience of introducing students to Church History and the History of Biblical Hermeneutics.

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Pneumatology has always been at the very heart of Eastern theology. It is not a doctrine, but an integral aspect of Eastern theological thinking. One of the well known contemporary Orthodox theologians, Metropolitan John (Zizioulas), emphasizes that Pneumatology is inseparable from Christology and Ecclesiology in all the spheres of Christian life and Christian teaching. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit, so typical for the theological thought of the Christian East, has sometimes led to the rejection of such ‘pneumocentrism’ by Western theologians. In turn Eastern Christians have blamed the West for extreme ‘Christocentrism’. Speaking about the peculiarities of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Eastern Christian thought, Stanley Burgess points to the main differences between Eastern and Western theological approaches in the following spheres: the doctrine of the Trinity, Anthropology and, accordingly, Soteriology. The East rejected the teaching of Tertullian and

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7 J. Zizioulas, Being as Communion, Studies in Personhood and the Church, (Moscow, 2006), p. 126 (in Russian)
9 The Cappadocian Fathers underlined the uniqueness of the functions of the three divine hypostasis while the West in its turn insisted upon the filioque.
Augustine, that, faced with depravity, a human being is unable to help him/herself and is therefore totally dependent on the intervention of Christ, acting through the Holy Spirit for salvation. The Eastern Church has always insisted that humankind was created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and that God's goal is to restore humanity to its original perfection. True natural relationships between God, humankind and the rest of creation are restored by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

This process, called re-creation or transfiguration (or sanctification), is obvious to the eyes of faith but cannot be observed (and is therefore often omitted) in a solely rational analysis. It is the final goal of humanity's restoration and is defined in the doctrine of unification with God, or deification (φεοσις). It is important to remember that this doctrine does not suggest that human beings ever share the divine nature; rather it emphasizes that deification is a constant process, extending throughout eternity. Deification is a result of receiving the Holy Spirit and experiencing the Spirit in the life of the Church. This enables Christians to learn to live so that spiritual fruits develop and are practised, and to participate in the sacraments which give life and participation in the divine nature. In the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Eastern Christian thought proposes the importance of experience in its teachings of encountering the Holy Spirit.

Although contemporary patristic studies are only now beginning to pay attention to the Pneumatology of the men of the Apostolic age and of the Apologists, it is possible to identify well developed teaching on the Holy Spirit during this early period of Church History. That period anticipated the solutions of discussions of the fourth to the fifth centuries. In general, for the Eastern Christian tradition, in contrast to the medieval West there is no gap between spirituality and theology. The Eastern tradition has never drawn a line between a personal encounter with God and the doctrines confirmed by the Church. Vladimir Lossky in his ‘Essays on the Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church’ refers to the Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, and underlines that the experience of the Holy Spirit is a personal manifestation of faith, and thus theology is a general expression of something that is accessible to everyone. Any Russian Pentecostal believer would agree with such a statement.

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10 On the day of Pentecost the Church was born. To this structure, doctrinal continuity (succession) and apostolic authority was given by the Holy Spirit.
In the present article and the subsequent one [Ed. next issue] we will try to discover if it is true that spiritual experiences, to which contemporary Pentecostalism is testifying (and on the basis of which it is labelled ‘enthusiastic Christianity’) might be found in the writings of the Church Fathers. For this purpose we shall turn to examples from Gregory the Theologian (IV century), Isaac the Syrian (VII century) and Simeon the New Theologian (X-XI century).

The Mystical Theology of Gregory the Theologian

1. Divine Light, Prayer and God-vision

The light in which everything may become known is a comprehensive symbol of Greek culture. The famous apologist of Judaism, Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C. - c. 50 A.D.), wrote about the divine illumination by the ‘light of light’ (De Praemiis et Poenis. 46) and about exit from the body for the sake of unification with God (De Fuga et Inventione. 92). He underlined his aspiration to reach the permanent state of likeness (mimesis) to God and a clear vision of God. Philo of Alexandria, one of the most famous representatives of the Alexandrian Jews and an influential biblical exegete, whose writings were preserved thanks to Origen, was the first to express the idea that the final goal of human aspirations is a religious ecstasy, when a soul frees itself of all that is sensory and temporal and offers itself to the direct contemplation of God. Philo's longing to reach the state of likeness to God and to achieve a clear vision of the Almighty, meant, for him, longing for an intellectual enlightenment. To describe supernatural reality he had to use the language of mysticism.

The mystical unity (fellowship) of a human being with God is hidden from the eyes of others. This is almost always a mystery between God and a soul. It is never revealed to an outsider, except to a confessor and to some

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13 Philo of Alexandria left a number of religious-philosophical tractates in which he long to set connection between the Jewish religious teaching, exposed in the Old Testament, and the Greek idealistic philosophy. Schenk K. A Brief Guide to Philo. Moscow. 2007, P. 23. (in Russian)
14 Origen's interest in Philo was connected with his love to the allegorical interpretation of the Bible. Origen considered Philo's approach (method) to be the best for revealing the hidden (depper) spiritual meaning of the Hopy Scripture.
15 Ivanitzkyi V. Philo of Alexandria. His Life and the review fo His Literal Activity, Kiev. 1911, P. 588. (in Russian)
disciples. Gregory the Theologian who had an experience of seeing the Divine Light, is considered by the bishop Illarion (Alfejev) to be one of the creators of the Theology of Light in a Christian tradition that was developed further by such mystic writers as Maximus the Confessor, Simeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas. Theologians of the hesychast movement in Byzantium considered Gregory Palamas to be the most authoritative author whose writings became one of the primary sources of the hesychast doctrine. According to Gregory the Theologian, in order to see the purest light one has to purify one's mind - In as much as anyone approaches the King, thus far is he/she is becoming the light.

Let us become the light, following the disciples who were called by the great Light when He said: 'You are the light of the world' (Matth 5:14) ... . Let us dedicate ourselves totally, let us become the sound (wise) burnt offering, the verbal sacrifice ... . Let us give ourselves totally so that we may also take ourselves back totally, for to take in ourselves in purity is to give ourselves to God and to perform a religious rite of personal (our own) salvation.

In contrast to Philo of Alexandria the emphasis here is put not on an intellectual effort but rather on activities that take place at the physical (fleshly) level. Ascetic deeds, charity and fulfillment of commandments assist in reaching mystical illumination. According to Gregory the Theologian, prayer is primarily a meeting with the living God. A human being is seeking God and is in need of fellowship with Him, but God is seeking those who are thirsty after Him, continually and abundantly outpouring (Himself) upon them. Praying to Christ was an integral part of Gregory's

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17 His father, Gregory the Nazianzus the senior, had the same spiritual experience (this light was witnessed by his associates right after his coming out of the font after his baptism).
18 Gk. hesychastes, one who is silent, a hermit.
20 Quoted according to Alfejev, ibid., P. 366.
21 Ibid., P. 366-367.
22 When Philo is speaking about drunkenness and rage/fury (images that he borrowed from the Dionysians drama, mystery plays) he means sober rapture/ecstasy and intellectual "drunkenness". See Schenk K. A Brief Guide to Philo. P. 23.
23 Quoted according to Alfejev, ibid., P. 370.
spiritual life. His prayers are filled with deep personal love for Christ. However, he also has prayers that are addressed to each of the divine hypostases:

... To Thee, o Blessed, I am turning my glance; to Thee, my help, The Almighty, Unborn, the Beginning and the Father of the Beginning - Of Immortal Son, great Light (the Father) of equally great Light - Of Him (the One), Who is from the One and in the One! ..

To Thee, the Son of God, the Wisdom, the King, the Word, the Truth, The Image of the Proto-image, the nature equal to the Parent, The Shepherd, Lamb and Sacrifice, God, Man and Metropolitan! To Thee, the Spirit, Who is from the Father, the Light of our Mind, Coming to those who are pure and making a human being god!

Have mercy on me, let me, also here in my old age, And there when I will unite with the entire God, Praise Thee joyfully with hymns unceasing.

Understanding God's image as a goal of prayer and as a final point to reach during the whole of one's Christian life is the leitmotif of the Eastern Christian tradition. The teaching of Gregory on the vision of God is inseparable from his teaching on the knowledge of God (incomprehensibility of God). He suggests that the vision of God is possible during earthly life, but only for a very few; it will be much more widely available in the world to come. But it is possible for a human being to feel the presence of God. A vision of God becomes possible for those who purify themselves, who reach the state of deification and are constantly in prayer. Even when in such a state, a person can see God only from ‘behind’,

24 According to Origen, one has to pray only to God the Father through Christ, because Christ Himself did it and He taught it to His disciples - Matth 6:9; 26:39; Lk 11:2; John 12:27; 17:11 et al. (all the known Early Church liturgies are addressed to God the Father. Liturgies addressed to God the Son appeared not earlier than in the fifth century, in the era of Christological controversies).

25 Quoted according to Alfejev, ibid., P. 376.

26 Philo also did not believe that a human being is able to know God. He is able to know about His existence, but not the nature of His existence. Using the examples of Moses, Philo shows that only the Almighty Himself may allow someone to know Him in a measure. However, the true way to God - is the way of mysticism, that is understood in a limited sense, as a meditation of what is behind/above/ outside the limits of a human comprehension/understanding and might be only experienced. See Schenk. Ibid., P. 115.
by feeling His mystical presence. God always remains unknowable, inexpressible, unreachable, and invisible.

2. Deification

Unification of a human being with God - deification - is considered by Gregory the Theologian to form the pinnacle of the Christian life. (This concept also appeared in the earlier writings of Ireneaus.) However, no theologian has used this term as often and as consistently as Gregory. It, along with the concept of adoption by God, is central to Gregory's theology, and later these two concepts become the basic concept of Orthodox mysticism. The way leading to deification is a human being's love for God, which is expressed in prayer, mystical experience (the ascension of mind to God in a prayerful meditation) and the fulfilment of the New Testament commandments. Gregory addresses himself to his own soul with the following words: What are you willing to become? - Are you willing to become god - god which is luminiferously standing in the presence of God, rejoicing with angels? Go forward, stretch your wings and rise up on high.27 It is important to remember that this is not just an intellectual ascension to God, but rather something that involves the whole of life itself including its everyday cares. Deification is a salvation of the entire person - a transfiguration and recreation of his/her spirit, soul and body.

By the narrow and hard way, through narrow,
And not for many passable, gates, followed by the majestic court
Christ is taking me to God - god, created from dust (earth),
And not born; I - who from the mortal have become immortal.
Together with the magnificent image of God He is also attracting
body, my helper,
As a stone-magnet draws black iron.28

In becoming God-like, a human being (a person) is not only doing good for him/herself, he/she is also revealing the Word of God to others. Deification, the pinnacle of God-knowing, occurs when the incomprehensible God becomes as comprehensible as is possible for human nature. By this, every Christian can aspire to reach the final goal of existence - the salvation of mankind, the renewal and transfiguration of the world, the entering of all

27 Alfejev. ibid., p. 390
28 Alfejev. ibid., p. 386
who are saved into the ‘triumphant Church’, unification of humanity with God, and eschatological deification of the entire creation.\(^\text{29}\)

For ten centuries (V-XVI) Gregory was the best known theologian and the one most quoted, and his writings were second only to the Holy Scripture itself. It was his writings which influenced the great mystic of Byzantium - Simeon the New Theologian who will be discussed later.

Although the term deification is unknown to Pentecostals, most of them speak about the importance of the fellowship of a Christian with the living God. The way towards this encounter is paved by fulfilment of God's commandments, by being in the Word and by prayer and fasting. According to the testimonies of many Pentecostals, they have experienced the vision of the Godly light that has changed their entire life, giving them the power to be rid of the slavery of sin and vice.\(^\text{30}\) The entire Pentecostal teaching is based on an encounter with God, on an experience of a ‘personal Pentecost’.\(^\text{31}\) Experiencing the Holy Spirit is inseparable from a Pentecostal spirituality, and it is on this account that Pentecostals are often accused of being emotional at the expense of being reasonable.\(^\text{32}\) However, the special emphasis in their preaching is on the Love of God. Personal testimonies that form part of the service are extremely emotional, expressing sincerely the gratitude, love and sympathy, confidence in salvation and hope that have been gained. Their traditional hymns, many of which were inherited from the holiness movement, are full of such expressions.\(^\text{33}\) Prayer is the center of

\(^{29}\) Alfejev. ibid., p. 381

\(^{30}\) I do not know how it has happened, but the first thing I felt was light. ... It was different from the light that came through the door and the window: it was more illumination, than the light from the exact source. But this light had something special: I felt a kind of an awe, though in no way I felt scared. Instead, I felt/experiences recognition, ..."Are you Christ?" - I asked. The light approached a bit. It was as He would come closer, at the same time not leaving the place where he had been earlier. ... I was filled with such a sense of peace that I had never known before. For a long time I have been weeping out of joy. <...> I tried to share about this wonderful encounter ... but to my surprize, as soon as I opened my mouth to start, the same thing happened again and again - I felt that the tears are coming to my eyes and I knew that if only I would say just one more word, I would start to cry as a child. J. Cheryl, They speak in other Tongues, (Kazan, 1991), p. 9, 10 (in Russian)

\(^{31}\) S. Land Pentecostal Spirituality. A Passion for the Kingdom, (Sheffield, 1997); W., Menzies; S. Horton Biblical Doctrines. Pentecostal Perspectives. (Minsk, 1999); S. Land, H. Gause Living the Faith. Cleveland, 2001 et al.

\(^{32}\) Land, Pentecostal Spirituality,  p. 132.

\(^{33}\) One of the movements in the latest Protestantism, born in the USA at the end of the XIX century among Methodists. This movement declared "the birth from above" or "sanctification" (the instant miraculous, the second stage after
a Pentecostal spirituality. It is the place in which the encounter between a human being and the living God occurs, which results in the decision to follow Him. Love for God and for a neighbor is the basis for spreading the Kingdom of God through witnessing, preaching and ministering as well as through different forms of social work.

**Spiritual World of Isaac of Nineveh**

Experiences of a person on his journey towards God appear also in the Syrian Christian literature. One of the outstanding representatives of the Syrian tradition of the Eastern Church is Isaac the Syrian. Isaac of Nineveh (Syrian) is unique in the history of Eastern Christianity. This modest bishop from a remote Persian province became the holy father of the Orthodox Church of Chalcedonian tradition. His writings were already widely available in monastic circles in the XIV century and attracted the attention of many who sought guidance for their spiritual lives. In 1911 a new translation from Greek into Russian of his writings was completed. Isaac's personal spiritual experience will now be examined further, paying special attention to the similarities between his own description and those of both his predecessors and followers, including contemporary ones.

**1. Repentance and tests**

Spiritual life starts with the turning of a soul to God and a rejection of the ways of this world. According to the teaching of Isaac the Syrian the world is the sum of a human's passions, his distraction and absent-mindedness of soul, and the wanderings outside of himself, seen by Isaac as the soul betraying its own nature. Rejection of the world involves a soul entering within itself, such self-concentration and restoration of the whole spiritual essence, resulting in fellowship with God. Such a turning inwards is done freely, in the same way that sin is committed freely, and is therefore defined as a voluntary separation from God. We have already seen that for repentance), to be the main achievement/attainment of a Christian. Visual manifestations - repudiation of smoking, drinking alcohol, etc.

34 The Greek translation was done in VIII-IX centuries by the monks of St. Savva the Blessed's monastery in Palestine, the Slavic one - in XIV century. See Hieromonach Ilarion (Alfejev). The World of Isaac the Syrian. Moscow, 1998, P. 30-31. (in Russian)

35 See Losskyi, ibid., P. 151.
Gregory the Theologian prayer was an encounter with the living God. Isaac the Syrian claimed that *life in God was a sensation or feeling of His presence*. When for some reason this presence is lost, the believer is unable to find peace until he/she feels His presence again\(^{36}\). Isaac's discourse is about the different tests man encounters on the way to God (temptations, God-forsakenness) and about their sources (lack of patience, pride, wrong thoughts/intensions, depression, etc.). The tests themselves are given to a human being to enable him to feel the nearness of God and to perceive God's providence\(^{37}\). The usual advice for moments of temptation is to pray until darkening (loss of sight) will not pass by (*untill the power and light will not come from heaven*)\(^{38}\), which are strengthening faith in the heart), to read the Holy Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers. It is important to remember that temptation will be replaced by nearness to God, and forsakenness by the experience of His presence. Isaac the Syrian refers to three stages along the way to a human's unification with God: repentance, purification and perfection - in other words: change of will, freedom from passions, and the acquisition of the perfect love and fullness of God's grace. Repentance\(^{39}\) starts when one feels sinful, thanks to the intervention of God's grace\(^{40}\). This is a continual state for those who truly endeavor to come back to God. This *second birth* is a chance to return to the Father, given to us by God in baptism. It is a perpetual coming out of oneself, and has the power to change our nature. Such a state of soul is the opposite to self-satisfaction. It is a feeling of every 'righteous', who considers him or herself to be in a 'state of grace' because he or she does not yet know him/herself. Like ascending to God, repentance has no limits\(^{41}\).

### 2. Tears and Prayer

Teaching on repentance and on the encounter of a human soul with God is closely related to Isaac's teaching on tears. Tears also have an important

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\(^{37}\) See ibid., P. 100.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., P. 11.

\(^{39}\) Greek – μετανοια, means "change of thoughts, change of mind".

\(^{40}\) Augustine, Wesley and many others wrote about the same, Pentecostals preach about this as well.

\(^{41}\) See Loskyi, ibid., P. 154.
place in the traditional Syrian ascetic writings from Ephrem the Syrian\textsuperscript{42} and it was his earlier doctrine that was been developed later by Isaac. When referring to the Savior's words: \textit{Blessed are they that mourn} (Matt 5:4), Isaac adds that the one who is in the love of God will never lack the grace of tears because he/she is never lacking the source that is feeding in him/her: the remembrance of God. That is why even when he/she is sleeping he/she is talking with God\textsuperscript{43}. Isaac distinguishes between bitter and sweet tears, tears of repentance and tears of affection given to a person when he or she reaches purity of heart. At the same time he makes the point that shedding tears and weeping, is a special gift or privilege of Impassives. Tears in prayer testify that a prayer is accepted by God. According to Isaac, endless crying may start for any of the following three reasons:

... from awe and wonder occasioned by the mystery of revelation that is revealed to mind only rarely – tears begin to pour unbidden and without the will of a person and without forcing ...;

... from the love to God that inflames the soul to such an extent that a person cannot bear this love without continuous crying from pleasure because of its sweetness ...;

... from great humbleness of heart\textsuperscript{44}.

Unification with God is impossible without prayer because prayer is a personal encounter with God. Isaac underlines how one has to pray: attentively, with deep feeling and with tears (because \textit{the grace of tears is the fullness of prayer}\textsuperscript{45}), with fervour and faith. Petitionary prayer, that is full of fears and worries, is a preparation for a spiritual prayer, a gradual ascension to God that represents one's efforts and searching for His presence. Gradually the soul becomes concentrated, an focussed; personal requests are given up, and the person instead of asking, is giving him or herself up to the will of God. Thus \textit{pure prayer} and \textit{silence of mind} are reached\textsuperscript{46}, this is the

\textsuperscript{42} Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306 – 373), the outstanding representative of the Syrian Church, the author of numerous biblical commentaries, sermons, hymns and dogmatic treatises. His writings were translated into Greek and Armenian languages. He is known as the "Father of Repentance" and "the Harp of the Spirit".

\textsuperscript{43} Quoted according to Alfejev. the World of Isaac the Syrian. P. 145.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., P. 147. At the same time, according to Alfejev, Isaac not always defines the line between the two types of tears, they are (it is) more likely two aspects of the same experience. Ibid., P. 148.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., P. 153.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., P. 221-224.
crown of prayer, when nothing diverts the will of a person from turning to God and becoming united with the divine will. This amazement, wonder, and rapture of mind under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the seeing of the Divine Light in a state of silence and peace is sometimes called ecstasy. When realizing that one does not belong to oneself but rather to God, one is going out of oneself and no longer knows whether one exists in present time or in eternity. When the control and supervision of the Spirit rules over mind ... then the freedom is taken from nature and the mind is led rather than itself leading. An intense personal fellowship between a human being and God is taking place. What a soul is praying for is no longer represented by the words of the prayer itself, but rather by feeling and experiencing the spiritual realities of the world yet to come. These realities are beyond human understanding, except by the power of the Holy Spirit. ... From this experience of prayer the Holy Spirit lifts the soul up to meditation that is called spiritual vision.

3. Spiritual ‘drunkenness’

The experiences of the apostles Peter (Acts 10:10) and Paul (2 Cor 12:2-4) may serve as examples of mystical ecstasy. Such a state is called also amazement, wonder, rapture in God or being in Spirit (Rev 1:10; 4:2 and oth.). Moreover, in the days of the early Church such a state was often associated with glossolalia. One of the pre-Christian authors, Philo of Alexandria, wrote about drunkenness, about sober ecstasy and intellectual rage/fury. In the Bible such a state of praying is compared to drunkenness (1Sam1:13-16; Acts 2:12-15; Eph 5:18).

The first among the Byzantine theologians who paid attention to the ecstatic state was Gregory of Nyssa, who described the experience in similar words: sober ecstasy, rapture, etc. In the works of Isaac the Syrian which were written in Syrian language in Syriac, there is no equivalent term to the Greek one. Terms used by him were translated from Syrian into Russian by

47 Losskyi, ibid., P. 156-257.
48 Quoted according to Alfejev. The World of Isaac the Syrian. P. 230.
49 Ibid., P. 232 – 233.
50 Ecstasy - Greek, exit, exodus, furor, rage.
51 From Greek glossa - unclear meaning, lalein - to speak; theological term for definition of the "talk" with God in "other tongues" during the outpouring the Holy Spirit on a person (Acts 2:4 et al.).
52 See Schenk, ibid., P. 23.
53 Alfejev, ibid., P. 394.
the contemporary Orthodox scholar, Metropolitan Ilarion (Alfejev) as amazement. However, he also points out that several Greek translations of Isaac the Syrian repeatedly use the term:

... Quite often it happens that a person bows his knees in prayer, his hands are lifted up to heaven, his face is turned to the Cross of Christ and all his thoughts are brought together in prayer to God, and at the same time, as a human being is praying to God with tears and affections, suddenly a spring starts to jet in his heart, outpouring pleasure; then parts of his body are weakened, his eyes close, the face bows to earth, his thoughts are changing in a way that he cannot bow from the joy that is exciting his whole body.

... From time to time however the mind is taken from the prayer and carried to heaven as a captive and involuntary tears like springs of water pour over the face and water it. At the same time the person himself feels at peace, is speechless and filled with amazing vision and truly this is a ceasing of prayer; it is a state that is above prayer - a state of constant amazement in the face of every one of God's creatures, like those who have lost their senses because of wine.

The image of drunkenness caused by wine helps Isaac to describe the experience of mystical encounter, which is in itself the introduction to the heavenly joy and pleasure of the Kingdom of Heaven. When the soul is drunk with joy of hope and the joyfulness of God, the body does not feel sorrows. ... It happens when the soul enters into the joy of the Spirit. This experience is frequently associated with the Eucharist, in which the true love of God is revealed to a human being.

Pentecostals always emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit experience and see the experience of the Pentecostal spirituality as the cornerstone of their Theology. Here we have to bear in mind that although 'theology' was never defined as a term in Greek Patristic writings, it was introduced into the Christian context and later legalized by Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Patristic theology stands for the idea that a

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54 Quoted according to Alfejev. St. Simeon the New Theologian and the Orthodox Tradition. Moscow. 1998, P. 396-397. (in Russian)
55 Quoted according to Alfejev. The World of Isaac the Syrian. P. 259.
56 Ibid., P. 262.
human being is able to join himself to God only through the Son in the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes that this is an experience of intercourse with God. Maxim the Confessor expresses this in the following words:

A studious mind in an active life achieves discretion, and the studious mind in a contemplative life achieves knowledge. The first of the two enables ascetics to discern between virtue and imperfection; the second introduces its communicant to the knowledge of properties of incorporeal and corporal creatures. The mind is only considered to be worthy of the gift of theology when, on the wings of love, it has flown beyond the above and found itself in God, seeing His properties to the ultimate extent that is possible for a human mind through the spirit.

Theology - the knowledge of God as God is in Himself - is achieved in the mysterious unification with God at the last stage of higher unification with God. Gregory the Theologian gives as examples the deification granted to Moses on the Mount Sinai and to the apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration. Pentecostals begin their history from the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and their doctrine, which is still in the process of formation, relies on the cooperative experience of the Holy Spirit, including the two elements: listening (a sound ... as of a rushing mighty wind, v.2) and seeing (tongues, as of fire, v.3). One of the theologians who influenced the holiness movement, a direct predecessor of Pentecostalism, is John Wesley. After Wesley's conversion he started to preach about salvation through faith, stating that the testimony of the Spirit is the inner experience of one's soul: the Spirit of God testifies directly to my spirit that I am a child of God.

For Protestants the problematic question is, What may be taken as the main authority in the question of salvation. The highest authority for Luther and Protestantism that followed him, was Holy Scripture; for the Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism it was Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church; for the 'Enthusiastic' Christians - Holy Scripture and the experience of the Holy Spirit. But this theme is beyond the scope of this paper and requires a separate detailed examination.

58 Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) Being as Communion. P. 13. (in Russian)
61 John Wesley (1703-1791) an Anglican priest and the founder of Methodist church. It is well known that he was greatly influenced by the Writings of the Early Eastern Church Fathers. His doctrine on sanctification testifies it.
Pentecostal hermeneutics is building its foundation upon the experiential aspect of theology, since Pentecostals regard it as impossible to talk about the existence of God without using the concept of fellowship, and without accepting the importance of believers' participating in a community led by the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{62}. Each congregation is not just a human organization; its life and the life of every single believer must conform one to Holy Scripture. In this way, the three components (the community of believers, the Holy Scripture and the activity of the Holy Spirit) exist in a permanent interdependent dialogue, and the unification of Pneumatology and Ecclesiology come to be.

**Mystical Theology of Simeon the New Theologian**

Prior to Simeon the New Theologian, only the apostle John and Gregory of Nazianzus the Junior held the title ‘Theologian’, which was given to them for their writings on the doctrine of God. Simeon the New Theologian is regarded in the West as the most outstanding of the medieval mystics, for his charismatic approach to Christian life and continuity of the Patristic tradition\textsuperscript{63}. His uniqueness can also be seen in the openness with which he shares his spiritual experience, which is of special value for anyone seeking their own personal encounter with God.

**1. Divine Light and Tears.**

It is a well known fact that Simeon was greatly influenced by his spiritual father Simeon the Studit\textsuperscript{64}, the monk of the Studit's Monastery in Constantinople. Simeon the Studit encouraged his disciple to follow the voice of his own conscience, to pursue God's commandments for the sake of earning the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to seek the spiritual knowledge that is gained through prayer. In the following poetic section Simeon the New

\textsuperscript{62} By doing this Pentecostal theologians refer to the Old Testament: yadhah (Hebrew) - (get to) know, be(come) acquainted, have intercourse, perceive, etc. Holladay W. A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Michigan, 1988, PP. 128-129. This emphasizes the experiential character of knowledge in contrast to the Greek oida - to know, understand, etc. (that is close to eido - to see) - Gen 4:1; Becker M. A Tenet Under Examination: Reflections on the Pentecostal Hermeneutical Approach // JEPTA, v. XXIV, 2004, 30 – 48.


\textsuperscript{64} Greek - the one who has profound respect for God
Theologian mentions his tutor, calling him a *slave of God* and an *apostle*, and talks about his own spiritual experiences:

Inside myself I am worshiping Thee and am visioning Thee from a distance,
I see Thee in myself and visualize Thee in heaven!
But how this might happen? Thee, only Thee knowest this,
Shining in the heart, as the Sun - in worldly (earthly?) - unworldly (unearthly).
O God, Who hath lighted me up with the radiance of glory,
The One Who hath brought me to all-saint father Simeon,
Thine slave and apostle, shine on me Thyself
And teach me, O God, by the Holy Spirit to sing Him hymns,
That are heavenly, mystical, new and ancient!
So that everyone will be amazed by the wisdom of God
And all, who heard it, will glorify Thee, O my Christ,
For I am speaking in other tongues in grace.
Amen, and let it be according to Thy will, O my Lord!
I am sick and suffer within my humble soul,
When Thy light, shining so bright, appears in it,
Love for me becomes an unceasing pain,
My soul suffers and weeps, because I have no strength
To embrace Thee and to be saturated by Thee which is what I yearn for.\(^{65}\)

Like Gregory the Theologian, Simeon speaks about his experiences of the Divine Light. He mentions it in all his writings, without hiding the fact that with the years his experiences of seeing the Light became more frequent. The description is given in a very personal way, in line with the passage quoted above. Besides his experiences with light, Gregory mentions prayer in other tongues and how much his soul suffers and cries. Following Isaac the Syrian, Simeon speaks about permanent repentance and the necessity to weep for salvation, because ... *it is impossible for us to be saved without repentance - repentance from the depth of the soul, that the Word requires from us*\(^{66}\). Tears that follow repentance lead to purification and deification:

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\(^{66}\) Ibid., P. 431.
Blessed are those who are illuminated by the Divine light and who see their own infirmity and realize the ugliness of their spiritual garments, because they will weep constantly and will be washed by the floods of tears.

Blessed are those who approach the Divine light and who enter into it and all who become light themselves, completely dissolved in it, since they take off all their defiled garments and will never more weep with bitter tears.

Tears as a theme in Simeon's writings are associated with the themes of love for God and vision, as in Isaac's writings. Simeon gives testimony regarding the process of a person's transfiguration, which takes place in turning to God in prayer, and in shedding bitter tears of repentance and grief. Once the state of clean heart and the vision of the Divine are reached, there is a consolation, and the person experiencing it sheds sweet tears (Matth 5:8). When envisioning God and listening to His revelations, the person him/herself becomes a light. All of Simeon's personal experiences, which form the basis of his theology, are not just an individual search for God, but rather the very revelation of God Himself to a human being. He perceives this experience as a feeling of light and a flood of tears, - a reaction to God's presence unseen by his earthly sight.

The same experience was reported during the Welsh revival of 1904:

I fell on my knees ..., my face was bathed in perspiration, and the tears flowed in streams ... . It was God commending His love which bent me, while I saw nothing to commend. After I was bent, what a wave of peace flooded my bosom.

This is a testimony of a 19-year-old boy, Evan Roberts, who described his experiences at a meeting which took place not far from his school on September 29, 1904. With a flood of tears running down his face Evan cried out ‘Bend me! Bend me!’ The Holy Spirit came upon him, filling him with the love for the Crucifixion and stamped in his heart the image of Calvary. During one of the following nights Evan's neighbor noticed that his face was shining with light during prayer, and others as well felt the presence of God.

2. Ecstasy and Deification

Simeon the New Theologian experienced ecstasy throughout his whole life. However, in contrast to Isaac, he claimed that temporary experiencing of light followed by tears, the sensing of joy and sweetness, being free from

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67 Quoted according to Alfejev, ibid., P. 349.
68 Evans E. The Welsh Revival of 1904. Evangelical Press of Wales. P. 70
self-consciousness and removal from the world, relaxation of the body extremities and trembling - are just the beginnings of a spiritual pilgrimage. This view shows how cautious he is when relating to this kind of an experience. According to him, a soul that advances in spiritual life puts aside such temporary experiences, and experiences constantly the divine reality in which it lives.

The one that has within himself the light of the Holy Spirit ... is becoming like a man whose inner being is set on fire for some reason ... . Having no strength whatsoever to control himself, being watered constantly by tears and refreshed by them, he stirs even more the fire of love. That is why he sheds more tears and is washed by their flood, shining even brighter ... . After being in this state for a long time [a person] considers it to be natural ... and it stays always with him ... . Afterwards he remains in the light, or more accurately, with the light, and is no longer in ecstasy but is able to see himself, and to see his surrounding, and his neighbors ...\(^69\)

For Simeon the conscious mystical experience was important to a degree that made him insist that the perception of grace, and of the enlightenment which grace brings about following the envisioning of God, has to be recognized as the norm for every Christian. He even raises the question of whether those who have not had such experiences can truly be called Christians. The experiences include knowing and envisioning such goodness, \(\text{and seeking it even more persistently with sobbing and tears}\) in order to pursue purification and, on reaching Him, to unite with Him, and to have fellowship with Him\(^70\). This confidence of Simeon's that without such a spiritual experience the goal of Christian life is not achieved, means that everybody has to make his way to salvation, through repentance and tears which lead first to ecstasy, and in turn to \textit{deification}. In line with the tradition of Gregory the Theologian, Simeon saw the achievement of \textit{deification} as the final goal of the entire Christian life. Such a total transformation, is sometimes called by Simeon \textit{a spiritual birth, a mystical resurrection or a spirit baptism}. Simeon's concept of \textit{deification} is defined by archbishop Vasilyi (Krivosheyn) as 'the state of total transformation of a person by the Holy Spirit, when a person is following God's commandments, acquiring Christian virtues and becoming a participant of Christ's sufferings'\(^71\).

Give me an answer, O restless people:

\(^69\) Quoted according to Alfejev: ibid., P. 400-402.

\(^70\) Quoted according to Archbishop Vasilyi (Krivoshein). St. Simeon the New Theologian (949-1022). L. Novgorod, 1996. P. 181. (in Russian)

\(^71\) Ibid., P. 429.
Who among you, having Christ,  
Will need the perishable goods  
Of this swift-passing earthly life?  
Having constantly the grace of the Holy Spirit  
Who will not become the dwelling place of the Trinity,  
That enlightens, sanctifies  
And transforms you to god?\(^72\)

The doctrine of deification sums up the theological system of Simeon the New Theologian, whose entire life testified that this deification is a reality experienced in our world. According to the Eastern Church tradition, the final goal of Christian life as well as the eternal beatitude in the Kingdom of Heaven, is a fellowship with the Holy Trinity - a deified state of *co-heirs of the Divine essence*. This is the goal of Christians, as gods created after the uncreated God and possessing, due to His grace, everything that the Holy Trinity has by nature\(^73\). Salvation itself, as understood by Christians as a fellowship or communion, speaks about a free response, of love, through which one's fellowship with God becomes deeper and more intense. Simeon saw the fruit of the Holy Spirit's deification process and the climax of perfection in the Divine Love, which he called *grace acquired by our inner being*. He saw in the love for a neighbor a testimony to a person's acquiring true love for God\(^74\).

Even in his lifetime, Simeon's doctrine provoked much discussion. His controversy with Bishop Stephen of Nicodemia, the official theologian of the emperor's court, resulted in Simeon's exile in 1009. This was essentially a conflict between two approaches to theology: the abstract and philosophical approach of Stephen, and the experiential and spiritual approach of Simeon\(^75\). It can also be taken as an example of a clash between ‘institutional’ and ‘charismatic’ approaches. Having such a rich spiritual experience behind him, Simeon confronted nominal Christianity, insisting that there is no value whatsoever in water baptism, unless a person also bears the fruits of a holy life. For Simeon the fruit of sanctification was inseparable from the Holy Spirit, the producer of this fruit. Official theology

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\(^{72}\) The Teaching with Theology, in which it speaks about the Priesthood and about the impassive Meditation. 19:38. Quoted according to Alfejev. Ibid., P. 610.

\(^{73}\) Losskyi, ibid., P. 52.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., P. 160-161.

\(^{75}\) It is compared to the controversy between St. Bernard from Clairvaux and Abelair.
ignored Simeon's writings and his works have been preserved mainly by the monks of Mt. Athos.76

One can also mention among the spiritual followers of the mystical branch of the Orthodox tradition, Sergyi from Radonezh, Nilus of Sor and Seraphym of Sarov, who maintained that the true goal of a Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit77. Alfejev who pointed out the 'unconventionality' of Simeon's mystical theology in the Patristic tradition, discusses the whole nature of Eastern Christianity, and comes to a remarkable conclusion: the cornerstone of the Orthodox tradition is nothing but the personal mystical experience of a Christian - an experience of a direct personal fellowship with God78.

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While the Christian East, in seeking a solution to the question of salvation continually emphasises that the concept of theosis (deification) is inseparable from a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit for anyone who calls him/herself a Christian; the West pays more attention to the legal aspect of the same question as expressed in the doctrine of grace, and emphasizes such ideas as 'adoption', 'restoration', 'redemption' and 'justification'. A Pentecostal often accuses Orthodox believers of being unsure of their Christian salvation, and of failing to draw any clear line between salvation and sanctification.

According to the Orthodox doctrine, a person receives the new birth through water baptism, and deification is reached mystically through liturgy and sacraments. Pentecostals in turn, point to the challenge of a personal study of Scripture, and stress the need for a personal conversion through an encounter with the Holy Spirit. As Pelikan has noted, 'historically, the relation between the doctrine of grace and the doctrine of means of grace has been ambiguous. The doctrine of grace as justification and forgiveness developed slowly and unsteadily, the doctrine of the means of grace, given through the church sacraments, developed very rapidly.79. Moreover, as was already mentioned, for the Greek Patristic tradition, especially with

76 Especially during the time of Hesychasm (XIV century) – Gregory Palamas and oth., Siluan from Mt. Athos and archimandrite Sophronius (Sakharov).
78 Alfejev, St. Simeon the New Theologian and the Orthodox Tradition. P. 443.
regard to its mystical forms, the final goal and the desired outcome of one's knowledge of the Word, which brings about salvation, forgiveness, and rescue from death and sin is *deification*. This teaching underlines the dynamic character of salvation and sees it as a process of sanctification, love and holiness, rather than a salvation from sin and death which remains permanent after the moment it is granted - as static, once-and-forever adoption and redemption.

Western theologians, however, claim that grace produces a real change in a human being as well. The doctrine of ‘transfiguration’ as developed by the Anglican church might be taken as an example. Similar tendencies may be noticed in contemporary Lutheran theology. Luther, who himself insisted that Christ can be present in a believer and who stressed the unity between Christ and a Christian, did not hesitate to use the concept of *deification* (*Vergöttlichung*) in the same sense as it was used by the early Church.

... a Christian lives not within himself rather in Christ and in his neighbor. In the opposite situation he is not a Christian. He is living in Christ by faith, in his neighbor by love. By Faith he is ascending to God and by Love he is descending to his neighbor. And still he abides always in God and in His love ...

In the recent dialogue between Orthodox and Lutheran theologians, which took place in Finland, understanding was reached that for Luther faith was partaking in the existence of God. In the Holy Spirit outpouring of the love of God upon a person, that person becomes a means of transmission of the divine grace. Luther emphasised that this is the work of God in a person and that the person himself is just an instrument in His hands. Grace Brame, a contemporary Lutheran theologian, in one of her recent books defines theology as faith expressed in statements, propositions, and creeds and spirituality as *faith based on our relationship to God through prayer and letting God live and love through us*. Faith filled with love produced in a human being by God's grace, is at the core of John Wesley's theology, with

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80 It is possible to trace the connection between Anglican and Orthodox methodology enrooted in the Eastern Church Fathers' writings. Zaitzev E. Losskyi's Teaching on Theosis. Moscow, 2007. P. 127. (in Russian)
81 German – deification.
83 Brame G. Faith, the Yes of the Heart. Minneapolis, 1999. P. 52
the concept of sanctification in its very heart. Like Patristic tradition, Wesley's teaching stresses that likeness to Christ is achieved gradually by a process of conscious response to the calling of God and acceptance of the grace offered by Him. Wesley emphasizes that the goal of Christian life (Christian perfection, or renewal of the *image of God*) is inseparable from the way of Christian life. In experiencing new birth, a person puts on a new human nature (Col 3:9). The renewal of a human soul in righteousness and true holiness is taking place, - the renewal of God's image in us. In this image God's love guides feelings, inclinations, needs and passions, as was the case with Adam before the Fall.\(^84\)

The more a contemporary Pentecostal is introduced to the writings of the Holy Fathers, the more he/she feels 'at home'- he/she understands their language, their means of expression and their spiritual experiences. Due to the mystical encounter with the living God experienced in prayer a person may visualize the Truth in the Holy Spirit as a product of a post-modern era. According to the contemporary theologian, Steve Land: 'Pentecostalism is more Catholic than Protestant in emphasizing sanctification-transformation more than forensic justification, but more Protestant than Catholic in the conviction that the Word is the authority over the church and tradition for matters of faith, practice, government and discipline.'\(^85\). The similarity between spiritual experiences described in the Patristic heritage and those described today has been noticed by many. The bishop Ilarion (Alfejev) when pointing to the special role of mystical experience in the apology (defending ideal) of Christian life, maximalism and radicalism of the outstanding Christian mystics, makes it a point not to discuss the mystical experience of groups that are outside the official Church. Examples such as Montanism he calls 'heretical' mysticism, claiming that the main criterion for differentiating 'true' from 'heretical' mysticism is whether or not it conforms to the tradition of the Church.\(^86\). Archbishop Vasilyi (Krivoshein), the monk from Mt. Athos, noted with regret that there are only few Orthodox writings on Simeon the New Theologian. He was also unwilling to make of Simeon any sort of predecessor of contemporary Pentecostalism, as has been suggested by the American Jesuit G. Maloney.\(^87\). Orthodoxy insists that it is first necessary to reach the spiritual level of the Church Fathers, and only

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\(^86\) Alfejev, St. Simeon the New Theologian and the Orthodox Tradition. P. 444.  
\(^87\) Archbishop Vasilyi (Krivoshein), P. 10-11.
then to speak about spiritual gifts. This is, to some extent, a repeat of the arguments of the Jewish zealots, who being among the members of the Early Church, refused to let pagan converts join them (see examples of Cornelius' house and others, discussed already at the first council in Jerusalem - Acts 15).

Christianity allows incredible freedom to everyone who searches for a Truth that requires faith, originating not only in the mind but also in the heart. Contemporary Orthodoxy understands the importance of communion with God and regards it as the main criterion for all spiritual life\(^88\). Trinitarian theology may be interpreted as theology of communion, theology of mystical union with God, implying experience, and the gradual change of a human nature which results from the encounter with the Holy Spirit, as described by Gregory the Theologian, Isaac the Syrian and Simeon the New Theologian, for whom the foundation of faith is the encounter with God ‘face to face’.

Some contemporary Pentecostals define their own personal experiences as Charismatic manifestations or deeds of the Holy Spirit. For them an encounter with Christ the Saviour is a reality, but we must not forget that we have to learn what it means to live a Christian life. After all, it is the life of a person that testifies to a conversion of a heart to God. It is an encounter with Christ that awakens in the heart of a believer a desire to know God, to love Him and seek His fellowship before anything else. This is the human response to God's searching for the true worshipers, who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23).

Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy in Russia regard each other with a certain suspicion. Pentecostals see the majority of Orthodox believers as nominal Christians (thus sharing the opinion of Simeon the New Theologian about the Christianity of day) and regard worshiping icons and relics as features of pagan cults. The Orthodox, in turn, view Pentecostals as a Western Christianity, alien to the national culture, even just a cult, where extreme emotions may turn out to be dangerous. It is remarkable how in secular societies, both Eastern and Western, interest to the mystical part of Christian life appears to be growing quickly. Pentecostalism in the West is indebted to its direct predecessor - the holiness movement and its leaders (Finney, Moody, Palmers and others) who advocated *sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit*\(^89\). Pentecostals differ from evangelical

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\(^{88}\) Hegumen Petr (Меzcherjaninov). Problems of Joining the Church. Moscow, 2007, P. 87. (in Russian)

\(^{89}\) Land, ibid. PP. 47 – 50.
fundamentalists in their search for truth not only in the sphere of the mind, but rather in spiritual experiences, which are followed by a change of conduct - the essential part of true conversion.

The Pentecostal worldview is characterized primarily by the emphasis it puts on the importance of communion with God, and by claiming constantly that love is an emotional experience. Salvation, when understood as communion, involves a response of free love, and a sincere turning of the human will towards God and His ways, which makes the communion with God deeper and deeper. An interest in Eschatology and Ecclesiology is typical for Pentecostals. One can compare the three components of the Eastern Church Fathers' mystical encounter with the Holy Spirit which were mentioned above with the three major characteristics of Pentecostal theology: orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy. Orthodoxy concerns prayer, in which an encounter with a living God is taking place. Its goal is envisioning God, knowing His will and accepting it freely. Orthopathy corresponds to experiencing the presence of God, as expressed in various ways (tears, ecstasy, etc.). Orthopraxy is the transformation of a believer's way of life (deification, transfiguration into His image). In its understanding of experiential or mystical theology, Pentecostalism seems closer to the Patristic tradition than one might originally have supposed, especially when Maxim the Confessor's definition of a theological gift is taken into account. Despite all our differences, it is of great importance to learn to recognize each other as Christian churches, as brothers and sisters in Christ, the children of the same Lord. It is important to respect the image of Christ in each other and to have fellowship with each other, according to what we testify to the world about our common Christian faith.

Nowadays Pentecostals (including the Charismatic movement which some Russian authors call Neo-Pentecostalism) are growing in number in Russia, and have become a visible phenomenon in both religious and social


91 In the teaching of the Eastern Church Fathers on deification Alfejev emphasizes the pronounced eschatological and anthropological components. The final deification will take place in the Kingdom of Heaven, while here on earth we are preparing for this event for the purpose of reaching the partaking in the divine Light in the world to come. The same idea is expressed by the Jewish thought of the Tannaim era. An example from Pirke Avot might be given: R. Jacob said: This world is a vestibule to the world to come; prepare yourself in the vestibule to enter the chamber (palace) (3.16). R. Jacob is the teacher of R. Jehuda ha-Nasi (the Patriarch) under whose leadership the formation of Mishna was terminated (second sentury A.D.).
spheres, attracting the attention of the media and provoking considerable controversy\textsuperscript{92}. It seems that one is forced to agree with Sergey Scherbak's thesis that willingly or not, all those of us who are facing complex problems of contemporary social and religious life, had better stop dealing with them using such exclusive categories as my - alien - a community of believers - sect, etc.\textsuperscript{93}. All of us, faculty members and theological students alike, have to remember that the goal of every education, secular as well as religious, is the intellectual and spiritual growth of a person.

Dialogue between Jews and Christians, Orthodox and Lutherans is already taking place. Why not now initiate a dialogue between Orthodox and Pentecostals who have common roots in the Holy Scripture and in the spiritual experience of the Patristic tradition? V. Lossky, the famous representative of Neo-Patristic theology, asserts that all the provisions given by the Church for a Christian are necessary for reaching the final goal of unification with God. This unification, however, is not a result of an unconscious process, it is rather accomplished by our freedom in the Holy Spirit. All we are lacking is personal determination and boldness\textsuperscript{94}. Contemporary Pentecostal theologians observe that the Pentecostal movement, which at its dawn was open for others to join, and later in its history preferred exclusivism, is now turning back to its own origins. T. Richie underlines the importance of the Pentecostal heritage of ecumenism and inclusivism, as an answer to the religious diversity and the pluralism of opinion in our contemporary world\textsuperscript{95}. The search for a more solid and constructive dialogue between followers of Eastern and Western Christian traditions is one of mankind's most urgent tasks. This has already been eloquently pointed out by the contemporary Orthodox theologian Zizioulas, who maintains that, as Orthodoxy increasingly embraces Western culture, the problem of the church institutions will soon obtain an ecumenical dimension. In this context he invites others to develop an ontology of communion as a provision for Church being, that appears to designate the

\textsuperscript{92} It is a surprise that the denomination, whose history might be traced in Russia since the beginning of the XX century and experienced all the difficulties of religious persecution, equally with the representatives of the Orthodox Church and other confessions, recognized all over the world, in Russia is still considered sometimes to be a cult.


\textsuperscript{94} Losskyi, ibid., P. 163.

turn to Pneumatology at the theological level.\textsuperscript{96} It is impossible to conclude without mentioning the development of spirituality in contemporary Russian society. As a phenomenon, spirituality is a complex manifestation of a human spirit which changes its character from generation to generation, from nation to nation, from individual to individual\textsuperscript{97}. As a free being, each human being is seeking the restoration of perfection of the being-eternity. Inevitably, this is also a process of realization of one's own personal goals and of overcoming the finality of earthly existence. Escaping a dead end is possible only by creating a new spirituality of a kind which enables the integration in one's self of the whole manifold historical experience of mankind and of one's nation, without excluding multivariability and pluralism when assessing the past, present and future.

‘Enthusiastic Christianity’\textsuperscript{98}, while not overlooking the experiential component of conversion in the process of salvation and full communion with God, has also begun to seek its roots not only in Holy Scripture and in Church tradition. Will the ‘Enthusiasts’, in common with some contemporary Orthodox theologians, choose to follow the way of Neo-Patristic synthesis? Or will they claim that this represents only an escape from the problems imposed by modernity - that it is no more than a slavish imitation of tradition, which rejects any theological development? Will the Orthodox Church in contemporary Russia be ready to recognize the reality of the encounter with Christ, which ‘Enthusiastic Christianity’ advocates and testifies to? These must remain open questions and ones to which Christians, of whatever persuasion, will no doubt wish to return in the future.

\textsuperscript{96} Church unity, understood as a Eucharistic union, depends on the valuable synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology in the frames of Ecclesiology. Žizioulas, ibid., P. 141.

\textsuperscript{97} Spirituality is an example of modelling words after foreign patterns - following the concept of mentality. However, the last one refers more to the intellectual aspect of culture, analyzing it mostly from the rational positions. Its moral-aesthetic content of the concept is retiring to the background, although in the Russian tradition it is vice versa. Ezhov O. “Spirituality as a principle and a mechanism of mastering time” // Spirituality: Traditions and Problems. Ufa. 1991. PP. 13-19. (in Russian)

\textsuperscript{98} Including Charismatic movement and Neo-Pentecostalism although some scholars insist on separation of these terms from each other.
Editorial
Catching a Butterfly – The Identity of Pentecostal Theology
Paul N. van der Laan PhD

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Abstract:
An historical overview of Pentecostal systematic theologies in the anglo-american world proves that these works do not include the characteristics of our genuine Pentecostal identity. At best they use the arguments and methodology of an evangelical theology with a special emphasis on Pentecostal themes. This paper suggests a methodology in which these elements are represented. A Pentecostal quadrilateral is introduced which contains the following four elements: 1. Experiential 2. Scriptural 3. Prophetic 4. Intercultural. Each field is investigated and applied as we explore the diversity of our theological thinking. A Pentecostal theology should address each of these four areas in order to articulate our roots and identity.

INTRODUCTION
Imagine that I would release a butterfly. I am confident that this butterfly would draw all your attention and you would marvel at its beauty. Not far from where I live you can walk amidst these fragile creatures at Cypress Gardens in Winter Haven, Florida. One is literally surrounded by multiple varieties of butterflies lighting here and there on plants and sometimes even people. After you have walked through this hall, called ‘Wings of Wonder’, you can view a wide variety of butterflies pinned to a display case, butterflies collected from a variety of places reflecting a variety of types. Usually visitors hardly pay any attention to these taxidermic animals. You can imagine why. Pentecostal Theology is like the flying butterfly, the moment you catch it there is a danger in killing it. Trying to pin it to a display case for further study destroys the experience of the butterfly in flight. As a dead species it is easier to investigate, but the amazement is gone. It is my prayer that this imagery butterfly will keep flying during this presentation. Some may even recognize the wings of a dove.

I would like to start with a brief historical overview of former and contemporary attempts to formulate a Pentecostal Theology. Then I would

1 Professor of Religion at Southeastern University, Lakeland, Florida, USA, pnvdlaan@seuniversity.edu
like to propose four particular areas that a genuine Pentecostal theology should address. It is my thesis that after one hundred years of modern Pentecostal history, we still lack a theology that is rooted into the characteristics and hermeneutics of our Pentecostal identity.

Before I will present my proposed methodology we need to get a better picture of our starting point.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Pentecostal pioneers were standing on the shoulders of the Wesleyan Holiness tradition\(^2\), Restorationism, Dispensationalism\(^3\) and Afro-American Christianity\(^4\). After more than a century we are indebted to many Pentecostal and Charismatic scholars who have attempted to articulate our specific theology. In this brief overview I will limit myself to the publications in the Anglo-Saxon world in particular in the area of systematic theology. Even with this limitation it is far from complete, although I will attempt to touch upon the major publications. In his article *Reflections of a Hundred Years of Pentecostal Theology*\(^5\), Paul W. Lewis, divides the development of the formulation of Pentecostal Theology in the following periods:

- The period of formulation (1901-29 i.e. Topeka Kansas – death Charles Parham).
- The period of entrenchment and adaption (1929-1967 i.e. death Charles Parham-RCC Charismatic Renewal).
- The period of challenge (1967-84 i.e. RCC Charismatic Renewal-emerge of the Third wave).
- The period of reformulation (1984-present).

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The first generation of Pentecostal leaders were either autodidacts or had received their theological training in the denomination they formerly belonged to. They usually formulated their particular Pentecostal doctrines in periodical articles or small booklets. During those early decades the classical Pentecostals formulated their creeds, which classical Pentecostals preferred to call: Statements of Faith or Statements of Fundamental Truths. As a second generation emerged the need to articulate their theology became evident, especially in the Bible schools, where usually theology was taught as one of the main subjects. Jacobsen defines the development of the second generation of A/G Pentecostals as ‘Pentecostal scholasticism.’ He argues that ‘the most prominent characteristics of the Pentecostal theology written during this era, were its logical organization and systematic completeness. Never before had Pentecostals arranged their beliefs with such a degree of logic.’ In the USA the two most prominent theologians of this period are Myer Pearlman (1898-1943) and Ernest S. Williams (1885-1981). Pearlman taught theology at Central Bible Institute (A/G) at Springfield, Missouri when he wrote his The Doctrines of the Bible in 1937. Williams published his Systematic Theology in 1953, four years after he had completed twenty years tenure as General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God (1929-1949). During this period a major concern was to be theologically and phenomenologically acceptable within mainstream Evangelicalism in the USA, culminating in their application for membership in the National Association of Evangelicals shortly after its foundation in 1942.

In the United Kingdom, pioneers like George Jeffreys (1889-1962) and Donald Gee (1891-1966) focused most of their theological essays on defending particular Pentecostal themes like baptism in the Holy Spirit, healing and spiritual gifts. The more philosophically inclined Derek Prince was probably the most notable writer of the second generation of English publications. In his ‘foundations series’ he also discussed topics like Christology, soteriology and eschatology. In 1976 Percy S. Brewster (1908-1980 / Elim Pentecostal Church) edited and published a comprehensive Pentecostal Doctrine, which included the major Pentecostal themes but also a chapter on ‘Doctrine and modern Society’. In 1998 Keith Warrington edited a volume entitled Pentecostal Perspectives, which included contributions on bibliology, pneumatology, eschatology, healing and exorcism, worship and the ordinances.

Going back to the United States, the most remarkable publication in the eighties was probably the Foundations of Pentecostal Theology by the American authors Guy P. Duffield & Nathaniel M. Van Cleave of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The book was advertised as being ‘the most comprehensive book on the theology of Pentecostals to date.’ It certainly was a genuine attempt to cover all the classical theological topics from a Pentecostal perspective. The book included a lengthy chapter of over 50 pages on divine healing. Surprisingly there was no separate chapter on Christology and angelology was covered in between ecclesiology

12 or an overview of the writings: David A. Wormack, Pentecostal Experiences – The writings of Donald Gee, (Springfield, Mi: Gospel Publishing House, 1993).
13 Derek Prince, originally published in three volumes in 1973: Volume 1 - Foundation for faith and repent and believe; Volume 2 - From Jordan to Pentecost and Purposes of Pentecost; Volume 3 - Laying on of Hands and Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment. In 1986 a revised and compiled volume Foundation Series, was published by Sovereign World International.
and eschatology. It did lack the embedding of a consistent world-view and there hardly was any reference to nor any discussion with contemporary theologians. In the 1990’s the Assemblies of God published some updated works on their theology. The scholars William Menzies and Stanley Horton expanded on the Statement of Fundamental Truths in their Bible Doctrines of 1993. One year later Horton edited a Systematic Theology, which gave a platform to the leading A/G theologians to present their expertise. Like Foundations of Pentecostal Theology this volume reflected on all the major theological topics, but due to the variety of authors it did not present a coherent philosophy with component parts that articulated their system of belief. During the same period French L. Arrington, a leading theologian of the Church of God Cleveland, published a three volume systematic theology entitled Christian Doctrine: A Pentecostal Perspective. This series is another example of an evangelical theology, with some extra emphasis on particular Pentecostal themes. All of these works lacked some of the crucial Pentecostal characteristics, which I will discuss later.

With the arrival of the Charismatic movement in the sixties and the third wave and Neo-Charismatics in the eighties the Pentecostals became blessed with the input from theologians from various Christian denominations, who tried to embed their new experience within their tradition. The ecumenical thrust that was so characteristic for the early Pentecostals, especially in Azusa Street Mission and Europe, was given a second chance. A few major theological works were produced by some of their adherents, which are still being widely used in Pentecostal and Charismatic Colleges and Universities. J. Rodman Williams, who had served as an early president of the international Presbyterian Charismatic Communion, wrote his Magnum opus Renewal Theology in the nineties.

20 French L. Arrington, Christian Doctrine: A Pentecostal Perspective - Volume 1, 2 and 3 (Cleveland, TN Pathway Press).
21 Originally Rodman Williams wrote this as a three volume work entitled Renewal Theology (Vol. 1, God, the World, and Redemption, 1988; Vol. 2, Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living, 1990; and Vol. 3, The Church, the Kingdom, and Last Things, 1992. The three volumes are presently published as one unabridged volume (Zondervan, 1996) entitled Renewal Theology.
He called this ‘an expression of theological revitalization’22. The Systematic Theology of Wayne A. Grudem, a Baptist who was at one time a qualified supporter of the Vineyard Movement and one of the main apologists and spokespeople for reuniting Charismatic, Reformed, and Evangelical churches, was published in 1994.23 It has one chapter on the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit and two additional chapters on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These extensive works of Williams and Grudem include a more coherent worldview and system of belief than any of the Pentecostal works that have been published so far. They also try to remain faithful to the Biblical text, which clearly is the decisive source for their conclusions. But obviously their works are a mix of Pentecostal convictions in particular in the field of pneumatology and the theological position of their own denominational background. They also do not present the particular characteristics a Pentecostal theology should include, on which I will expand a little later. The cross-fertilization of charismatic and neo-charismatic theology has produced a wider ecumenical interest in theological topics that once seemed to belong exclusively to the Pentecostal realm. In the 21st century a few Pentecostal scholars have entered the arena of ecumenical and intercultural dialogue. The Finnish theologian Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen has produced an amazing number of books24, in which he reflects on


________., Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology and Theology of Mission (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2002, edited by Amos Yong)


________., An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives, (Inter-varsity Press, 2002).


________., The Doctrine of God, (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Book House, 2004).

Pentecostal theology in the context of church-historical and contemporary contributions. His encyclopaedic knowledge and ecumenical spirit helps Pentecostal scholars to break out of their isolation and opens them up to be enriched by the treasures of traditional and contemporary Christianity. Kärkkäinen however hardly seems to recognize the potential and significance of the Pentecostal approach, which may bring a paradigm shift in the field of theology as a whole.

Others have tried to come to grips with the intercultural and global complexity of Pentecostal theology. The Swiss theologian Walter J. Hollenweger, who put Pentecostalism on the academic map, was one of the first who perceived that the Pentecostals had many roots and were characterized by a global diversity. In his Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide he expands on the Black Oral, the Catholic, the Evangelical, the Critical and the Ecumenical roots of Pentecostalism. Allan Anderson, one of his successors at the University of Birmingham (UK), has elaborated on this thought. In his Introduction to Pentecostalism, he presents a bird’s eye view of the major global developments. In his conclusion he observes ‘that Pentecostalism with its flexibility (or ‘freedom’) in the Spirit has an innate ability to make itself at home in almost any context.’ Amos Yong and Frank Macchia have recently each produced a book that had ‘Global (Pentecostal) Theology’ in its subtitle. In his first chapter Yong presents an interesting study of Latin-American, Asian and African Pentecostalism. He continues to apply this diversity in the areas of soteriology, ecclesiology, ecumenical world theology, pneumatology and theology of creation. Macchia acknowledges the Pentecostal oral tradition and opens with an appropriate testimony of his own experience of Spirit baptism, after which he enters into a dialogue with this central distinctive in the fields of Trinitarianism, ecclesiology and life. The works of

27 Amos Yong, The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).
29 Yong, The Spirit poured out, 33-80.
30 Macchia, Baptized, 11-13.
Kärkkäinen, Anderson, Yong and Macchia are very helpful in the ecumenical and academic discussion of Pentecostalism. In retrospect I am inclined to divide the past century in the following four subsequent periods:

1906-1931 Formulation of Pentecostal creeds\textsuperscript{31}
1931-1956 In search of evangelical recognition
1956-1981 Interaction with the Charismatic movement
1981-2006 In search of ecumenical and academic recognition.

The years are a bit ambiguous. I have simply divided the century in four quarters. Certainly there are overflowing elements in each of these periods. If I apply this analysis to my original analogy of a butterfly, we see the following development. During the first period the butterfly was caught in the net of Biblicism and fundamentalism, in the second period the butterfly was preserved under the glass bell of evangelicalism, in the third period the butterfly got lost in the variety of different traditions and in the fourth period the butterfly was put on display alive by Pentecostal taxidermists.

I want to make an appeal for a new era, in which Pentecostals rediscover their identity and potential to present a new approach to theology. My heart-desire is to give a voice to all those people who have experienced the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit and to articulate their deepest convictions in a way that will preserve its distinctive contribution and power, while simultaneously will not alienate them from the larger body of Christ. In short: Release the Pentecostal butterfly in its own unique way in the midst of the other Christian butterflies.

A PENTECOSTAL QUADRILATERAL

In 1983 the University of South Africa (Unisa) commenced with a research project on Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement in order to try and understand the growth of this section of Christianity and to take its theological contribution seriously.\textsuperscript{32} This resulted in the publication of a book in 1989 entitled What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?\textsuperscript{33} In the conclusion of this book Henry Lederle, at that time professor of


\textsuperscript{32} Henry I. Lederle, The Pentecostal Proprium, paper presented at the 17th annual meeting of the international Society for Pentecostal Studies at the CBN University, Virginia Beach, VA., p. 321.

\textsuperscript{33} Matthew S. Clark & Henry L. Lederle et al, What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1989).
systematic theology at Unisa, suggests that ‘the essence of Pentecostal faith lies in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and that it can be found in the specific concentration on Jesus as Saviour, Spirit-baptizer, Healer and the soon and coming King’34. This foursquare summary of Pentecostal doctrine was the banner of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG) founded by Aimee McPherson in 1923 and the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance initiated by George Jeffreys in the United Kingdom in 1929. It is also mentioned in the introduction of the Statement of Fundamental Truth of the Assemblies of God35. This underlines that the Pentecostal movement is Christ-centred, rather than Pneuma-centred. It helps to highlight the major doctrines in Pentecostal theology, but it does not provide an insight in its major overarching theme nor in its methodology. The Pentecostal quadrilateral I am about to propose is rather derived from the so-called Wesleyan Quadrilateral36. John Wesley used four different sources in coming to theological conclusions:

- Scripture
- Tradition
- Reason
- Experience

Following this pattern my suggestion is that Pentecostals should include the following four adjectives to define their theology:

- Experiential
- Scriptural
- Prophetic
- Intercultural

I would like to define this as a ‘Theology of the Heart’.

EXPERIENTIAL

34 Clarke & Lederle, What is distinctive, p. 164.
35 The first paragraph states: “Four of these, Salvation, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Divine Healing, and the Second Coming of Christ are considered Cardinal Doctrines which are essential to the church’s core mission of reaching the world for Christ.” Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths, ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm
In what is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology Clark & Lederle discussed the central role experience has in Pentecostal life. They observed: ‘A Pentecostal meeting has always been an event, an experience, and those who attend have always expected that something will happen, and that it will happen to them …. To be Pentecostal is to have experienced the power of God in Jesus’37. John Bond states that in Pentecostal thinking theology follows experience. ‘First comes the act of God, then follows the attempt to understand it’38. Historically this is not always the case. Many of the early Pentecostal pioneers including Charles Parham, William Seymour, Alexander Boddy and Gerrit Polman, were convinced that the biblical evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues before they had experienced this themselves. Nevertheless I would argue that Pentecostals do not perceive their experience as a closing and final act in their process of theological deliberation, like it is in the Wesleyan quadrilateral. On the contrary, an encounter with God usually is the starting point out of which their theology is developed. That is why I have chosen to begin each section in the systematic theology I am in the process of writing with a testimony. This puts the rest of the theological deliberation in the context of real life.

So far I have tried to avoid the term ‘narrative theology’. Many have argued that the Pentecostal preference for testimonies and stories is linked to our black oral roots39. The use of narratives certainly has strong biblical backing. In His teaching, Jesus Christ used many parables to convey truths. Nevertheless I think the term ‘narrative’ is confusing when we apply it to Pentecostal theology. It seems to imply the use of fictitiously stories, to prove a point. This allegorical application does not seem characteristic for the way Pentecostals use narratives. They rather tell real events they have experienced. The early Pentecostal periodicals, like ‘The Apostolic Faith’ of the Azusa Street Mission, are filled with testimonies of people whose lives

37 Matthew S. Clark & Henry L. Lederle et al, What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?, 43.
38 John Bond in Matthew S. Clark & Henry L. Lederle et al, What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?, 135. At the time of the publication Bond served as the General Chairman of the Assemblies of God in South Africa.
were changed by an encounter with God. It is also a common practice in Pentecostal churches to give room for testimonies and usually the sermon also includes a personal story. For this reason I suggest that we limit the use of narratives to trustworthy and verified events that have occurred in real. This seems to be in line with the specific Pentecostal application of the same.

**SCRIPTURAL**

Brian Robinson has rightly observed that ‘experiential theology does not need to reject Scripture as final authority, nor deny orthodox Christian reflection’\(^{40}\). On the contrary Word and Spirit are like two mirrors, which if they reflect the image in the right angle produce a glimpse of eternity. We need both the objective and subjective source to come to a balanced theological conclusion. It is peculiar that adversaries of Pentecostalism regularly accuse us of subjectivism, where our theological works usually are based on a fundamentalistic investigation of Scripture. One can open almost any of the books that I have mentioned in my historical overview above to prove this point. Let me illustrate this by the wording of the 7\(^{th}\) Fundamental Truth of the Assemblies of God on the baptism in the Holy Ghost:

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 1 Cor 12:1). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

Many scriptures are used to sustain their position, but no experiential nor prophetic proof is added to this. In the books Foundations of Pentecostal Theology\(^ {41}\) and Bible Doctrines\(^ {42}\) the same methodology is applied. The

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accusation of subjectivity may be true in our praxis, but does not apply to our theology. In fact I want to make an appeal that we become more conscious and proud of our identity and integrate more of our subjective interaction with the Spirit in our theology, but this needs to be balanced by profound and scholarly exegesis of the Biblical text. In the early decades Pentecostals studied the Bible through the prism of Fundamentalism, Restorationism and Dispensationalism. The second generation of Pentecostals restricted themselves to evangelical hermeneutics. Through our encounters with the charismatic and neo-charismatic movements and our increasing openness to academic research, we have started to enrich our theology with the various Christian traditions and opened a dialogue with contemporary theologians. The latest developments indicate that we are now discovering our own intercultural diversity. We realize more then ever before that study of the Bible is complex. At the same time we need to rediscover our first naïveté, to read Scripture in a way that opens us to understand the text by the guidance and insight of the Holy Spirit.

PROPHETIC

I now enter the most dangerous section of my proposed methodology. Feel free to walk away angry. I will even allow you to shout in agony, but please do not throw stones. We are living in New Testament times!

My point is simply this: if a Pentecostal studies the Bible she or he is not content with a mere academic investigation. We have accepted Calvin’s hermeneutical rule that ‘Scripture interprets scripture.’, but in our praxis this is just the starting point of our exegesis. We want to come to a point were we ‘receive’ a divine revelation or insight to understand the deeper meaning of the text. If this happens we use phrases like ‘the Holy Spirit showed me’ to underline that our conclusions go beyond cognitive research. We apply this in our personal lives, our Bible studies and sermons, but so far this is hardly integrated in our theology. I am convinced that one of the reasons that Pentecostalism is so appealing to many is the fact that we dare to speak with divine authority. I realize that this has been and is being abused by many to manipulate others. It certainly does not concur with the critical-analytical method, which is so widely accepted in Western academia. Let us not forget however that this was one of the main reasons why Pentecostals have been so hostile towards academia. The accumulation of knowledge presented by the academia resulted according to their perception merely in confusion and the loss of faith. Let us try to keep both the knowledge and the faith. They
are not necessarily mutual exclusive. I am in good company here. Gordon Fee argues that the ultimate aim of exegesis is the ‘Spiritual one’. 43 He urges that we must hear the Word of God with our hearts. 44 He felt schizophrenic when he was trying to meet the academic requirements for exegesis while remaining true to his passion for the Bible. He described this tension as ‘trying to play baseball, but was allowed to play only by the rules of soccer.’ 45 Steven Land has argued that ‘a distinctive Pentecostal spirituality should be reflected in the process and results of the theological task’. 46 I suggest we do so by including the prophetic element in our theology.

Let me illustrate the prophetic element by one example. In his commentary on Genesis 2:21 Matthew Henry (1662-1714) writes:

That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved. 47

It is debatable whether the conclusion Henry draws here can be sustained by other scriptures. I am not even sure if this is the reason why God created Eve out of Adam’s side, but his commentary helps me to understand the equality and partnership between a man and woman. It resounds in my spirit and in my Pentecostal perception I like to think that Henry was enlightened by the Spirit to write down this thought.

I am very much aware of the dangers of giving such an authoritative weight to prophetic interpretation, but we should not throw away the baby with the bath-water. The bath-water is the haughtiness to think that anyone has the monopoly on truth or the exclusive insight in the full meaning of the biblical text. All we receive is illumination by the Holy Spirit, not inspiration in the way the authors of the Bible were led by the Holy Spirit to write down the text that would ultimately become part of our Holy Scripture. The baby is that we can receive knowledge and insight that goes beyond academic and cognitive research. As 1 Corinthians 2:10 puts it: God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. We cannot

44 Fee, To what end, p. 289.
45 Fee, To what end, p. 278.
investigate the Bible by means a computer-program based on the best hermeneutical method and expect an unequivocal and decisive result. Of course the interpretation of a scripture is bound by Scripture as a whole. The Word and the Spirit cannot contradict each other, but the Holy Spirit can help us to come to a prophetic understanding, interpretation and application of scripture. I define prophetic interpretation as the process in which the Holy Spirit gives us illumination or insight in a certain scripture, by which we can apply this with greater authority. This is certainly not limited to those who have the prophetic gift; it rather seems an integral part of the office of teacher. Nevertheless, the New Testament rule towards prophets that ‘others should weigh carefully what is said’ (1 Corinthians 14:29) also applies in this context. We need to develop some sound tests by which this prophetic element in our theology can be tested both academically and spiritually. Within these parameters we must try to develop a theology that is relevant, biblical and is presented with the prophetic authority that I have tried to define in this paragraph.

INTERCULTURAL

Allan Anderson has made a convincing plea that the global history of Pentecostalism is usually described from a bias North American perspective and urgently needs correction. The development of the Pentecostal movement in China, India, Chili, Nigeria etcetera is distinct from the Azusa Street revival. Paul Pommerville declared that Pentecostalism had originated in a series of roughly spontaneous and universal beginnings in different parts of the world. This gives Pentecostal theology a unique feature. It has the potential to present an intercultural and global theology, providing that we integrate the contributions from our Pentecostal peers in other parts of the world, in particular from Asia, Africa and Latin-America where the vast majority of Pentecostals are now located. With the emerge of globalization through the fast developing communications, emigration and outsourcing it seems that it can serve global Christianity by developing a theology that is not particularly Western-based, but embraces insights and world-views from all continents. A precondition to develop such a theology is that we encourage Pentecostals in the third world to develop their faith in their own


context and enter into a dialogue with them, so we can integrate their views in our own theology in a relevant and accessible way.

In this way our theology can be enriched by their insights and experiences. Wonsuk Ma for instance points out that voluntary suffering is an important aspect for Asian Pentecostals in China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Becoming a Christian in these countries is often a life-and-death decision, which has resulted in persecution in many cases. They can help us to develop a much needed theology of suffering.

Another word we could use for intercultural in this respect could be the word integration or inclusiveness. This closing section in this proposed methodology should not only interact literally with other cultures, but also try to incorporate or at least discuss various Pentecostal positions and enter into a dialogue with the various Christian traditions and contemporary philosophies and theologians.

We need to enter into the following three circles:

- Polemic: Integration of various themes addressed by Pentecostals
- Ecumenical: Dialogue with church traditions and contemporary theology.
- Global: Input from Pentecostals from various cultures and continents.

In the first inner circle we need to come to terms with the different theological positions Pentecostals have developed. These are like unpaid bills. We need to know where the bill came from, how much we are charged and how we can pay our debt. A good example is the dialogue with oneness Pentecostals within the heart of this Society for Pentecostal Studies. Similar initiatives can and should be developed with regards to the Word of Faith theology and other controversies.

The dialogue in the second circle is probably the most developed of the three at this point. Here we see the advantage if there are equivalent participants. Many Charismatics are well skilled and used to academic dialogue. Their contributions to conferences like these are usually well appreciated. Cecil Robeck Jr., Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and many others have proven to be outstanding Pentecostal representatives in this ecumenical dialogue. This is a complex and challenging task however, that cannot and should not be left to some specialists. Pentecostals need to come to terms

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50 Wonsuk Ma, Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context, in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic face of Christianity in Asia, 76.
with their original ecumenical thrust and potential and become more pro-active in his area.

We come back to third circle of intercultural exchange. The Asian Pentecostals seem to be the first to discover how their Pentecostal identity can be integrated best in their own cultural context. We can expect a lot more from African and Latin-American Pentecostals in this area in the near future. After having dictated our western theology to them for so many decades it serves us right to devote at least one decade to listen to what they have to say. It may help us to understand why their growth is so much more substantial than ours.

CONCLUSION

In this presentation I have tried to convince you that Pentecostal theology does not distinct itself by a new insight in certain New Testament themes like Baptism in the Holy Spirit or Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It rather presents a paradigm shift in theological thinking. In the historical overview I have demonstrated that the theologies that have been written by Pentecostals so far do not include our own characteristics in applying theology. I have suggested a Pentecostal quadrilateral as a methodology that reflects our identity and historical roots:

Experiential: Black oral roots
Scriptural: Evangelical roots
Prophetic: Pietistic roots
Intercultural: Global roots

I intend to apply this method in a systematic theology, which I hope to write for students who are studying at an undergraduate level. I need your input to correct and refine my method. Are these the genuine parameters of a Pentecostal theology? Am I missing out come crucial elements? I look forward to your suggestions either today in the discussion or by correspondence. I hope I have provoked your thoughts and that you have kept the amazement of looking at this peculiar butterfly. Let me close with a final appeal: Do not catch the Pentecostal butterfly with your clumsy hands, but with your eyes only!
Abstract

sed mi sodales sagittis. In egestas. Nullam elementum elit condimentum
wisi.

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metus in eros adipiscing rhoncus. Fusce egestas, erat et elementum fringilla,
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inceptos hymenaeos. Aenean rhoncus quam vitae magna porta fringilla.

[Quote (Mid)] This is a middle paragraph of a multi-paragraph quote. It
has 4mm of space to the left and to the right, but no space above or below.
Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per
inceptos hymenaeos. Aenean rhoncus quam vitae magna porta fringilla.

[Quote (Last)] This is the last paragraph of a multi-paragraph quote. It has
4mm of space to the left and to the right, and also 4mm of space below. Class
aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos
hymenaeos. Aenean rhoncus quam vitae magna porta fringilla.

[Heading 3]

[Normal (No Indent)] Nunc nec elit. Donec et erat. Morbi nec lorem.
Suspendisse vel sapien. Cras arcu nunc, gravida eu, tincidunt ut, commodo
quis, erat. Praesent sed sem quis lacus congue bibendum. Donec nec massa
Duis eleifend volutpat massa.

In laoreet, massa sed molestie lacinia, velit risus interdum wisi, at
aliquam turpis leo et pede. Nulla rutrum, risus et dapibus vestibulum, risus
massa viverra nulla, vel bibendum ligula justo a turpis. Pellentesque
habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis
egestas. Suspendisse mi ante, semper sed, gravida quis, porttitor eu, neque. Aenean nonummy dignissim mauris.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} Trial footnote


Sed suscipit nulla non dui. Nullam vel mi et massa semper adipiscing. Phasellus iaculis erat quis ligula. Integer urna augue, placerat eu, porttitor eget,